

This volume represents one part of a larger research project undertaken by the Central Department of Sociology and Anthropology at Tribhuvan University from 2011 to 2013 to design a Social Inclusion Atlas and Ethnographic Profiles (SIA-EP) for Nepal. The SIA-EP project has four interrelated components, including a country-wide Nepal Social Inclusion Survey (NSIS), a Nepal Multidimensional Social Inclusion Index (NSII) combining original surveying with the findings of other recent surveys and the 2011 Census, a Social Inclusion Atlas that maps caste/ethnicity data, and finally a series of Ethnographic Profiles describing the 42 highly-excluded communities of Nepal. The overall objective of the SIA-EP research was to promote a more informed understanding of Nepal's social diversity by producing research based on the most current information of the country's cultural and linguistic diversity and the status of social inclusion of different social groups. The combination of quantitative and qualitative information produced through this research is expected to contribute to policy design, research, and education.

PERSPECTIVES ON SOCIAL INCLUSION AND EXCLUSION IN NEPAL

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*Editors*

Om Gurung  
Mukta S. Tamang  
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CENTRAL DEPARTMENT OF SOCIOLOGY/ANTROPOLOGY  
TRIBHUVAN UNIVERSITY  
KIRTIPUR, KATHMANDU, NEPAL



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Kirtipur, Kathmandu, Nepal

## **Perspectives on Social Inclusion and Exclusion in Nepal**

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# Preface

This edited volume is a compilation of papers presented at a workshop organized by the Central Department of Sociology/Anthropology (CDSA) at Tribhuvan University from 6-8 May 2012 in Kathmandu, Nepal. The workshop was organized as part of an ongoing research project undertaken by the CDSA to generate a Social Inclusion Atlas and Ethnographic Profile (SIA-EP). The objective of the workshop was to inform and refine concepts and methodologies used in the SIA-EP research program through dialogue with social scientists and concerned stakeholders.

The SIA-EP research project was formally launched in February 2012. Its primary aim was to promote a more informed understanding of Nepal's social diversity by producing current research-based information on the country's cultural and linguistic diversity and explore the status of social development among different caste and ethnic groups. As an initiative undertaken by a university department, the project involved a multidisciplinary team of scholars who designed and then implemented the research initiative.

During the workshop, more than thirty papers were presented on concepts and methods for social inclusion and exclusion research in Nepal. Among these were papers that dealt with issues regarding the relevance of ethnographic studies, as well as approaches to ethnographic research. Most of the papers engaged with theories of social exclusion, inclusion, and cultural diversity, thereby generating perspectives in the context of Nepali society, and offering insights on how research on such timely issues could be best furthered.

Ideas generated during the workshop contributed substantially to the later implementation of all the components of SIA-EP research program, which involved four interrelated components. First, the Nepal Social Inclusion Survey (NSIS), consisting of a national sample survey covering 98 caste and ethnic groups. Second, the Reanalysis of National Survey Data including the 2011 Census of Nepal to generate disaggregated statistical information within social groups. Third, the designing and building of Ethnographic

Profiles for 42 pre-determined highly excluded groups. Finally, and through the use of GIS technology, the Social Inclusion Atlas which plotted the 2011 census data onto a map. All of these components were geared toward producing a comprehensive picture of Nepal's social diversity and the state of social inclusion through the systematic generation and presentation of both quantitative and qualitative information.

The research was carried out with generous funding from the Royal Norwegian Embassy in Nepal through Social Inclusion Research Fund (SIRF). As such, it is one of the largest research projects undertaken by CDSA in its history. Together with research findings published separately, we are confident that this volume on "Perspectives on Social Inclusion and Exclusion in Nepal" will be useful for planners, researchers, educators, students, and general readers interested in understanding the concepts of social inclusion and exclusion particularly within the context of Nepal. I thank all the authors for their contributions and are grateful to our editors, Professor Om Gurung, Dr. Mukta S. Tamang and Dr. Mark Turin, for their valuable assistance in bringing this work to fruition.

Manju Thapa Tuladhar, Ph.D.  
Lead Advisor, SIRF

## Acknowledgements

While the persistence of institutionalized social exclusion in Nepal has received attention from political leaders, development workers, academics, activists, journalists, civil society leaders and others, the extent and dynamics of social exclusion has remained seriously understudied. In order to address this lacuna, the Central Department of Sociology/Anthropology (CDSA) at Tribhuvan University undertook a research project to construct an atlas of social inclusion supported by ethnographic profiles of communities in Nepal. This multidimensional project was supported by the Royal Norwegian Embassy in Kathmandu through SNV/Nepal.

The primary objective of the research was to promote an informed understanding of Nepal's social diversity through the production of high quality and up-to-date, research-based information regarding the country's social, cultural, and linguistic composition, as well as the status of human and social development. In order to carry out the research effectively, CDSA formed a multidisciplinary research team. From the outset, the team felt it necessary to clarify both the perspectives and methods of the research on social exclusion, to which end the CDSA organized a three-day research methodology workshop from May 6-8, 2012. The broad objective of the methodology workshop was to sharpen the research perspectives for understanding social exclusion and inclusion in Nepal from a range of theoretical vantage points. The specific objective of the meeting was to refine and finalize the research methodology through consultation with experts and multiple stakeholder representatives. More than 150 participants from different fields participated in the workshop, including planners, policy makers, academics, political leaders, international organizations, donors, government administrators, activists, civil society leaders, and journalists. About 40 experts were invited to write perspective papers to contextualize social inclusion in Nepal and help form a robust methodology for fieldwork. The workshop was thus envisioned as providing a platform from which expert researchers could present their perspectives and research methodologies to each other, as well as share them with wider stakeholders for feedback.

There were two expected outputs of the workshop. First, the workshop was intended to finalize a comprehensive research methodology for fieldwork, data collection, and analysis. Secondly, the workshop was to lead to the production of two volumes of collected papers under the tentative title “Perspectives and Measures on Social Exclusion and Inclusion-Nepal.” In point of fact, of the 40 experts who were invited, only 30 presented papers. Of those, only six papers were submitted for consideration for publication. Now thoroughly reviewed and assessed, these papers have been compiled and published here in a single volume as the background papers that frame the research project.

The Social Inclusion Atlas-Ethnographic Profiles (SIA-EP) methodology workshop would not have been possible without the cooperation and contribution of a number of institutions and individuals. On behalf of the Department, we would like to thank all those who supported the workshop for their generous cooperation and lasting contributions. In particular, our sincere thanks go to the Royal Norwegian Embassy in Kathmandu for providing the research funding through SNV/Nepal; to Tribhuvan University for granting permission to the scholars to undertake the research; to the Social Inclusion Research Fund (SIRF) Screening committee for providing valuable input; to the SIRF Secretariat for managing the funds and facilitating the entire project; and to the National Foundation for Development of Indigenous Nationalities (NFDIN), the National Dalit Commission, and the Nepal Academy for supporting and collaborating in the research.

We are also grateful to the former Vice Chair of the National Planning Commission for inaugurating the workshop and encouraging our activities. Thanks are also due to scholars from a range of disciplinary backgrounds for presenting valuable papers and revising them for publication in this volume. We extend our deep gratitude to Dr. Bal Gopal Vaidya, Dr. Jit Gurung, Dr. Vidhyanath Koirala, Dr. Mangal Siddi Manadhar, Dr. Terence Turner, Dr. Kathryn March, Dr. Sumitra Manadhar Gurung, Dr. Jane Fajans and Dr. David Holmberg for chairing sessions and providing valuable comments. We are also thankful to the many stakeholders who actively participated in the workshop and provided useful feedback that helped revise the research methodology, and to the administrative staff in both the Department and the SIA-EP office for helping with workshop logistics. As we headed

towards publication, we were delighted to receive contributions from Dr. David Holmberg and Dr. Gérard Toffin, in the form of an introduction and epilogue respectively. During the production process, we were most fortunate to receive support from Amy Leigh Johnson, a graduate student at Yale University, who worked tirelessly as our editorial assistant in the early months of 2014 to bring this project to a timely conclusion. As editors of this volume on social inclusion in Nepal, we are delighted to bring such important research to a wider audience through publication.

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March 2014



# Introduction

David Holmberg, Cornell University

## The Social Inclusion Atlas of Nepal and Ethnographic Profiles

The Social Inclusion Atlas of Nepal and the accompanying set of forty-two Ethnographic Profiles (SIA-EP) is an ambitious and comprehensive research effort by a highly accomplished, multi-disciplinary team of social scientists and junior researchers. The team includes anthropologists, sociologists, population specialists, economists, statisticians, geographers, political scientists, historians, and others in an unprecedented attempt to produce an overview of Nepal's contemporary diversity and assess patterns of inequality and social inclusion geographically. The team worked in the context of an aspiration to transform Nepal into a just, inclusive, and multicultural socio-polity. Since the consolidation of Nepal in the late 18th century, an elite drawn from high caste groups has sustained an effective monopoly in positions of influence across the range of sociopolitical life through multiple political regimes.

Large sectors of the population within the borders of Nepal are either inherently marginalized, like *dalits* (formerly referred to as “untouchables”), historically denied access to influence, like Nepal’s *adivasi-janajati* or “indigenous nationalities,” or not considered to be full citizens of Nepal, like *madhesi* or people of the southern plains. The situation for women is highly variable as we move across different cultural groups, but there is no question that in public spheres of the state and civic life, women are also kept to the side. Other gender and sexual minorities are largely absent from consciousness and discourse.

The SIA-EP is not so much an effort to develop theories of the dynamics of inequality and inclusion—whether economic, political, social, or cultural—as it is to provide a comprehensive set of data points on inclusion for further in-depth research and to build a solid empirical platform from which to devise efforts to enhance inclusiveness and produce a fully multi-cultural society and polity. The social scientists who undertook this project under

the direction of the Central Department of Sociology/Anthropology at Tribhuvan University divided their efforts across four different sub-projects. The first was a sophisticated re-analysis of existing datasets to develop a Nepal Social Inclusion Index (NSII). The NSII team mined data from the National Living Standards Survey, the Nepal Demographic and Health Survey, the Nepal Labour Force Survey, the 2011 Census of Nepal, as well as data from the SIA-EP project itself, in order to construct their index. Second, the team developed an original survey, the Nepal Social Inclusion Survey (NSIS), that asked 325 questions to 152 households from each of 98 caste and ethnic groups identified in the 2001 census<sup>1</sup>. A total of 14, 709 households were surveyed. The data generated from the NSIS was incorporated as well into the indexing project. A third parallel initiative of the SIA-EP has been to localize and regionalize this data geographically, to which end a team produced maps to display geographic disparities.

Parallel to this demographic and geographic effort, the research teams undertook detailed ethnographic research on forty-two of the most excluded populations as designated in a prior effort to generate an index of exclusion for Nepal, *The Nepal Multi-dimensional Exclusion Index* (Bennett and Parajuli 2012). Forty-two fieldworkers under the supervision of seasoned ethnographers were deployed to study each of these groups in at least two distinct locales<sup>2</sup>. The team focused their efforts on five different clusters of marginalized groups (for a complete list of groups see Dahal's article in this volume): Hill *janajati* (indigenous nationalities), Tarai *janajati*, Hill *dalit*, *madhesi dalit*, and *madhesi* Other Castes. Although a few of the forty-two groups, mostly Hill *janajati* are well known in ethnographic literature, many others, especially fifteen Dalit groups, eight Tarai *janajati* groups, and ten *madhesi* castes, are virtually unknown in the ethnographic literature.

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1. The 2001 census recognized over 102 groups, plus a category of “unidentified.” But some of these categories were too vague or groups were too small to survey. In two cases, the actual survey was administered to substantially fewer than 152 households because the populations were so small.
  2. A main emphasis of the Social Inclusion Research Fund that sponsored the SIA-EP project is capacity building in research, especially of groups that have been historically excluded. The Ethnographic Team recruited ethnographers primarily from among sociology and anthropology graduates and wherever possible attempted to find ethnographers from excluded populations.

Thus, the SIA-EP research has generated original findings on largely unknown groups and expanded and consolidated information on a few of the better-known marginalized populations in Nepal. The results of all these ethnographic efforts will result in a number of concrete contributions. First, all the ethnographic field notes, photographs, audio recordings, and video footage produced will be organized into an archive so that future scholar and policy makers can have access to the raw data. Second, the SIA-EP will publish an ethnographic profile for each of these groups condensed from longer profiles.<sup>3</sup> The profiles will follow a template for easy access and comparison of information. These templates, like the archive, are meant to provide guidance for future research and development efforts. It has long been an axiom of anthropological involvement in development that projects cannot successfully proceed without baseline research, ethnographic understanding, and the involvement and investment of local communities. These profiles were generated in that framework and are an important step towards broadening the knowledge base of Nepal.

The papers in this volume focus on the conceptual and methodological complexities confronting a research effort of this magnitude. Before introducing these papers, I offer, for those not already familiar with Nepal's diversity, a brief sketch of the complex reality confronting the SIA-EP team. The most recent census of Nepal identified 125 different caste and ethnic groups in Nepal. Each of these currently recognized groups—and the picture has changed substantially even over the last 25 years (see Tamang in this volume)—are contending either to maintain their inclusive position or to acquire inclusion in a new Nepal.

## Nepal's Diversity

The wider picture of Nepal's stunning diversity stems from three main historical migrations stretching over centuries and continuing into the present. Movement into what is now the nation-state of Nepal most likely begins with movements of sectors of peoples who became what are now known as *adivasi-janajati* or “indigenous nationalities.” The histories of these movements are

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3 Tentative plans are to locate this archive digitally both at the Central Department of Sociology/Anthropology and at an international educational institution. For further information on the SIRF, see: <<http://www.socialinclusion.org.np>>.

lost, except in a few instances, in an as yet largely unrecovered and perhaps unrecoverable history<sup>4</sup>. All we know is that the movements of some of these groups have been very recent (Sherpa, Oraon, Munda, Bodo etc. ) and others so ancient that they constitute the first human inhabitants of different locales and were among the ancestors of Nepal's array of *adivasi-janajati* populations, most of whom speak Tibeto-Burman or other non Indo-European languages (Austroasiatic or unclassified) as their mother tongues. These peoples generated, sustained, and transformed largely autonomous and regionally distinct linguistic, cultural, and social practices though their interrelations with each other, with cultures to the north in Tibet, and to the south in India.

The second influx stems from waves of migration of caste peoples, who now constitute what, for convenience, I will designate as *parbatiya* groups in Nepal. Their ancestors began moving in significant numbers into parts of the central Himalayas in the 12th century after Muslim invaders spread their conquest and control eastward across northern India. These peoples spoke Indic languages—variants of north Indian languages—that eventually became modern Nepali, currently the language of “official business” in the state of Nepal, and found their cultural and religious inspiration from Hindu forms as they flourished in north India at the time. Their elites were able to establish small kingdoms in many regions of what is now Nepal, small kingdoms which in turn were in contiguity and even conflict with developing indigenous polities.

As these groups moved into Nepal, probably intermarrying in some instances with sectors of the indigenous populations, they applied a Hindu caste logic that had been internal to their own social and cultural life in their relations with the people already inhabiting the hills of Nepal who did not share these social ideologies. In a parallel development, Newars, indigenous to the Kathmandu valley, had begun to adopt forms of caste distinction internally. As elite sectors of *parbatiya* Hindu groups came to dominate indigenous principalities in the hills and eventually the Kathmandu Valley

4 Field archeology, historical linguistics, and genetic research are the primary methods for recovering this history, and for specific movements in particular regions archaeology focused on migrations of *adivasi-janajatiis* essential. Archaeology related to indigenous migrations is not well developed. Genetic work is in its infancy (see van Driem 2008).

through the conquest and negotiations of Prithvi Narayan Shah and his direct ancestors, high caste *parbatiya*, actively supported by the state structure, migrated throughout the mid-hills and valleys of Nepal where their elite became more often than not dominant in administrative and economic life.

The formal legal codes of the state developed in the 19th century instituted strict hierarchies that were firmly based on Hindu ideology applied to the unique array of diversity in Nepal. These codes structured a state organized from top to bottom in all public and civic life according to a fixed hierarchy of *jat* or caste groups and a political elite whose rights to rule were established through *jat* membership and kinship relationship. Nevertheless, the early state of Nepal allowed considerable regional autonomy. In many areas of Nepal, what are now known as *adivasi-janajati* groups were able to sustain unique and often oppositional and resistant cultural forms.

A third major migration began shortly after the malaria eradication campaign in the Tarai in 1955 opened up an immense area, by Nepali standards, of potentially productive land. People moved into the Tarai from both the overpopulated plains of North India and from the middle hills of Nepal where the carrying capacity of land in support of subsistence had begun to meet its limits in many places. These movements produced the current complex set of Tarai groups (either of hill or plains origin, of high caste or low caste, of Indian indigenous identity or Nepali indigenous identity) along with *dalit* and Muslim groups all living alongside one another in a formerly heavily forested area that had only been sparsely populated by indigenous populations, including some very small populations of now extinct or nearly extinct cultures and languages.

The reality of inequality and social exclusion with which we are familiar in contemporary Nepal took its form in the history of migration coupled with the history of socio-political domination. These structural inequalities set the stage for the most recent social and political upheavals punctuated by the first People's Movement in 1990, a ten year civil war culminating in a second People's Movement in 2006 and the cessation of the Hindu monarchy, and finally now, furtive steps toward constructing a new socio-political order in Nepal. Demands for recognition and empowerment from

*adivasi-janajati, dalits, madeshis*, women, and sexual minorities have become a ubiquitous feature of modern socio-political discourse in Nepal. These movements have produced a leveling in Nepali civil discourse that has yet to be matched by a leveling in greater social and political practice. The continuing paucity of faces and voices from groups constituting the majority in Nepal are an unavoidable reality of current administrative, political, educational, economic, journalistic, and academic life.

## Concepts and Methods

The set of papers in this volume were initially produced in the early phases of the SIA-EP project. They address conceptual and methodological conundrums confronting the SIA-EP team as they began their efforts. At the most general level, three papers take on abstract concepts of social inclusion and exclusion in their particular applicability to the context of Nepal. Several argue that the terms “inclusion” and “exclusion” are not transparent or universal. Mukta Tamang, in his paper “Perspectives on Social Inclusion and Implications for Research in Nepal,” traces the original application deployment of these concepts in European social policy discourse, and reviews key critiques of those concepts as applied in that context. In particular, he notes the historical and cultural specificity of the concepts as originally articulated in France and greater Europe and the need for rethinking them for Nepal. Drawing on social theory, Tamang opens up alternative ways of thinking about social inclusion from anthropological and sociological perspectives as applied to the unique dimensions of social and historical reality in Nepal. In so doing, he provides a rapid overview of the contemporary facts of exclusion and divides state approaches to diversity into three historical periods: “exclusionary inclusion,” “assimilationist inclusion” and “multicultural inclusion.”

Similarly, Meeta Pradhan, in her paper “Perspectives on Multiple Dimensions and Intersections in Social Inclusion,” provides a concise overview of the concepts of inclusion and exclusion in sociological literature, stressing the multiple dimensions of the identities of groups and individuals that confound simplistic quantitative approaches. Pradhan provides a particularly compelling example of how the complexity of social reality in South Asia make the production of a generic category like “women” and

assessment of their relative inclusion/exclusion impossible unless one adopts an “intersectional” perspective. Drawing on feminist literature, she offers a framework that considers multiple factors (such as caste, class, gender, culture, etc.) to derive a more complete picture of inclusion and exclusion in the unique configurations in Nepali society. Arun Kumar Lal Das et. al. in their “Nepal Social Index (NSII): A Proposed Methodology” make a more practical comparative examination of how inclusion and exclusion have been operationalized in studies elsewhere in the world and in previous studies in Nepal before laying out the basic features of their own techniques of measuring of inclusion and exclusion in Nepal. Their article allows us to see the difficult problems in generating and operationalizing a social inclusion index.

In addressing the importance of issues of inclusion and exclusion in Nepal, Mahendra Lawoti also emphasizes the multi-dimensional nature of the problem in his contribution, “A Comprehensive Exclusion/Inclusion Index for Nepal.” Here, Lawoti offers ways of measuring aspects of inclusion and exclusion that have historically eluded quantification, and draws particular attention to the absence of cultural and social discrimination in previous attempts to gauge exclusion and inclusion in Nepal. Lawoti proposes a higher statistical weighting to the social and cultural variables in the index, assigning more importance to these domains than to political ones. Finally, he proposes that some facets of discrimination are hard to operationalize in an index and suggests some alternate approaches.

Krishna Hachhethu takes on the question of methods of studying political inclusion in “Nepal: Study of Political Inclusion and Research Methods” by first reviewing briefly the history of the study of politics in Nepal. He then identifies a key distinction in the formulation of a central hypothesis: the greater a group’s participation in political life, the greater its inclusion. Hachhethu then provides examples of sets of questions administered in the Nepal Democracy Survey (Hachhethu 2004) that addressed issues related to inclusion and to participation. In conclusion, he discusses the question of customary governance, a topic to be considered in the ethnographic profiles.

As a complement to the concepts and methods of assessment of inclusion/exclusion, Dilli R. Dahal shifts focus to the production of

ethnographic profiles around the theme of inclusion, and speaks to the question of “Ethnographic Research in Nepal: Methodological Approaches, Relevance and Applications.” Himself a seasoned ethnographer of Nepal, Dahal briefly reviews the history of ethnography in Nepal and lays out the template the team is applying in the production of the ethnographic profiles. This template is important because it acted as a guide for the fieldworkers, many of whom were relatively inexperienced. Of special note, in his discussion of ethnographic tools Dahal addresses the question of long-term versus short-term research, establishing rapport and gaining acceptance in marginalized communities, the ethics of research among disadvantaged groups, and the link between theory and ethnographic practice.

This collection of papers as a whole constitutes a major contribution not only to how we think about the application of inclusion and exclusion to the social reality of Nepal, but they advance, through a thoughtful comparative assessment, our general understanding of the cross-cultural applicability of terms that have gained considerable currency in global debates about inequality and the policies that stem from them. The contributors are to be commended for a benchmark set of papers that will guide future research and analysis of inclusion in Nepal and add an important dimension to international debates. If knowledge is at the foundation of effective social policy, the authors are to be celebrated for making a significant contribution.

## **The Politics of Data**

Knowledge is always formed in power relations and produces effects in the world, both intended and unintended. Classification, enumeration, and compilation of data at the core of SIA-EP efforts must also be understood in this context. In greater South Asia, from the beginning of the Raj, British colonists classified, counted, and mapped people in India as part of the technology of their rule, culminating in the first pan-Indian census in 1871-1872 and a set of late 19th century gazetteer projects that both enumerated and compiled data (see Cohn 1996; Dirks 2002; Risely 1891). These projects of knowledge generation were instigated to provide information in order to better administer and control the population. Classification, enumeration, and compilation of data in Nepal historically have served the agendas of different forms of

state government from the oligarchy of the Rana-Shah era to the developmental state in the Panchayat era period and beyond (see Kansakar 1977 for a history of enumeration efforts in Nepal). For most of its history, internal colonization has been the experience of many groups (Bhattachan 1998: 123) and the history of data collection cannot escape this knowledge-power nexus.

Nevertheless, the SIA-EP reflects a major transformation and reversal in data production in Nepal that has taken form since the beginning of effective advocacy for a new inclusive and multicultural democracy in 1990 followed by the eventual collapse of the Hindu monarchy and the establishment of a secular state. Where classifications like the legal hierarchies of the 19th century worked to essentialize groups and to include and exclude groups, the groups simultaneously instantiated and dominated in that process have now appropriated those designations for empowerment. Beginning in 2001, the census began counting members of different groups, identifying over 100 groups, a number that expanded to 125 in the most recent census of 2011. Classification and enumeration are no longer the uncontested efforts of governments to circumscribe, control, rule, or, in a more modern era, “develop” citizens; classification and enumeration have become the vehicles for demanding recognition as groups vie to be officially designated and minority groups argue, among other things, for more power based on demographic reality often challenging the accuracy of counts. I have witnessed, for instance, an active education drive by leaders of one *adivasi-janajati* group instructing their members on how to answer questions on the 2011 census including the registration of names, language, group identity, and religion. Although there is evidence (e. g. Turin 2000) as well as anecdotes of undercounts and miscounts of minority groups, as well as quite obvious inflation of Hindu religious identity in the recent censuses, the fact remains that enumeration and classification are becoming democratized and encompassed in a new and more open politics in Nepal.

The SIA-EP project attempts to bring greater rigor to data on inequality and inclusion through a re-analysis of existing data and the generation of new data. Although the SIA-EP is framed as a purely empirical project oriented toward more precise mapping of relative inclusion and exclusion across multiple spheres of life, the knowledge generated will be deployed, no doubt, to inform debates

about affirmative action policies and constitutional issues. If there is a caution in the history of classification and enumeration in India, instantiation, ossification, and essentialization of a once more fluid social reality led to unintended consequence and new forms of conflict and suffering (Dirks 2002; Shneiderman and Middleton 2008). One thing that seems clear is that until recently, expansion and centralization of power and knowledge production in Nepal led to similar instantiation and essentialization. One can only hope that sophisticated and nuanced projects like SIA-EP which are guided by an inclusive and truly multicultural spirit will point to pathways of reduced strife through the empowerment of excluded peoples.

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# **Perspectives on Social Inclusion and Implications for Research in Nepal**

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The concept of social inclusion, originated in the European countries of the North and gradually spread in the Global South, has become one of the pressing national agendas in Nepal during the last two decades. Promises and plans to make the Nepali state and society inclusive are articulated in a range of documents. These include the Interim Constitution, various national laws, and policies as well as monographs of the National Planning Commission, national and international development agencies, and non-governmental organizations. Social inclusion is prominent in discussions of academic communities and among the general public. The concept of social inclusion has become both a useful tool for analyzing the Nepali state and society and a way of envisioning its future.

What is social exclusion? How should social inclusion be understood and implemented in the case of Nepal? What special measures should be taken for inclusion of excluded groups in a meaningful way? Various perspectives and alternative proposals have been put forward during discussions in the constitution-making and political transition period. At the same time, Nepal has introduced some important measures on social inclusion. In this article, I review various perspectives on social inclusion and the debate within Nepal in order to propose ways to conceptualize social inclusion. I argue that 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.

## **What is Social Exclusion?**

It would be helpful to explicate the notion of social exclusion before clarifying the concept of social inclusion. Scholars on social exclusion have defined it as a “dynamic process of progressive multidimensional rupturing of the social bond” (Silver 2007: 1).

According to Silver, the social bond consists of “social relations, institutions, and imagined identities of belonging constituting social cohesion, integration, or solidarity. Social exclusion precludes full participation in the normatively prescribed activities of a given society and denies access to information, resources, sociability, recognition, and identity, eroding self-respect and reducing capabilities\_to achieve personal goals” (ibid.). Studies have indicated that social exclusion is (a) a condition, (b) a relation, and (c) a process.

Social exclusion encompasses the condition of poverty, deprivation, marginalization, and powerlessness. As Amartya Sen stated, it can also be viewed as a state of capability failure. Transcending individual capability, the concept of social exclusion helps us broaden the understanding of poverty by calling attention to the equitable distribution of the material resources among different social groups. The concept of social exclusion is thus not just another way of explaining poverty and deprivation. The concept seems to add additional dimensions to understand and interpret deprivation and distributive justice.

Social exclusion encompasses poverty and includes multiple dimensions of marginalization in analyzing deprivation beyond the economic realm. Income and expenditure are certainly linked to the life chances of an individual, but they are not sufficient to fully understand the difficulties of human life. To fully understand social life, it is necessary to analyze multiple dimensions of problems of marginalization and powerlessness and their interrelationships. It is impossible to understand the dynamic nature of poverty without analyzing causes of economic deprivation. The problems of homelessness, educational failure, and lack of skills for the labor market, and childhood malnutrition and subsequent ill health and diseases all contribute to social exclusion. To take an example from the Nepali context, being deprived of primary education in his or her mother tongue, an *adivasi janajati* or a child belonging to *madhesi* community fails in formal education and is forced into unfavorable work conditions; or a *dalit* child, due to treatment as untouchable and caste discrimination, lags behind for her whole life in the economic realm.

Social exclusion can also be understood as relationship because lack of mutual support and cooperation between members of a society

and discriminatory, unequal, and failed relations between powerful and powerless groups in a society function as determinants of exclusion. Discrimination is a rupture of the relationship between sovereign citizens and the state, the state that should have ensured dignity and provided services to all its citizens equally. Similarly, it is a failure of coordination between different institutions that regulate the relation between the state, civil society, and market economy.

Social exclusion is a process whereby an excluder continuously and actively attempts to gain a higher position by excluding others. Such active exclusion is manifested in everyday behavior, language, and conduct of individuals belonging to dominant groups. The behavior is reproduced through the family, education, religion, gender relations, values, roles, laws, etc. In contrast to the restricted understanding of poverty that tends to limit itself in locating people in different classes based on possession of wealth and material resources, the concept of social exclusion does not omit the active excluder. Poverty analysis locates people in a hierachal scale. The concept of social exclusion, on the other hand, does not slot marginalized groups into an up or down ladder, but views them either as being inside or outside of the system (Touraine 1992, quoted in Silver 1994).

Some scholars have also defined exclusion as an obstacle to open and healthy communication between different ethnic, linguistic, religious, and cultural groups. This perspective emerged out of the thinking on deliberative democracy and suggests that this obstacle is critical to overcome to create a positive democratic environment (Habermas 1975). In terms of process, if one ethnic group, class, caste or linguistic group has a monopoly over the public voice, through control of language, media, and technology, this can restrain the processes of group decision making of the constitution, law, or policy. In turn, biased laws adversely affect inter-group relations and contribute to exclusion.

Social exclusion also helps us see social relations not as static but as flexible in time and space. For example, the study of poverty informed by social inclusion should not be limited to the enumeration of poor people and description of their economic characteristics. It is equally important to consider how people enter the poverty cycle and are able to come out of it, and how their experiences and

struggles are affected by the conditions of poverty. Studies have shown that even if the conditions predisposing people to poverty are the same, not all groups fall into the poverty trap (O'Brien and Penna 2007). In similar vein, poverty may be temporary, but there is high probability that uneducated, unemployed, differently abled, single women, and people belonging to *adivasi janajati*, *madhesi*, *dalit*, and linguistic and religious minorities have different chances of coming out of poverty. Certain disabilities and conditions push them back in the trap of poverty even when they are able to come out temporarily. The concept of social exclusion tries to understand such complex dynamics beyond class.

## **European Origin and Critique of the Idea**

The concept of social exclusion gradually adapted in Europe, after it was first coined in 1974 by a French high official, Rene Lenoir. Since the 1980s, the concept has become an important dimension guiding social policy making in that region. Although exclusion was initially viewed as a social problem linked to disability, substance abuse, and related deviations, it gradually included other social problems and the people affected. By the end of the 1980s, the major issues of exclusion came to be the long-term unemployment problem faced by the young and unskilled in Europe and the problems of poverty and displacement due to globalization and the closure or relocation of European industries elsewhere. In subsequent decades, social movements raised additional issues including discrimination based on race, language, and ethnicity, and the problems of immigrants, refugees, and students came to the forefront of the discussion of social inclusion. Moreover, the need to positively address the discrimination against the minority Roma community in Europe and, more broadly, ethnic, linguistic, and religious diversity effectively came under the purview of social exclusion (Silver 2010).

Although a range of social problems are addressed by the concept of social exclusion, different countries in Europe have focused on different aspects of social exclusion. For example, in Britain it is closely related to poverty, which is in line with the liberal paradigm of classical political philosophy associated with John Locke. The government of Tony Blair first established a Social Exclusion Unit under the Prime Minister's Office. The Unit extensively studied groups that suffered multidimensional marginalization such as

the homeless, people with physical and mental disabilities, and substance abusers, as well as problems such as unemployment and poverty. To assist in this study, the London School of Economics formed a Center of the Study of Social Exclusion. The Social Exclusion Unit was created in the Cabinet Office, and a social exclusion action plan was formulated (Room 1999).

In France, emphasis was on the problem of integration into the wider national society and lack of social solidarity. The concept of social solidarity comes from the French sociologist Emile Durkheim. In classical sociology, the concept of whole and parts was employed to analyze the European society. The integration of all members of a society through social institutions such as religion, state, education, family, and law was considered not only a necessity, but an inevitable stage in social development. This perspective had a substantial influence in the social policy making in many countries.

Talcott Parsons and later sociologists reformulated this theory by linking it with system analysis, which came to be known as neo-functionalism. The neo-functionalists focused on explicating how the social system operates and solidarity is maintained (O'Brien and Penna 2007). According to them, society consists of independent but interconnected subsystems. Examples are: the economic subsystem based on theory of competition; political subsystem based on theory of power; cultural subsystem based on theory of normative values; and social subsystem based on theory of mutual help and friendship. According to them, conditions of social exclusion arise with failure in the operation of the social system and in relations between the system and its subsystems.

The meeting of the European Council in 2000 in Lisbon, Portugal, can be considered as a milestone in the adoption of a social inclusion strategy in Europe. The meeting formulated a ten-year strategy known as the "Lisbon Agenda" for modernizing the European socio-economic system. In brief, the concept of social inclusion was originated and developed in the particular context of European society and history. The concept is based on a particular kind of social theory, and it has been utilized in a particular way for policy making in welfare states (European Commission 2009).

But social inclusion was also gradually adapted to other countries outside Europe after the International Labor Organization (ILO) and the United Nations (UN) incorporated the concept in their programming (Atkinson and Marlier 2010). Within the last three decades, the concept has spread to the countries of Asia, North and South America, and Africa. During this spread, the concept of social inclusion became broader and was refined and reformulated according to national situations.

The above discussion shows the concept of social exclusion encompasses and goes beyond poverty or economic deprivation. Therefore, economic affluence alone cannot lead to social inclusion. Exclusion and poverty rather have cause-and-effect relations; exclusion also gives durability to poverty. Social inclusion analysis, therefore, takes into account social relations and solidarity as important aspects.

Does this mean that success in achieving social solidarity signifies social inclusion? The answer has generally been in the affirmative, because in Europe, solidarity is an established concept that guides social policy-making. However, critiques of the theory of social solidarity suggest that there is a severe limitation to this view if solidarity is equated with assimilation or integration. Critics have pointed out that if social solidarity is interpreted as assimilation, it may lead to other conditions of exclusion.

Scholars have put forth two major criticisms (Bhabha 1994; Goldberg 2002; O'Brien and Penna 2007). The first is related to how the European model of social inclusion encourages assimilation. The functionalist as well as neoliberal concept of social solidarity is based on a particular interpretation of evolution of society. According to this interpretation, all types of political, cultural, and economic aspects evolves along a unilinear trajectory. In this evolutionary idea of social change, the world ultimately converges into a single system through a universal moral and political consciousness which anticipates that all cultural and other diversities will eventually disappear. The critics suggest that the imagination of a world without diversity, created by erasure of the aspirations of the groups making up a multicultural society and through assimilation of all cultures into a broader one of Europe or another powerful group, is impractical in the 21st century. This perspective of unilinear societal development and

assimilation is incongruous from a social inclusion point of view as marginal groups are expected to be included in the terms set by their powerful counterparts. Moreover, it does not help one understand the objective fact that idea of assimilation itself is used to legitimize discrimination based on social, cultural, gender, and ethnic identities and social backgrounds of individuals and groups.

A second criticism is caution about the limited relevance of the concept beyond Europe. The concept of social inclusion emerged in a particular period in European cultural and political history in which social solidarity in the form of social inclusion was being articulated. The strategy of social inclusion became necessary for Europe to present itself as a successful player in the free market system in competitive economic globalization at this particular juncture of history. Social inclusion, therefore, can best be viewed as product of new phase in the capitalist development of Europe, which also demands the reconfiguration of the nation-state. Also, the process of globalization necessitates social solidarity *between* societies and states. To the extent that this notion of international solidarity is European in origin, it can also be seen as an attempt by Europe to continue its imperial hegemony. Thus, according to these critics, social inclusion should be seen as a concept that developed in the context of European history along with the process of globalization of capitalism.

Why are people socially excluded? There have been various interpretations and analyses of this issue, synthesized and categorized into three models by Lou Wilson (2006). The first is related to social rights, distributive justice, and equality. This model has been used by liberal democratic and democratic socialist philosophies to formulate and implement state policies in Europe and elsewhere. According to this perspective, certain dominant groups control the state, and by abusing power, exercise illegitimate control over state resources, resulting in exclusion. Thus, to reduce social exclusion, the state should intervene and seize wealth and resources from the powerful groups and redistribute them to excluded groups.

According to the second model, groups with different social backgrounds, ethnicity, languages, etc., are always struggling to expand their power and influence. Such struggle is characteristic of modern society and an inevitable part of it. Because every

individual and group struggles to be included and to exclude others in this win-or-lose game, the losers gradually become a separate class, which, when stabilized, develops a particular lower class set of customs and practices. Thinkers who believe in individual freedom and free market competition propose this model of social exclusion as resulting from individual failures and free market failures.

The third model is that of social integration, which developed from the Durkheimian theory of social solidarity, and is the basis of the functionalist approach mentioned above. It regards apparatus of the state and components of the labor market system as aspects that need to be integrated, and regards social exclusion as resulting from failure of the state to integrate them. It argues that exclusion is the result of breakdown of relationships between society and individuals. When a citizen suffers from marginalization, he or she is excluded from basic social and political rights (Alexander 1985). Following this model, the European Commission emphasizes the idea that each citizen has the right to a certain basic standard of living and a right to participate in the major social and occupational institutions of the state. The attempt at establishing employment, housing, health care, education, etc., as citizenship rights is an instance of such a perspective.

The history and consciousness of exclusion in South Asia is older and different from that of Europe (Vitanen 2000; Sheth 2004; Bhattacharyya, Sarkar, et al. 2010). This difference is due to the social and cultural system of exclusion imposed by the Hindu caste system, which excludes certain groups from services, opportunities, and respect. The experience of exclusion in Nepal is more or less similar to that of South Asia, but it has some special characteristics. It is important to take into consideration specific aspects of the historical, political, and cultural context when discussing social exclusion in Nepal.

## **What is Social Inclusion?**

Social inclusion is generally considered the ending of social exclusion, but actually it is much more than that. While the concept of social exclusion is related to the problems prevalent in society, social inclusion is about participation of all members in the social processes and the nature of their relationships. On the

one hand, the condition of social exclusion should be eradicated; on the other, the condition of social inclusion is to be promoted. Merely eliminating the conditions of social exclusion does not create conditions of social inclusion, although that may be its major objective. Social inclusion demands something beyond the elimination of exclusion. What are these things?

First, the agenda of social inclusion demands an end of the status quo of inequality. Its objective is not only the creation of social solidarity in the sense of assimilation as discussed above: social solidarity may address social exclusion but it cannot necessarily change the unequal power relations present in the society. On the contrary, it is possible that coercive social harmony makes possible a continuation of inequality. Inclusion under the conditions of the dominant class in the name of social harmony and solidarity thus can legitimize existing exclusion. Inclusion aspires for solidarity based on equality with difference.

Second, social inclusion requires that social problems be resolved based on the principle of equality. It is not enough to declare the inclusion of the groups suffering racial discrimination, untouchability, and/or ethnic-linguistic discrimination. Special measures should be in place to change such unequal relations into equal ones. For example, affirmative action and reservations, as compensation for historical oppression by the dominant group, are essential components of inclusive policies. Additionally, it advocates social equality through enactment and implementation of non-discrimination laws.

Third, social inclusion does not mean assimilation into the mainstream of the dominant culture. Often in the name of inclusion, groups that are discriminated against on the basis of ethnicity, language, religion, etc., are forced to abandon their identity, lifestyle, and language. Ending exclusion by such means gives birth to another type of cultural exclusion. The essence of inclusion lies in respect of identity, sociability, and culture of other people.

Thus, in other words, social inclusion does not mean creation of a uniform society with the same contour and color without plurality. Instead, it regards plurality as the basis of human civilization both because plurality is a fact and it should be treated as an ideal.

According to Taylor (1992), acceptance of plurality means respect of people and cultures different from one's own. Respecting cultural difference on the principle of equality means guaranteeing the autonomous rights of decision-making with regard to reproduction of one's lifestyle, tradition, and culture.

Social inclusion is also linked with concept of social capital. Social capital is viewed as social networks for mutual support (Bourdieu 1985) and is an essential element of social inclusion. For societies with multiple cultures, the need for positive inter-cultural social networks and communication is even more essential. If the relations between individuals, between an individual and the society, and an individual and the state are not based on mutual help, social inclusion is impossible. In a broad sense, social inclusion means uniting the national and global society consisting of multicultural groups based on the principle of both autonomy and mutual cooperation.

In sum, social inclusion means escaping from the cycle of poverty. It is the permanent dismantling of the reproduction of poverty along with its manifold dimensions and causes to achieve a just and equal distribution. This could be captured by the concept of equitable social development of all. The second theme in social inclusion foregrounds the need for meaningful representation and participation. Freedom from poverty and meaningful participation in social activities enhance democracy and transparent communication. As a process, social inclusion is the capacity to participate in activities of social life and to be able to participate in making policies, programs, and laws that affects the lives of the people. The third theme in social inclusion is social bond and solidarity between individual and groups. For sustainable inter-groups solidarity, one, however, needs to avoid the policy of assimilation since the recognition of group identity is essential for meaningful sense of belonging.

## **Social Inclusion in Nepal**

Social inclusion entered into Nepali national debate through various mediums and resonates the conceptualization and application elsewhere as discussed above in the literature review. Social and political movements against exclusion by historically excluded groups, intellectual analyses of Nepali society (Gurung

1998; Pradhan 2006; Rawal 2008; Bhattachan 2009), and initiatives of the Nepali state and the international development community (DFID and the World Bank 2006) all contributed to deepening the discussion and lengthening the agenda of social inclusion in Nepal. Concept of social inclusion also has been extensively discussed in the context of new constitution making in Nepal (Oommen 2010; Tamang 2012). The concept of social inclusion has been instrumental in bringing the different excluded groups and the state into constructive dialogue in multiple ways. The adoption of the agenda of social inclusion has contributed to ending the decade-long violent conflict in the country in which more than 16,000 people died. It also heralded the government's commitment to respect the social, economic, cultural, and political rights of the excluded communities. The concept has thus proved to be tool for peace and conflict resolution as well as a tool for development of minority rights.

The government of Nepal introduced social inclusion as one of the four pillars of the tenth Five Year Plan, also known as Poverty Reduction Strategy in 2003. The concept was politically endorsed in 2006 in the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) between the Nepal Communist Party (Maoist) and seven political parties to end the political conflict and draft a new constitution through elected representatives. The Interim Constitution 2007, subsequently promulgated, reflects further work on institutionalizing the concept, and states in Article 33 (d) that the state shall have responsibility "to carry out an inclusive, democratic and progressive restructuring of the State by eliminating its existing form of centralized and unitary structure in order to address the problems related to women, Dalits, Indigenous Nationalities [Adivasi Janajati], Madhesis, oppressed and minority communities and other disadvantaged groups, by eliminating class, caste, language, gender, cultural, religious and regional discrimination."

The first Constituent Assembly (CA), which worked for four years from 2008 to 2012 on drafting a new constitution, likewise placed significant emphasis on inclusion. *Social inclusion* is one of the key terms that appear in draft reports submitted by all eleven CA Committees. A total of more than 60 entries can be detected in the reports and recommendation submitted by various CA committees. Echoing conceptualization of social inclusion in terms of social bond consisting of social cohesion emerging out of meaningful

participation and representation, the CA reports deploys the concept to envision the “inclusive state,” “inclusive democracy,” and “inclusive rule” itself. For example, the Constitutional Committee report recommended, "Committing ourselves to build the foundation of socialism while adopting democratic norms and values including a system of people's competitive multiparty democratic proportionate inclusive rule" to be included in the preamble.

Recommendations by CA Committees reflect the larger articulation on nature and dynamics of social exclusion in Nepal. Like in other countries, the social exclusion in Nepal is multidimensional. Different social groups in Nepal experience single to multiple barriers for inclusion. Barriers to inclusion include ethnic, caste gender, linguistic, religious, location, untouchability, disability, and class based exclusion. Due to the historical roots of classification of social groups in caste hierarchy and associated differential privileges accorded by the state, caste and ethnicity based exclusion is of greatest severity in Nepal. The groups belonging to former untouchable caste groups and indigenous people have higher level of exclusion based on caste and ethnic identity. Similarly, these groups who do not share the dominant culture, language, and religion often suffer from linguistic and religion-based exclusion in terms of access to information and participation in the public life. For example, many of the groups especially indigenous groups and people living in tarai-madhes are excluded due to their lack of access to information in their native tongue. Exclusion based on untouchability particularly is damaging for the group identified as *dalit*. Women from across all groups face gender based discrimination in different degree and nature. The same is also true for location and class as factors causing exclusion across the groups. Multidimensionality of exclusion is also reflected in intersectionality of factors affecting different groups. For example, for a woman belonging to a *dalit* community living in the region of tarai-madhes, it is likely that she would be excluded on more than six grounds, including language, location, caste identity, religion, and untouchability, besides discrimination faced as being a woman. The groups who are excluded in various social indicators also have higher rates of poverty and dispossession. As discussed in the previous review, the poverty for these groups also operates as cause for exclusion and vice versa.

Social stratification and hierarchy has traditionally guided the relationship between different groups in Nepal. The tendency to maintain hierarchy and caste status that is entrenched among certain sections of the population, despite the interdependence between groups, has caused the persistence of exclusion of minority caste and ethnic groups in participation and representation in the public sphere. With such active motivated excluder, inclusion becomes a challenge that has caused rupture in social bonds and led to political conflict. This shows that exclusion in Nepal, as discussed earlier, can be taken as both process and relation.

In order to address social exclusion in Nepal, a number of conceptualizations and initiatives have been underway in the country. These conceptualizations of inclusion are analogous to the broader concepts articulated elsewhere; there are however some specific emphasis based on Nepal's socio-historical context. The first and overwhelming emphasis one finds in Nepal is on the "representation and participation" of the citizens in all the entities of the state. The inclusion here relates to the right to participate in decision-making and explicitly means presence/representation of people from different social backgrounds in political life, institutions of governance, public institutions, as well as national and societal processes. The second emphasis is on the national aim of an equitable society where economic equality, prosperity, and social justice prevail. The term *inclusion* in this context would translate into human development for all in terms of inclusive access to education, health, employment, and women's empowerment, among other resources. The third dimension of the recommendation refers to recognition of diverse cultures and group identities. I would add that implicit to this is aspiration of inter-group solidarity based on equal respect and the overall commitment to non-discrimination.

Based upon this, three interrelated issues would be crucial for understanding social inclusion in Nepal. The first issue is inclusive economic growth and equal social development as necessary preconditions for social inclusion. Second, social inclusion entails representation and participation of the different caste and ethnic groups in public institutions and decision-making. And the third emphasis would be the recognition of group identity and inter-group solidarity. In the following section, I offer discussion on why the first three agendas are crucial in the research for promoting social inclusion in Nepal.

## Inclusive Economic Growth and Equal Human Wellbeing

Poverty is the biggest challenge related to social inclusion in Nepal. Although there has been economic growth, there is still poverty concentrated in certain groups and regions. The available data shows that poverty is concentrated among *dalit*, *adivasi*, *janajati*, muslim, *madhesi*, and the remote rural areas. For some caste and ethnic groups, poverty has even increased during the last decade. The National Living Standard Survey, for example, has shown that there has been increased inequality despite economic growth in the country. Research studies have indicated that such inequalities reduce economic growth and produce far-reaching adverse effects on social relations. In a region or society where poverty is prevalent, illiteracy, unemployment, ill health, and crime are likely to be rampant. Moreover, the studies have demonstrated that laws, policies, perspectives, as well as economic and educational opportunities made available, are all responsible for such inequality, and they in turn have disturbed social relations.

Many scholars have reanalyzed the 2001 census and other data for a comparative picture of different caste and ethnic groups. Among them, the study conducted by DFID and WB in 2005 extensively studied the state of social exclusion (DFID and the World Bank 2006). Building on this, a study conducted by Bennett and Parajuli (Bennett and Prajuli 2011) has made a comparative analysis of more than 80 different caste/ethnic groups of Nepal using multidimensional exclusion measures. This study used eight indicators: for measuring economic status, 1) per capita consumption; for assessing health and nutrition status, 2) age and height of children, 3) availability of drinking water, and 4) availability of toilets; for educational status, 5) school attendance of children aged 6 to 13 and number of children aged 14 to 20 who have passed primary education, 7) women's literacy in the family; and for assessing influence and access, 8) representation as member in parliament, administrators, managers, and technical experts. According to these indicators, among all the caste/ethnic groups, Musahar and Dom among tarai *dalits* and Kusunda, Raji, Raute, and Chepang among hill *janajati* appeared at the most excluded categories and hill Bahuns and Newars figure as the most included ones.

The reanalysis of the data from the 2001 census, National Living Standard Survey (NLSS 2004), and Nepal Demographic and Health Survey (NDHS 2006) shows a similar situation. These studies help us understand not only the extent of poverty prevalent among caste/ethnic groups but also the poverty level of groups within each group. For example, according to NLSS 2003/2004, average per capita income of bahun-chhetri was Rs. 18,400, whereas *adivasi janajati* had income of Rs. 13,300. Similarly, the literacy rate of bahun-chhetri was 72.3 percent, whereas that of *adivasi janajati* was at 48.8 percent. As shown in the table below, 18 percent of bahun-chhetri and 14 percent of *newars* were below poverty line. In contrast to this situation, 46 percent of *dalits*, 44 percent of hill *janajatis*, and 41 percent of muslims were under the poverty line (CBS, World Bank et al. 2006). The table below presents the percentage of poverty within various ethnic/caste groups and their ratio to total poverty.

### Poverty in Terms of Caste/Ethnicity

Social group		Percent of Poverty	Ratio of Poverty
Caste Group	Bahun-Chhetri	18.4	15.7
	Other Madhesi groups	21.3	1.9
	Dalit	45.5	10.9
Adivasi Janajati	Newar	14	3.4
	Hill Janajati	44	27.8
	Terai Janajati	35.4	9.2
Muslim	Muslim	41.3	8.7
Other minorities	Other minorities	31.3	22.3
Nepal		30.8	100

Source : CBS, World Bank and ADB, 2006

This study also shows that Nepal's overall poverty rate has decreased from 41 percent in 1995/96 to 31 percent in 2003/04. But unfortunately, poverty did not decrease equally for all groups. For example, during this period, the poverty of hill brahman-chhetris decreased by 46 percent, while the decrease was only 6% for muslim and 10% for *adivasi janajatis*. Perhaps as a consequence of such disparities in poverty reduction rates, there

was an alarming rise of inequality amidst economic growth. This trend shows that if state policies remain as they exist now, it will require about a decade for newar and bahun-chhetri communities to end poverty, but even half a century would be inadequate to eliminate the grinding poverty of *dalits*, *adivasi janajati* and other minorities.

With introduction of concept of social inclusion, our understanding of poverty has expanded in recent years, and as mentioned, it is common now to point to its multidimensionality. Poverty is expressed in low education, poor health, little social capital, organization, and empowerment, among other dimensions. Moreover, social inclusion demands that the persistence and causes of such poverty be understood in the specific social situation of each caste and ethnic group. This contextualization is needed because the causes of poverty are often significantly different for people belonging to different social groups. For example, poverty is obviously a class issue for people belonging to bahun-chhetri community and largely resulted from inefficiency of poverty reduction measures and failure of service delivery offered by the state. But for *adivasi janajati*, *dalit*, *madhesi*, and other minorities, the causes transcend the inefficiency of state programs. Poverty for these groups are perpetuated due to exclusion based on ethnic, linguistic, cultural, and religious identities. Language barriers, social networks and cultural identity bar them from accessing services even when they are available. For them, social exclusion, functions as a cause of poverty.

Research on historical dimension of existing poverty also is relevant for understanding nature of present social inclusion. For example, the poverty of *adivasi janajati* is also attributed to the history of dispossession of their land by powerful sections of society. Besides the dispossession of land and resources, they were subjected to labor servitude in the past. The impact of discriminatory law based on caste hierarchy that legalize discriminatory privileges to higher caste groups have a lingering effect. Although different social groups in Nepal have specific kinds of relationship with the state, *adivasi janajati*, *dalits*, *madhesi* and other minorities had a common experience of oppression and exploitation. Thus, while analyzing their present poverty, the history of their dispossession, forced labor, and slavery should not be forgotten (Holmberg, March, et al. 1999; Regmi 1999).

## Inclusion in Representation and Participation

The second important research agenda of inclusion in Nepal is related to representation and participation in public institutions and decision-making processes. The issue of proportional representation was raised by social and political movements in Nepal even earlier than the issue of poverty. For two centuries (beginning from 1769 when Prithvi Narayan Shah began territorial expansion to the end of Rana regime in middle of 20<sup>th</sup> century) Chhetri and Thakuris ruled the country in a feudalist and authoritarian way. The regime was supported by certain families of Brahmins acting as royal priests, judges, landlords, clerks, advisors, and scribes. At the local level, dominant families belonging to *adivasi janajatis* were also appointed as local commissioners. However, they were classified as *praja* (subjects) and were rarely part of the national and regional positions of power. Most *dalits* were full-time agricultural laborers, and they depended on technical skills such as iron-work, leather-work, and tailoring. The very low representation of marginalized peoples in the central state institutions is evident in the list of signatories to the Muluki Ain of 1854. Among the signatories, 78 percent were hill Brahman-Chhetri-Thakuri and 15 percent were high-caste Newars (Gurung 2003). Interestingly, the situation of political exclusion even after introduction of democracy in 1950 remained virtually identical to that of 19th century Nepal.

Early in 2000, Govinda Neupane in *Ethnic Question in Nepal: Social Structure and Possibility of Cooperation* (2000) brought forth a picture of ethnic representation in a new way. The book revealed the status of social inclusion in Nepal by portraying ethnic representation in political parties, executive, legislative, and judiciary, along with representation in different constituent bodies, bureaucracy, civil society, and private sector. As is clear from the following table, *adivasi janajati*, *dalit*, *madhesi*, and other minorities are largely excluded from these arenas due to several reasons. The table below shows the state of representation in the country:

Caste/Ethnicity Index of participation in Governance, 1999

Institutions	Bahun/Chhetri				Newar				Janajati				Madhesi				Hill Daali				Others				Total	
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
Judiciary	181	77	32	14	4	1.7	18	7.7																		235
Constitutional bodies/Commissions	14	56	6	24	2	8	3	12																		25
Cabinet	20	62.5	3	9.4	4	13	5	15.6																		32
Public Administration	159	60	20	7.6	36	14	46	17.4	4	1.5																265
Legislature	190	77.6	43	18	3	1.2	9	3.7																		245
Political party leaders	97	58.8	18	11	25	15	26	17.8																		165
Local government	106	55.5	30	16	23	12	31	16.2																		191
Industry/commerce	7	16.7	20	48	0	0	15	35.7																		42
Education sector	75	77.3	11	11	2	2.1	7	7.2	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	97	
Cultural Organizations	85	69.1	22	18	6	4.9	0	0																		123
Science and Technology	36	58	18	29	2	3.2	6	9.7																		62
Civil Society	41	75.9	8	15	1	1.9	4	7.4																		54
Total	1011	66.5	231	15	108	7.1	170	11.2	5	0.3	1	0													1520	
Percentage		66.5		15		7.1		11.2		0.3	1	0														
% of Nepal's Population	31.6	5.6		22.2		30.9		8.7		0.1																100
Difference %	34.9	9.6		-15.1		-19.7		-8.4		-1																

Source: Adapted from Neupane, 2000:82

Figures on representation in parliament between 1991-1999 corroborate the above picture. For example, results of four elections after establishment of multiparty democracy in 1990 showed that hill high-castes remained dominant in the parliament. The people belonging to Bahun and Chhetri groups were dominant with 62 percent representation in the 1991 election, 70 percent in the 1994 election, 65 percent in the 1999 election, and 56 percent in the 2008 election. There were no *dalit* representatives in the first two parliaments during this period. However, in the 2008 constituent assembly election, inclusion of some excluded groups was to a greater extent successful due to the proportionate representation and reservation system introduced in 2007. The representation of *dalits* rises up to eight percent from virtually none and of *adivasi janajati* to 37 percent in the constituent assembly 2008. Thirty-one ethnic groups were successful in sending their representatives to the parliament for the first time (Vollan 2010). This indicates that appropriate state policies can revert the existing exclusion toward building an inclusive society.

Although analysis of representation by broader subgroups shows some progress, individual caste and ethnic groups who were being marginalized remain unrepresented or under-represented. For example, Bahun and Thakuri among hill caste group; Tarai Brahman, Yadav, Kayastha, Baniya, Rajput, and Koiri among *madhesi* group; and Newar, Gurung, Limbu, Rai, Sherpa and Thakali among *adivasi janajati* have representation higher than their population. The groups such as Magar, Tharu, and Tamang, who have sizable populations, have substantially lower proportion of representation compared to their population size. Although the representation of Bahun-Chhetri as a combined group is high, when we break down by specific caste groups, the trend in last four elections shows that representation of Chhetri is in decline. For example, the total population of Chhetri is 16%, whereas their representation in the constituent assembly 2008 is only at nine percent. The Chhetri representation was 9.8%, 11.2%, and 12.2% respectively in 1991, 1994, and 1999 parliament (Lawoti 2011). With gradual ending of feudalism and emergence of Westminster-style parliamentary democracy, even Chhetris seem to lag behind in political representation.

Analysis of inclusion in bureaucracy, judiciary, media, NGOs, and trade and industry shows similar disparity. Since the introduction

Comparative number of existing officer level civil servants (excluding Health Service)

SN	Level (Class)	2006		2012				Others	Dalit	Madhesi	Total
		Janajati	Madhesi	Dalit	Others	Janajati	Madhesi				
1	Special	8 (7)	0	0	30	38	3	2	0	49	54
2	First	71 (68)	30	3	293	397	75 (58)	50 (1)	1	387	513
3	Second	444 (374)	237	11	1441	2136	346	36	12	2132	2526
4	Third	893 (703)	538	60	4034	5525	1169 (620)	980 (40)	104	7625	9878
	Total	1416	805	74	5801	8096	1592	1066	117	10193	12971
	Percent	17.49	9.94	0.91	71.65	100.00	12.27	8.22	0.90	78.58	100

Source: Awasthi and Adhikary, 2012

NB: The number of Newar and muslim under *janajati* and *madhesi* communities is indicated in bracket respectively.

of reservation policy in civil service in 2007, some improvement was expected. Available data however, shows a contrary result and discouraging trend in the inclusion of the excluded groups in the civil service. As the study by Awasthi and Adhikary (2012) demonstrates, the proportion of *janajati* and *madhesi* in existing officer level civil servants has decreased. For example, *janajati* representation has dropped to 12.27% in 2012 from 17. 49% in 2006 and *madhesi* representation decreased to 8.22% in 2012 from 9.94 in 2006.

The situation of representation in civil society and media is not very different. A study carried out by Parajuli and Gautam (2008) has shown that 80 percent of people involved in media are from Bahun-Chhetri community, and only 15 percent are Newars and other *adivasi janajatis*. The social composition of 36-member executive committee of Nepal NGO Federation- federation of about 22,000 NGOs in Nepal ([www.ngofederation.org](http://www.ngofederation.org) accessed 12/1/2-14) shows that about 58 percent of members of executive committee are from Bahun-Chhetri group with negligible proportion of *dalit* and *madhesi* with 5.5% and 2.7% respectively. Representation of *adivasi janajati* and women however appears to have increased to about 33% for each. Obviously, in the absence of meaningful reservation in higher education, the number of professionals, such as advocates, professors, teachers, doctors, engineers, and NGO workers from the excluded groups will remain low due to their limited access to education.

Current situation of dominance by certain groups in organs of the state, the civil society and professional sector has become a source of severe discontent among the historically excluded groups and they often link this situation with a “dimension of internal colonization.” In-depth research on the causes and dynamics of such differential outcomes in representation is yet to be made. The argument that merit-based competition and selection are the underlying causes of such outcome necessary for selection of qualified individuals inadequately explains the situation. It would be prejudiced and even racist to suggest that certain groups are industrious, laborious, and hardworking by nature or are genetically clever. It would be equally irrational and unfair to suggest that a particular group lagged behind because they were naturally simplistic, lazy, drunkard, and less able.

If research is necessary for nuanced understanding of dynamics of exclusion in representation, it is also important for devising appropriate policies for inclusion. Now that there is a general agreement emerging that all public institutions should be inclusive and should reflect the plurality of the Nepali society and provide mechanisms to compensate the historically oppressed and discriminated groups such as *adivasi janajati*, *dalit*, and other minorities, there is a need to articulate this in a form that is conducive to social solidarity and stronger bonds. Policies and programs such as affirmative action and reservations based on sound research are critical in this regard.

## **Recognition of Group Identity and Inter-Group Solidarity**

Another important aspect of understanding social inclusion in Nepal is the recognition and respect of group identities. The movement for ending exclusion based on ethnicity, language, religion, and identity, and the demand for social inclusion based on equal dignity of all social groups has been established as a powerful part of democratic movement in Nepal. The agenda of recognizing collective identities with associated language, tradition, and customs has been one of the central elements in this articulation. The need for restructuring the state and radical transformation of its values came in forefront due largely to the failure of the state of Nepal to recognize and accommodate diversity.

Nepal has practiced three approaches to managing and recognizing group identities. The first is the Hindu caste hierarchical system of Muluki Ain of 1854 of the Rana period. It classified the Hindu caste groups and the non-Hindu cultural and religious communities into a single hierarchy of caste system characterized by the notion of purity and impurity (Pfaff-Czarnecka 1997). This system considered it legal, and thus natural, for those at the higher levels of caste hierarchy to have higher privilege. Caste hierarchy is often endorsed by Hindu religious philosophy and emphasizes interdependence between groups in often asymmetrical exchange. I call these practices *exclusionary inclusion*. Such processes put in motion in South Asia and Nepal have fostered the process of imitation of higher caste ethos famously referred to as “Sanskritization” for upward social mobility (Srinivas 1972; Sharma 1977). On the other side, the situation that pressurized

the groups other than higher caste to adopt higher caste customs for upward social mobility created a considerable resentment among subordinated groups (Bista 1993).

The second approach is the assimilation of identity that was practiced by the Panchayat system. Similar to other post colonial states, the Nepali state during this period encouraged all other groups to abandon their original tradition and identity and assimilate into the language, religion, culture, and tradition of the hill high caste group. This approach was backed up by the classical model of national unity situated around a single language, dress, religion, and culture. In Nepal, as the *panchayat* system was based on feudalist, authoritarian Hindu kingship, it also demanded unconditional devotion or reverence to the Shah hereditary kings and their crown (Burghart 1984). Such assimilationist line of nation building not only misrecognized various other identities, but also despised and persecuted them by branding them secessionists and antinational elements. Such perspective of viewing identity can be termed *assimilationist inclusion* in Nepali context.

All political movements in Nepal from anti-Rana to anti-Panchayat movement leading to 1990 movement had articulated agenda of ethnic/caste equality. The political change of 1990 was a partial success as it was able to redefine Nepal as a multilingual, multiethnic nation-state for the first time (Tamang 2008). This conception of identity adopted by the state after reinstitution of multiparty democracy in 1990 can be termed multicultural inclusion. This is the third approach in which plurality recognized and inclusion is with identity. During this period, Nepal made some notable achievements. For example, in 2001 the parliament officially recognized the adivasi janajati identity by classifying 59 groups as *adivasi janajati* through the National Foundation for Development of Indigenous Nationalities Act. Similarly, 26 groups which had been suffering from caste discrimination and untouchability were identified as dalits through formation of a Dalit Commission. Similarly, the state in recent years also took initiative to form bodies to address the issues of Muslims and groups referred to as Other Backward Classes (OBCs).

The recognition of the diversity and exclusion however remained a limited and even contradictory one. Nepal continued its false identity as the only Hindu kingdom of the world in the 1990

constitution, and it discriminated other languages by defining the Khas Nepali language as the language of official use in government offices (Gellner 2002). *Adivasi janajiti* who aspired for preservation and promotion of their culture, language and spirituality were not able to do so as freely as they wished. Nor were the promises of ending untouchability, signed as legislation several times, implemented in practice.

Inability to revert the past state policies of non-recognition or assimilation of cultural diversity had a damaging impact on indigenous and other minority communities. Due to such policies, not only did their language and culture come to the verge of extinction, but also they ended up in a situation of persistent poverty. The new generation is compelled to grow and live viewing their own culture and history as inferior to the dominant ethos and forced to assimilate for a better future. Such situation in fact brewed a strong sense of resistance and even rebellion. The discontents are reflected in the political movements in Nepal of which violent political conflict between the state and Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist) is one example.

Nepal has taken important steps toward addressing the above and move toward *multicultural inclusion*. The respect of identities is illustrated by the state policies of granting equal status to all languages of the country, provision of primary education in mother tongue through multilingual policy and preservation of nearly extinct languages. Adoption of secularism by Interim Constitution 2007 is another milestone in this regard. Using cultural symbols of all groups in national life and observing public holidays on major festivals of various ethnic groups can be seen as symbolic recognition by the state of ethnic identities. Now it is time to rewrite the history that include the history of diverse people and preserve it as national heritage according to the principle of social inclusion. It is apparent from the past that the perspective to view culture and accommodate diversity is central to identity and therefore peoples' feeling of being excluded and included in the national life and social processes. Research of a serious nature is needed not only to better understand the country's diversity, but also to find ways of accommodating diversity in a manner that fosters social solidarity and national unity.

## Conclusion

Although originating in Europe, the concept of social inclusion has spread to several countries during the last three decades. Social inclusion also took up different forms in different countries according to each country's contextual specificities. Like other South Asian countries, there has been a deeper and distinct type of social exclusion in Nepal compared to Europe. In order to address this situation, Nepal has classified *adivasi janajati, dalit, madhesi*, minorities, and muslim societies as socially excluded groups and initiated policy revisions for facilitating social inclusion. Such call by the state also responds to social and political movements in Nepal and public and intellectual debates for democratization of the country. The first steps towards social inclusion is identification of excluded groups, determination to end their exclusion, and affirmative policies for their inclusion. Nepal seems to have made encouraging progress in this regard with some major challenges.

There are three aspects which need to be addressed for social inclusion in Nepal. The first is equitable development. Irrespective of caste and ethnic belonging, every individual is to be ensured dignified living. The second is representation. Proportional representation, ideally proportionate to population of each community, of all caste and ethnic groups in the state apparatus and public institutions is paramount in promoting social inclusion in Nepal. The third relates to recognition of groups identities and inter-group solidarity. The assimilation runs contrary to social inclusion. The three components are inherently related to agenda of social inclusion in Nepal and thus for the research. I believe that aim of social inclusion in the Nepali context is to achieve equitable human wellbeing, proportionate representation in public entities, and a just social bond through respect for solidarity between diverse social identities, and autonomy of the people to participate fully in the life of our national society.

Further, the issue of social inclusion is about human relations based on mutual respect. It is also an issue of human existence. Dignity or absence of it affects the quality of human life. That is why it has become an issue of primary interest the world over. The concept of social inclusion assumes that the current unequal social relations are human made and thus can be changed. Access of all to sociality is important both for affective and practical reasons. When

people feel that their dignity is respected, equality and solidarity among the members of a society are deepened. Similarly, education and material affluence encourages people to be harmonious and respectful to members of another society (Honneth 1996; Chandhoke 1999). The initiation toward ending social exclusion along with acknowledging strengths and weaknesses of the past is a natural process for a welfare state. Informed research can contribute to this agenda in significant ways.

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# Perspectives on Multiple Dimensions and Intersections in Social Inclusion<sup>1</sup>

Meeta S. Pradhan, PhD

## Introduction

The public discourses and changes in legislation on social exclusion and discrimination based on ascribed statuses surfaced openly in Nepal after the political changes in 1990 with the restoration of democracy (the “First People’s Movement”) and the declaration of Nepal as a multi-ethnic and multilingual state. This agenda continued to rise to prominence with the initiation of political unrest in the mid-1990s and became well recognized and established since 2006 after the Second People’s Movement (*Jana Andolan II*). Since then the discourse on social inclusion has been focused on equal rights, increased representation, affirmative action, and on the recognition of group rights, and has been tied closely to the proposed federal system of governance. Concomitantly the censuses of 2001 and 2011 have documented the presence of 103 and 125 different caste and ethnic groups, respectively, in the country. The wealth of such diversity needs to be better understood, not just in terms of knowledge building in terms of the socio-cultural values, norms, and traditions, but also the variances in social, economic, and political outcomes and the structural barriers that many of these groups face in improving their life conditions and outcomes. This is a critical start for appropriate policy and programs to be designed and implemented in the coming years.

The key objective of this paper is to provide some insights on social inclusion, particularly in relation to its multiple dimensions and the need for an intersectional analytical approach during the design, data collection, and analysis of the “Social Inclusion

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<sup>1</sup> This paper was prepared to contribute towards the discussions on the methodology of the study entitled “Social Inclusion Atlas and Ethnographic Profile (SIAEP)” carried out by the Department of Sociology/Anthropology, Tribhuvan University, and commissioned by the Social Inclusion Research Fund (SIRF), with financial assistance from the Royal Norwegian Embassy in Nepal. I would like to thank the reviewers whose feedback has helped to improve the paper.

Atlas and Ethnographic Profile" (SIAEP) study. There are three key issues that I believe are important to keep in mind that this paper will focus on. They are, first, a discussion on the element of the dualism embedded within the concepts of inclusion/exclusion; secondly, a discussion on the multiple dimensions of inclusion and exclusion; and thirdly, a brief discussion on the case for a need for an analytic framework that takes into consideration an intersectional perspective during the SIAEP study. The paper starts with a brief presentation of the social structure of Nepali society in relation to principles of inclusion and exclusion. It then goes on to discuss the three issues mentioned and then concludes with a few questions that will potentially help the research team in the planning of the study.

## **The Nepal Context**

In the socio-political history of Nepal there have been two important manifestations of the social structure that has been the basis of stratification, hierarchy, and discrimination – namely, caste and gender. The enduring nature of the caste system in Nepal and India, as an institution, is evident by its persistence despite changing social, legal, and economic conditions, though in attenuated forms (Grusky and Ku 2008: 27). Unlike the system in India, the caste system in Nepal is a mix of both a ritualistic ordering of groups of individuals as well as a “socially created system of social stratification established and sanctioned by secular power” (Greenwold 1975: 74). In Nepal, non-Hindu ethnic and indigenous categories of people were incorporated into a modified caste hierarchy where socially, culturally and linguistically distinct ethnic and indigenous categories of people (the *janajati*) were subsumed within this structure based on their degree of similarity and differences with the cultural practices of the “upper caste” Nepali-speaking Hindus (Höfer 1979)<sup>2</sup> and the system was legalized through the promulgation of the first National Code (*Muluki Ain*) in late 1854.

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2 The five tiers of the adapted caste hierarchy in Nepal are: (i) the *tagadharis* (the wearers of the sacred thread), (ii) the *namasinya matwali* (non-enslaveable alcohol drinkers), (iii) the *masinya matwali* (the enslaveable alcohol drinkers), (iv) the *pani chalne choi chito halnu naparne* (impure but touchable castes), and (v) *pani nachalne choi chito halnuparne* (the impure and untouchable castes) (Höfer 1979).

Among Hindus, patriarchal and patrilineal systems marked by consistent paternalistic behavior towards women are intertwined with religious ideologies that prescribe strict conventions, norms, and behaviors. But the legal adaptation of the caste system that integrated all non-Hindu ethnic groups also promoted restrictions in the roles and status of women, even among the relatively more egalitarian janajati groups (Acharya and Bennett 1981; Pradhan 2002). Studies of ethnic groups from the mid and high hills such as the Sherpa, Thakali, Magar, Tamang, and Limbu have shown the relatively more egalitarian roles and autonomous positions of women in terms of household decision making, mobility outside of the home and community, and roles in the family business and marketing (Jones and Jones 1976; Acharya and Bennett 1981; Molnar 1981; Watkins 1996; March 2002). Despite this Nepali women in general have continued to be discriminated against and polarized gender roles and attitudes continue to permeate life in Nepal, intersecting with caste and ethnic identities. Moreover, discrimination of the “third gender” citizens – the lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans-sexual, and inter-sexual (LGBTI) population – has only very slowly been coming into the discourse of “gender discrimination” within the country. Despite the important measures taken at the policy level by the government and the Supreme Court to recognize the equal rights of the LGBTI population, their continued discrimination and exclusion stems from the social and cultural norms that have defined the categories of sex and sexual identities (Federica Moscati & Phuyal 2009).

The post 1990 period in Nepal heralded a rise in discourses on identity politics (Lawoti 2010), particularly those based on caste, ethnicity, and region, in stark contrast to the earlier national agenda of forging a united state identity vis a vis Nepal’s powerful neighbors and as a measure of political and cultural dominance of the upper caste elites. Caste, ethnicity, and region based political parties, organizations, and federations proliferated nationally (Lawoti and Guneratne 2010). Additionally the decade between 1996 and 2006, the time period of the Maoist insurgency, aimed at unseating the constitutional monarchy and installing a democratic republic, caused severe political, economic, and social instability throughout the country. The Maoists maintained an ideological commitment to class, caste, and gender equality, though there was a clear gap between rhetoric and practice (Pettigrew and Shneiderman 2004). Yet, high levels of participation of young

women in the “People’s War” was one of the most reported aspects of the conflict, and striking photos of young, gun toting guerrilla women in unprecedented, highly unconventional roles often made the headlines during these years (*ibid*).<sup>3</sup> Additionally the Maoists are credited with pushing the ethnic agenda as well as the dalits’ agenda, highlighting the political, economic, social, and cultural exclusion of these categories of people.

Legislative changes and national debates also thrust issues of women’s rights and the exclusion of *dalits* into the forefront during this period. The Nepal Citizenship Act 2006 provided the right of any individual whose mother or father is a Nepali citizen to gain citizenship, as opposed to the prior requirement of providing proof of father’s citizenship. Secondly, the country also followed the international trend towards liberalization of abortion laws in support of women’s reproductive rights. In 2000 the National Dalit Commission, and in 2002 the National Women’s Commission, were formed to promote and protect the rights of *dalits* and women heralding positive institutional change<sup>4</sup>.

The post *Jana Andolan II* period has also seen a sharp rise in the demand for state recognition of group rights based on ethnicity and region, especially by the *madhesi* and the *janajati* population in the country, particularly in the context of the proposed federal system of governance. The contested position on the call for “ethnic federalism” by these groups left the previous Constitutional Assembly in a state of non-action even after four years.

## **Social Exclusion and Social Inclusion**

The intention of this paper is not to review the extensive literature on social exclusion (or social inclusion) in terms of its history, the evolution of the concept, and approaches of social exclusion, particularly in the social sciences and social policy literature. Scholars have succinctly pulled together a preliminary

<sup>3</sup> Refer to Pettigrew and Schneiderman (2004) for a discussion on the contrasting narratives of agency and victimization of women during the Maoist movement in Nepal, and the new experiences for Nepali women of all caste, ethnic, class, and regional backgrounds that have introduced them to “potentially transformative possibilities.”

<sup>4</sup> Subsequently, both commissions have been near defunct due to continued political manipulation, limited power, and a lack of adequate resources.

review of the concept and how the terms and concepts can be understood. Pradhan (2006) contextualizes this particularly in the Nepali context. I believe it is important to briefly revisit the concept of *social exclusion* and *social inclusion* before moving on to a discussion on the dualism inherent in the manner in which most often the concepts of social exclusion and inclusion have been used.

Within the social policy discourse, *social exclusion* focuses on how formal and informal institutions and practices work to disconnect groups and individuals from social relations and create barriers to their ability to fully participate in the activities that would be normal and accessible for other groups in the same community (Power and Wilson 2000; Bennett 2008). Scholars have examined social exclusion from both an individual and group perspective, where there is “disadvantage, alienation and lack of freedom” for certain groups relative to others (Gore and Figueiredo 1997). Exclusion of individuals or groups can be based on several dimensions or a multiplicity of disadvantages—class, caste, ethnicity, race, gender, age, religion, political representation, physical abilities, or even based on geographic locations such as rural or urban areas, as well as areas that are remote with very difficult accessibility (Sen 1992; Jordan 1996; Hills et al. 2002). The overlap and reinforcement of economic, social, religious and political categories of exclusion over decades result in “hard core” excluded groups, such as low caste, indigenous, and marginal ethnic and tribal groups, for instance, in South Asia (Kabeer 2000). Thus Kabeer contends that social exclusion reflects the social and cultural devaluation of people based on “who they are” (or rather who they are *perceived* to be) as well as “where they are” (Kabeer 2000, 2006).

*Social inclusion*, on the other hand, remains less discussed theoretically in the literature probably due to the manner in which the two terms have been considered as obverse of each other, like the two sides of a coin (Pradhan 2006). In the social policy literature (particularly in Europe and Australia), it is most often used in reference to overcoming the condition of social exclusion or integration into the mainstream society<sup>5</sup>. Thus it has also been defined in relation to social exclusion; where, “social exclusion is defined as the opposite of social integration, mirroring the

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5 Refer to Wilson (2006) for example.

perceived importance of being part of society, of being ‘included’” (de Haan n.d: 26). “Inclusion” has also often been associated with integration and assimilation; these are likely to be problematic if the underlying conditions, structures, and institutions remain the same.

The Gender and Social Exclusion Assessment (GSEA) of the World Bank (WB) and Department for International Development (DFID) in Nepal defines social inclusion as “the removal of institutional barriers and the enhancement of incentives to increase the access of diverse individuals and groups to development opportunities” (World Bank and DFID 2006). The term *social inclusion* has been discussed more widely in the context of Nepal particularly after the political changes in 1990. Currently social inclusion has become mainstreamed within the National Planning Commission of Nepal (NPC), the World Bank, other bilateral donors, and the Social Inclusion Research Fund (SIRF) Secretariat in Nepal, although each agency uses the term for different purposes.

### **Unpacking the Dualisms**

As mentioned earlier, social exclusion and inclusion are often used as obverse terms, or as binary opposites—where one is the opposite of the other. There is an element of dualism embedded within the concepts of inclusion and exclusion. There are two issues that need to be considered here. Firstly, that social inclusion and social exclusion are not exclusive terms or conditions. There can be simultaneous inclusion and exclusion where individuals or groups can be included in one domain while being excluded in another (Jackson 1999). As Pradhan (2006) points out, Parbate Dalits are included in the domain of the national language of the country, while they are excluded from political and economic domains (2006: 9). Similarly, Newars in general might be excluded from the dominant language and culture, but are included in the political and economic domain (*ibid*).

Secondly, in gaining insights from the feminist perspective of gender analysis, all forms of social inclusion might not necessarily be desirable (just as all exclusion, might not be either), particularly when the terms and conditions of inclusion are not re-conditioned to overcome the inherent structural inequalities and barriers. This was made very clear in the early years of efforts at inclusion of

women in the work force, where women were included into the “formal” employment arena but were continued to be treated “differently” (or “unequally”); while certain professions were feminized, work continued to the split along gendered roles, and wage differential persisted at all levels.

The example from Zwartveen and Neupane’s (1996) study of women’s (non)participation in the Chhattis Mauja irrigation scheme highlights the issue of whether women were “excluded” or used their agencies and became “free riders,” thereby not only overcoming “exclusion” but actually finding ways to take advantage of the paternalistic ideology and the ensuing exclusion. Though women were not formal members, although though they are front center in irrigated farming, and do not participate in the management, they were not negatively affected or victims since they used their agency to cut across legalities by stealing water, not having to pay fines, etc. Therefore a portrayal of “weakness” actually worked in their favor. This example raises the question of how individual agency functions within the structures, institutions and processes that create and sustains exclusion.

Thus it becomes important to understand the dualism inherent in the concepts of inclusion and exclusion. The question of inclusion, therefore, is best conceptualized as a sort of sliding scale rather than as a binary function, so that inclusion and exclusion are the extreme poles of a continuum of relations of inclusion/exclusion. Thus for the inclusion of the politically less represented, economically disadvantaged, and the socially discriminated individuals or groups, the terms and conditions of their “integration” into society needs to be on what it means for them to be “included.” Not all inclusion might be desirable if it means having to let go of the very specificity that is tied into their identity.

In the context of Nepal, social exclusion and/or inclusion is not just a singular and linear phenomenon, but a multi-factorial and layered one, depicting the inherent dualisms of the concepts. Social exclusion and inclusion is often experienced simultaneously by different individuals and groups both within and between the groups. For example, *janajati* and *dalit* groups suffer from exclusion within the broader social structure, yet there are inequalities and discriminatory practices within the different sub-groups that make up the broader categories. Not only do certain sub-groups of *dalits*,

for instance, face the discrimination against their collective identity as dalits but then they also have to endure within group exclusion, internal hierarchies, and patriarchal values. The combination of barriers related to overall social and economic rights as well as discrimination of a vulnerable group of people within a minority, results in greater hardships for the “minorities-in-minorities,” which is often overlooked by multicultural discourses (Pfaff-Czarnecka 2010).

Therefore a key point which needs to be highlighted is that invoking the two terms has moral and political implications, that is: exclusion is “bad,” inclusion is “desirable,” and that we need to find ways to include the excluded all the time (Jackson 1999). This implication of individuals or groups being either excluded or included, in a form of binary function, belies the pluralistic forms of exclusion and the multiple dimensions of the lives and experiences of individuals and groups. It also belies the individual’s own agency in terms of their own claims and attributions which they make about their position in the social order, their own views of where they belong and where not, based on their “location and positionality,” as Anthias (2002) theorizes in her study the articulation of race and ethnicity by migrant youth.

### **Multiple Dimensions of Inclusion and Exclusion**

The multiple dimensions of the lives of an individual or group are important to understand since lives and experiences are never quite one-dimensional. Thus there is a need to take into consideration the multiple identities inherent in individuals and groups of people. As discussed earlier, the discussions on social exclusion (or inclusion for that matter) tend to often focus on extreme ends of what is most likely a multiplicity of experiences of being included in some spheres while being excluded in others. While hierarchies and inequities create categories of exclusion, scholars have also been acutely aware of how multiple dimensions of exclusion or inequalities create important differences within and across categories of individuals and groups.

The failure to take into account the diversity and differences among women’s experiences in Nepal and in India, particularly in relation to the women’s movement, have been pointed out by a number of scholars. Tamang (2002) critically assessed the role

of various agents, including that of NGOs and international aid agencies, in “excluding and silencing radical diversity” in the women’s movement in Nepal. She also builds the case for how the processes of “development” has been the “locus classicus of generic apolitical consciousness-less Nepali woman,” where a single category of *“the Nepali Woman”* has failed to acknowledge the multiple intersections of gender, caste/ethnicity, and political ideologies. Dalit scholars in Nepal and in India have pointed out how women’s movements in both countries have tended to focus on the experiences of upper caste and middle class women (Rao 2003; Tamang 2004; Sonalkar 2004). Across the border, the need to “exorcise the ghost of ‘monolithic identity’” in the Indian feminist movement was brought into sharp focus by *dalit* women who questioned whether issues pertaining to *dalit* women and their oppression had been paid sufficient attention and whether the primarily upper-caste women’s movement had any right to speak for *dalit* women (Sonalkar 2004).

The detrimental effects of treating women as one category and blurring the differences among them, for instance by the caste and economic class of the households, has been pointed out by a study of women-only community forest groups in Nepal. Buchy and Rai (2008) show how three specific axis of exclusion—caste, class, and gender relations—result in the consistent exclusion of women and the poor in the case of management of local forest resources. The formation of women-only Forest User Groups (FUGs) as a strategy to improve women’s participation is rather problematic in targeting women as a homogeneous group, and fails to challenge the structural constraints that affect women and the poor (2008: 129-130). The strategy not only completely bypasses gender issues, but also ignores the multiple axes of exclusion in the “community” that cut across women’s conditions and positions. They end up becoming “just an exclusive group assigned to manage a portion of (degraded) resource following the same rules regulations as the mixed FUGs, but with more constraints” and thereby fails to address gender or social equity issues (*ibid*: 143). With more economically better-off and high-caste women leading the FUGs, benefiting the poor and lower-caste women might not necessarily be in their interest. Such institutions are more likely “to reproduce existing relations of inequality between ‘women’ and ‘men’ and strengthens comparison between particular kinds of women and their men folk, rather than build the basis for more equitable gender relations” (Cornwall 2003: 1329).

It is essential at this point to add a reminder that though multiple identities and dimensions can lead to multiple levels of oppression and discrimination (the double and triple discrimination faced by groups of individuals such as “poor Tarai *dalit* women,” for example) there is also heterogeneity in these experiences, which are relational in nature. For example, while women across the board face similar problems in relation to reproductive rights, rape (within and outside of marital life), domestic violence, discriminatory experiences as a girl child), women from the lower caste groups face the *additional* social discrimination which they share with the men from their own caste groups. While the multiple categories of class, gender, caste, and region affect the experiences of *dalit* women, making their experiences of exclusion layered, they share horizontal inequities with their male folks in terms of economic, cultural, and political exclusion and discrimination.<sup>6</sup>

## **The Intersectional Framework**

Thus we see that within society, markers of differences (especially those related to oppression) such as race, caste, ethnicity, gender, religion, sexuality, class, (and even geographic region in the case of Nepal) do not have independent influences nor do they always act independently. While hierarchies and inequities create categories of exclusion, scholars have also been acutely aware of how the intersections of multiple dimensions of exclusion or inequalities create important differences within and across categories of individuals and groups (Jackson 1999). Many of these markers of differences (and discrimination) most often inter-relate and are “inter-locking” (as opposed to having only additive effects). This entails the need for examining “the relationship among multiple dimensions and modalities of social relations and subject formation” using the framework of intersectionality (McCall 2005: 1771). Thus rather than only examining distinct social identities—such as gender, caste, ethnicity, race and class for example—as distinctive social hierarchies, intersectionality examines how they mutually construct one another. The collective significance of not just a series of social identities, but also categories of multiple identities

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<sup>6</sup> It should be noted here that the gender equality movement in Nepal is still largely focused upon heteronormative women-men relationships, and has yet to include the third gender, thereby excluding the LGBTI citizens and their rights.

that potentially stand as an organizing category in themselves, is what constitute the essence of an intersectional perspective and analytical framework. The intersectional framework offers a means to address both identity and oppression together as a category. It argues that it is important to look at the way in which “different social divisions inter-relate in terms of the production of social relation and in terms of people’s lives... classes are always gendered and racialized and gender is always classed and racialized” (Anthias 2009:10 in Pfaff-Czarnecka 2010).<sup>7</sup>

The concept of "intersectionality" has been used by feminist scholars to illuminate the “interlocking” hierarchies of identity that characterize individual experiences and the production of social life (Collins 1990 & 1999, in McCall 2005; Crenshaw 1997). Black and multiracial feminist theory in the US have argued that race and gender are socially constructed, which influences individual identity and provides principles of organization in the social system which produces and maintains social hierarchy (Collins 1999). Collins refers to the “interlocking systems of race, class and gender” as constituting a “matrix of domination,” within which individuals can simultaneously experience disadvantage and privilege through the combined statuses of gender, race, and class, (as well as age, sexuality, and ability/disability) (*ibid*; Weber 2001, in Browne and Misra 2003). This experience of disadvantage (oppression) and privilege (or the ability to resist oppression) occurs at three levels: the personal, community, and systemic levels of social institutions. All three levels are sites of domination and can also be potential sites of resistance (Collins 1999: 227, in Kharel 2010). Thus, the intersectional lens breaks down unidimensional understanding of inequality and oppression.

McCall’s (2001) use of intersectionality as a central category of analysis in her work on examining the interrelationships of class, gender, and race within the context of new economic structures, employment, and immigration, leads to additional insights on the complexity of these interrelationships. The differential basis of oppression entails that individuals or groups of people can experience exclusion from multiple dimensions such as religious,

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<sup>7</sup> Refer to Browne and Misra (2003) for a succinct review of theories of intersectionality from a black and multiracial feminist theoretical perspective, and evidence for intersectionality in US labor markets.

social, economic, and political. Studies of the intersections of race, gender and the labour market in the US show that women of all minority groups suffer a smaller gender penalty in earnings compared to white women when they are compared to men of the same race (Browne and Misra 2003; Greenman and Xie 2008).

### **Intersections of Gender and Caste/Ethnicity**

Polarized gender roles and structures that permeate life in Nepal intersect with caste and ethnic identities, as well as class. Bennett's (1983) seminal work on the life of upper caste *parbatiya* women (Bahun and Chettri) depict the contradictions and social pressures they face within their marital families, despite their high status within the caste hierarchy. Cameron's (1995) work with low caste women in western Nepal shows how due to their low status in two hierarchies—gender and caste—the work of untouchable women has changed with the changing economic needs of the community from that of primarily artisan-related production with a variety of paid agricultural and non-agricultural work. Furthermore, she details how the intersection of caste and gender has resulted in differing gender ideologies and set of meanings (for the differential values of productive and reproductive work and marriage practices for instance) within different caste groups among Hindu women (Cameron 1998). The more recent work of Kharel (2010) shows how there is a strong association with the term and identity of *dalits* by political and human rights activists among the *dalits*, as opposed to the discomfort and hesitation to be called Dalit due to the historical sigma and discrimination attached to it. Yet these politically conscious, upwardly mobile actors live with the contradiction and disconnect between their private lives and public lives on a daily basis. Additional she also looks at the differences in women's status and meanings of gender across the occupational groups she studies. Thus the analysis of multiple dimensions of exclusion provides better insights into where and how locations of exclusion (and by extension, of inclusion) occurs and changes for different groups of people.

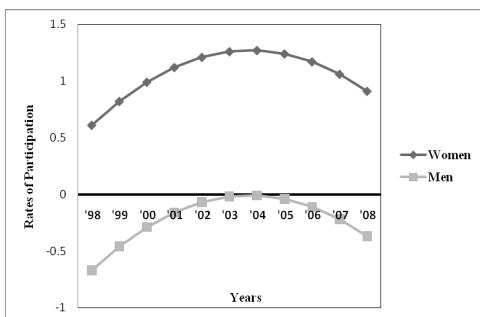
### **Gender, Caste/Ethnicity and Community Group Participation**

In my own study of how rates of participation in a number of different “community groups” have changed over times from a gender and caste perspective in western Chitwan, the results showed

some interesting variations based on the level of analysis (Pradhan 2011). At first an examination of the differences in the likelihoods of participation between men and women showed an increase in the rates of participation among women, in general, in a manner that was significantly different

for men. Secondly, examining the variations by caste/ethnic categories showed that, compared to the upper caste Brahman/Chhetri/Newar individuals, the overall likelihood of participation for all Hill *janajati* individuals was much lower. Finally, upon testing an interaction effect between caste/ethnic category and gender, the results suggest that for women from the hill *janajati* category, their rates of community group participation were significantly higher (66 percent) compared to men from the same caste/ethnic category. As shown in Figure 1 participation for Hill *janajati* men and women (the predictive log odds) showed a consistent wide gap over the years (*ibid*).

**Figure 1 : Group participation among Hill *janajati* women and men between 1997 and 2008, Western Chitwan (in predicted logo dds).**



### Methods of Analysis: Intersectional Analysis in the SIAEP Study

There are a number of different approaches that have been used in conducting analysis from an intersectional perspective. McCall acknowledges the complexity that arises when the subject of analysis expands to include multiple dimensions of social life and categories of analysis (2001: 2). In order to address the complexity of the analysis required she presents three approaches defined principally in terms of their stance toward categories: the *anticategorical complexity*, the *intracategorical complexity*, and the *intercategorical complexity*. Each approach differs in how they understand and use analytical categories (such as Dalit men, Madhesi women, poor hill Brahmins, low income men, medium class women, etc.) to explore the complexity of intersectionality in social life.

The ant categorical approach deconstructs analytical categories in recognition of the complexities of social categories and the fluid nature of subjects and structures. A second approach (the “intracategorical” approach) questions the boundary-making and boundary defining process itself and is thus critical about categories as such. Researchers using this approach tend to focus on particular social groups at neglected points of intersections in order to reveal the complexity of lived experiences of such groups (i.e. Black women in the US labor force). Both these approaches are used in case studies—in-depth studies of a single group or culture or site that generally employ more qualitative research methods that have generally been distinguished by their ability to reveal diversity, variation, and heterogeneity where quantitative researchers see singularity, sameness, and homogeneity (*ibid*: 1782). Therefore the focus is on an intensive study of a single social group, but is extended to be compared with other more standard groups. For example, in the case of Nepal, an intensive study of educated urbanized *dalit* men and uneducated *dalit* men provided an important element for understanding the intersections between caste, education and employment status in Kharel’s (2010) study.

The third approach (“inter-categorical”) focuses on the complexity of relationships among multiple social groups within and across analytical categories unlike the focus on one social group as in the former approach. It makes comparisons (for example, in terms of the case of Nepal, of ethnicity and income) among each of the groups constituting a category: men and women, Bahun and *dalit*, working and middle classes. This approach views the subject as “multi-group” and the method as “systematic comparative.”<sup>8</sup> As more categories are introduced (for example, education, religion), into the analysis, the analysis is systematically repeated for each group. For example, for each group of *dalit* men and women, in depth analysis of categories that are educated (or not) and employed (or not) needs to be systematically addressed to better understand

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<sup>8</sup> McCall acknowledges that not all research on intersectionality can be classified into one of the three approaches, since some research crosses the boundaries of the continuum, belonging partly to one approach and partly to another. Yet a central element of her argument is “that different methodologies produce different kinds of substantive knowledge and that a wider range of methodologies is needed to fully engage with the set of issues and topics falling broadly under the rubric of intersectionality” (*ibid*: 1774).

how the intersections of these different categories might or might not create variances in access, perceptions, and experiences.

Despite the perspectives presented, the intersectional framework is not necessarily devoid of ambiguity. Scholars are critically interrogating the assumptions underpinning intersectionality scholarship in terms of a lack of clarity in definition and methodology, as well as the empirical validity of the framework, while calling for a more complex way of theorizing identity and oppression (Nash 2008)<sup>9</sup>.

In the current context of study of SIAEP, the three inter-related concepts and their elements—the social exclusion/inclusion plurality, the multidimensional nature of social constructs and identities, and the effects of the intersection of these constructs—are critical in improving our understanding of how the interaction of multiple categories organize social structures and institutions. The intersection of such multiple categories in turn influences equality and social justice in most of life conditions and opportunities for different groups of people. In this paper I focus more on categories of class, caste, ethnicity, and gender as examples, but other social categories of age, sexual orientation, bodily conditions of differential abilities (or disabilities), religion, marital status, (for example widowhood for Hindu women), languages for example, are other markers, the intersection of which will have important insights to offer.

Last but not the least there are two points that I would like to flag. First, while it is important to keep in mind how “the excluded are simultaneously excluded and dominated” (Silver 1994: 543), it is also extremely useful to understand how the “excluded and dominated” use their agency in their daily life to circumvent structural barriers and life conditions. The SIAEP study will have survey data from 98 caste/ethnic groups and additional ethnographic data from 42 social groups. Attempts will have to be made by researchers and scholars to make full use of the available data during the analysis phase to better understand the multiplicity of factors that affect the “exclusion” and “inclusion” of groups

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<sup>9</sup> Additionally the use of “black women” as quintessential intersectional subjects in scholarship in the northern hemisphere has also been questioned (Nash 2008).

relative to one another. Secondly, it is also important to remember that in the long run, the social groups that we have labeled as “categories” such as *madhesi*, *janajati*, Bahun-Chhetri, Newar, etc. may soon become indefinable due to growing multiculturalism in the nation. Thus a perception of “impenetrable” categories and their relevance in different contexts also need to be taken into perspective. The SIAEP study has an opportunity to take into consideration these perspectives in the design, data collection, and, in particular, the analysis of the wealth of data that is being collected, which can help in a more nuanced understanding of the experiences of exclusion of individuals of the specific ethnic groups that are being studied intensively.

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# **Research on Social Inclusion Atlas (SIA) and Ethnographic Profile (EP) Nepal Social Inclusion Index (NSII): A Proposed Methodology**

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## **1. Introduction**

Nepal Social Inclusion Index (NSII) is a major component of the research on Social Inclusion Atlas (SIA) and Ethnographic Profile (EP) undertaken by the Central Department of Sociology/ Anthropology (CDSA), Tribhuvan University (TU), Nepal. Literature regarding social exclusion and inclusion has been reviewed here in order to develop a conceptual framework for NSII. NSII is a composite index to be derived from aggregated indices consisting of 50 indicators. Although, in definition, there are both inclusion and exclusion related indicators, exclusion related indicators have been transformed here into inclusion related indicators. These indicators cover 18 domains in six dimensions of social inclusion in the context of Nepal. This paper attempts to derive a NSII that could highlight the removal of risk factors of exclusion and changes in the drivers of inclusion. However, identifying the dimensions and indicators of social inclusion is itself a challenging task. Despite this challenge, it is hoped that the paper will contribute to the understanding of the social inclusion process in Nepal.

## **2. A Brief Review on Social Exclusion and Social Inclusion**

Although concepts of social inclusion and exclusion have newly emerged, there are already a range of literatures available on the subject. Therefore it would be better to review literatures on exclusion and inclusion separately.

## **2.1 Social Exclusion and Inclusion**

Over the last few decades, the concepts of social inclusion and exclusion have gained wider currency and coverage among academia, media, and the political community at global as well as national levels. One can notice that the issues of inclusion and exclusion are being raised in our everyday life by mass media, academic writings, and political campaigns. These issues are raised also by social categories organized in terms of caste, ethnicity, gender, region, religion, language, and class-based identities. Before developing the Social Inclusion Index (SII) for Nepal, it seems important to highlight the basic concept of inclusion and exclusion discussed in various literatures at the global as well as national-local context. The following three points were taken into consideration while doing the literature review.

- This research can draw on international examples of performance measurement.
- It can add value and improve measurement.
- Nepal's particular circumstances might require a different approach.

During the literature review, it was also found that this approach has been adopted by the Australian Government (AG) (2009) as well. Various attempts have been made internationally to define social exclusion and inclusion.

The concept of social exclusion was officially launched into development studies discourse in 1993 when the International Institute of Labor Studies (IILS) of the International Labor Organization (ILO) launched a research project on social exclusion with the support of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). It analyzes exclusion that can make anti-poverty strategies more effective. This effort also focuses on the insight that many processes of subordination, stratification, and segregation, particularly within the context of high or rising inequality, have not been effectively captured by poverty or even inequality methods of analysis (table 1 of annex 4). Therefore, a new approach to exclusion has been developed.

Arjan de Haan (nd) equates the concept of exclusion with the concept of deprivation as a multi-dimensional phenomenon and

parcel of social relations that helps to ground the understanding of deprivation firmly in tradition of social science analyses. For him, the term exclusion has usually been attributed to Rene Lenoir (1989 [1974]) whose “excluded” includes a wide variety of people: not only the poor, but also handicapped, suicidal, elderly, abused children, substance abusers, etc. (about 10 percent of the French population). The term “social exclusion” gained popularity in France during the 1980s. At this time, it was used to refer to various types of social disadvantage, related to the new social problems that arose including unemployment, ghettoization, and fundamental changes in family life. Haan's analysis of social exclusion is presented in details in the following paragraphs.

Later, social exclusion has been, more broadly, defined as “the process through which individuals or groups are wholly or partially excluded from full participation in society they live in. The concept has two defining characteristics. First, it is a multi-dimensional concept. People may be excluded, for example, from livelihoods, employment, earnings, property, housing, minimum consumption, education, the welfare state, citizenship, personal contacts, or respect (Silver 1994). But it focuses on the multidimensionality of deprivation, on the fact that people are often deprived of different things at the same time. It refers to exclusion (deprivation) in the economic, social, and political sphere. Secondly, less discussed in the literature but perhaps more relevant for the theoretical contribution of the concept, social exclusion implies a focus on the relations and processes that cause deprivation. People can be excluded by many different sorts of groups, often at the same time: landlords exclude people from access to land or housing; elite political groups exclude others from legal rights; priests may exclude scheduled castes from access to temples; minorities may be excluded from expressing their identity; labor markets, and also some trade unions, exclude people (non-members) from getting jobs; and so on (25).

He further writes:

The disadvantages faced by the excluded tend to be interrelated. People belonging to minorities or school

drop-outs may have a greater risk of being unemployed or be employed in precarious jobs (and hence low-paid), less educated, recipients of social assistance, possesses little political power, and fewer social contacts. Research on social exclusion focuses on the extent to which these dimensions overlap. Which of these dimensions is central depends on the context. The concept of social exclusion provides the basis for context-specific analyses, and can allow definitions of integration to be contested. Thus in some societies or among some groups labor market participation may form the crux around which other elements of deprivation revolve; whereas elsewhere or among other groups religious identity is more important (25).

Although exclusion is broadly defined in terms of deprivation, it can be taken as rupture of social bonds which is cultural and moral (for example, between individual and society). Poverty is seen as an issue which is separate from “social exclusion”—perhaps akin to the underclass debate—rather than as an element of social exclusion. People can be (and usually are) excluded in some areas (or dimensions) and included in others. Jackson (cited in Haan, nd, 37), in her critique of the notion of social exclusion, emphasizes that women are not categorically excluded, but integrated in particular ways, through reproductive labor for example.

Explaining exclusion in terms of broader categories the World Bank (WB 2006) has produced a report, Gender, Caste and Ethnic Exclusion in Nepal, examining gender, caste, and ethnicity as three interlocking institutions that determine individual and group access to assets, capabilities, and voice based on socially defined identity.

These varying discussions described above often confuse us about the concept of social exclusion. Andrew (2011) tries to clarify the ambiguities in the concepts of exclusion, deriving value added from the concept, and says that social exclusion needs to be re-conceptualized in a way that decisively opts for a processual definition, without reference to norms and/or poverty. New definition has been proposed as structural, institutional, or agentive processes of repulsion or obstruction. For further clarity it would be better to compare the terms “social exclusion” and “poverty.”

## 2.2 Social Exclusion and Poverty Compared

Haan (nd) compares social exclusion and poverty and writes that the notion of “relative deprivation” is more closely related to a concept of social exclusion (30), and it is often noted that rising inequality in various countries contributed to the popularity of the notion of social exclusion. Townsend (cited in Haan, nd, 30) emphasizes the concept of relative deprivation. Notions of vulnerability are closer to the concept of social exclusion. According to Chamber (cited in Haan, nd, 30) vulnerability is not a synonym for poverty, whereas poverty is lack or want, and is usually measured for convenience of counting in terms of income or consumption. Vulnerability means insecurity, defenselessness, and exposure to risk and shocks.

In fact, exclusion begins from a fixed point in time and exists at each level of society in each dimension differently. Group formation is a fundamental characteristic of human society, and this is accompanied by the exclusion of others. The concept takes us beyond mere descriptions of deprivations, and focuses attention on social relations and the processes and institutions that underlie and are part and parcel of deprivation.

Nobel Prize winner Amartya Sen’s work (1981, quoted in Haan, nd, 31) on capabilities has stressed that what counts is not what (poor) people possess, but what their possessions enable them to do. He argues that Townsend’s concept confuses the lack of commodities with the individuals or household’s capabilities to meet social conventions, participate in social activities, and retain self-respect. He further conceives that capabilities are absolute requirements for full membership of society. He also draws attention away from the mere possession of certain goods, towards rights, and command over goods, using various economic, political, and social opportunities within the legal system. In a recent contribution, Sen (1998:31) welcomes the social exclusion framework, because of its focus on relational roots of deprivation. He believes that the social exclusion framework reinforces the understanding of poverty as a deprivation of capabilities.

So far, as the literature shows, the issue of social exclusion gained prominence in public discourse after inclusion was incorporated as one of four pillars of the 2003 Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper

(PRSP), which is also Nepal's Tenth Plan. Major dimensions of exclusion mentioned in the plan are given in table two of annex four.

### **2.3 The Measurement of Social Exclusion and Inclusion**

Going through the writing by Arjan de Haan (nd, 32) one can find a number of ways applied to measuring social exclusion and inclusion. Of central emphasis in the UNDP's Human Development Index is poverty assessments' correlates. More challenging is operationalizing what Sen (1998) called the relational roots of deprivation. The London Research Centre (1996) provides an index of deprivation of areas with a large set of economic and social variables (mainly six major factors). On the other hand, the French Action Plan for Employment mentions 35 quantitative evaluation indicators to evaluate social inclusion initiatives. Britain's New Labor's "poverty charter" proposes 30 measures to track movement towards nationally defined social integration goals, whereas the French Panel Studies focuses on the subsequent activities of participants in training programs. Silver (as noted in Haan, nd, 32) also refers to the notion of measurement of social capital, to capture exclusion and inclusion in social networks.

Bennett (2005) deals with empowerment and social exclusion by indicating that social inclusion changes at the system level—in the external institutional environment or the rules that determine the distribution of the assets, capabilities, and voice necessary to exercise agency. She identifies three major dimensions of exclusion: household/family is the most problematic for women, community is the most problematic for dalits, and Nation is the most problematic for janajatis.

Recently, Bennett and Parajuli (2011) have suggested making smaller groups visible to explore the situation of exclusion. For their purpose they added one more variable influence, in the calculation of exclusion (see table three). But NHDR (2009)-Montenegro mentions key areas related to inclusion/exclusion. HDI, on the other hand, focuses on legal and policy background, poverty and exclusion, access to employment, access to health care, access to social services, housing and transportation, social, and political participation. Major indicators included in HDI are given in table three of annex four.

NHDR (2007) of Bosnia and Herzegovina discusses social inclusion in Bosnia and Herzegovina primarily based on Human Development Indices. However, the report highlights the Human Social Exclusion Index (HSEI). It shows interdependence of the factors responsible for social exclusion (see table two of annex four). It classifies HSEI into two categories; HSEI-I and HSEI-II. This report further elaborates key dimensions with 18 indicators measuring “at-risk of deprivation” as exclusion.

UNDP (2011) attempts to measure multidimensional social exclusion measures using the approach used by OPHI in obtaining MPI. It uses 24 indicators in three dimensions (see Annex two). However, OPHI (2011) attempted to measure acute poverty as Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI). It uses ten indicators belonging to three dimensions that mirror HDI (see table three of annex four).

However, Frank (2009) had already explored nine standards of equality: one hundred percent, the social minimum, equalization of lifetime income profiles, mobility, economic inclusion, income share, lowering the ceiling, avoidance of income and wealth crystallization, and international yard-sticks. In order to measure inequality, he provides scalar quantity (which implies that all the different features of inequality are compressed into a single number) and numerical representation.

Bennett and Dahal (2006), too, have explained regional inequalities among major caste/ethnic groups (seven) based on certain indicators (see Table three of annex four) of exclusion. The concept of exclusion, therefore, depends upon the approach and context used to define it. Huxley et al. (2006) also emphasizes exclusion and inclusion by identifying two broad approaches. The first considers a rights-based approach as social exclusion that reflects deprivation of rights as member or citizen of a particular group, community, society, or country. The second is rights-based conceptions on social inclusion. They defined social inclusion as a) relative to a given society (place and time), b) multi-dimensional (conceived in terms of rights or key activities), and c) multilayered (causes operate at individual, familial, communal, societal, and even global levels). They also identified two broad approaches to the measurement of social inclusion: a) social indicators of inclusion and b) perceived inclusion measures.

Moreover, Human Development Report (2011) raises the issue of sustainability and equity, highlighting HDI and its components. Major components are life expectancy at birth (years), mean year of schooling (years), expected year of schooling (years), gross national income per capita (GNI-PI). It further shows HDI of 187 countries with very high, high, medium, and low HDI.

GSEA (2006) analyses relationships between people, institutions and organizations. Institutions are defined as “rules of the game.” Organizations are defined as group of individuals, bound by a common purpose, involving a defined set of authority relations and dedicated to achieving objectives with particular “rules of the game.” For poor and excluded people to gain greater access to assets and services, the “rules of the game” must change in their favor.

HDR-2007, Ghana, broadly mentions a number of indicators under the title “toward a more inclusive society.” It explores the context of exclusion as insecure livelihoods, poverty and exclusion, geographical disparity, low access to public goods and services, resource degradation, cultural norms of discrimination, unequal gender relations, health status, disability, age related exclusion, formal educational status, human rights and citizenship, political relations, gender and exclusion, weak coping strategies, and survival mechanisms.

Considering the issue of exclusion, many countries in the world today are committed to creating an inclusive society. They have their own plan and vision to move ahead to achieve this goal. For example, the Australian Government’s vision of a socially inclusive society is one in which all Australians feel valued and have the opportunity to participate fully in the life of society. “As Australia’s distinctive approach, social inclusion can only be fully understood in relation to a particular vision of membership, belonging, and social integration that cannot be defined independently of context” (Silver 2010).

In a recent report concerning the concept of inclusion, NHDR-Kosovo (2010) defines social inclusion as a “process which ensures that those at risk of poverty and social exclusion gain the opportunities and resources necessary to participate fully in economic, social and cultural life and to enjoy a standard of living

and well being that is considered normal in society in which they live.” It further ensures that they fully participate in decision-making that affects their lives and guarantees access to their fundamental rights.

HDR-Ghana (2007) further describes some progressive efforts made to move from exclusion to inclusion. Defining social exclusion as multi-dimensional often involves incorporating economic, social, and spatial exclusion. These dimensions are seen to interrelate and reinforce each other. A classic example of the multidimensional manifestation of social exclusion is the case of People with Disabilities (PWDs). Some Ghanaian cultural norms identify physical disability as a factor to exclude people from becoming a chief. Furthermore, PWDs lack recognition and status in society and have limited opportunities for educational or vocational training.

The important thing is to move ahead from exclusion to inclusion through clear conceptualization. NHDR-Kosovo (2010) conceptualizes social exclusion as a process and state of being excluded from the life of community, municipality, society, and the world. It shows the relationship between social inclusion and human development. Major concerns are economic and labor market exclusion, access to education and exclusion, health care services and exclusion, and political participation exclusion. It highlights how discrimination—deliberate or otherwise—affects Kosovo’s socio-economic balance, its political process, and its EU-oriented policy goals.

As mentioned in NHDR-Kosovo (2010), EU defines social inclusion as “a process which ensures that those at risk of poverty and social exclusion gain the opportunities and resources necessary to participate fully in economic, social and cultural life and to enjoy a standard of living and well-being that is considered normal in the society in which they live in.” Major areas with indicators are given in table three of annex four.

Grouping indicators into EU’s indicators and supplementary indicators, Australian Government (2009) provides a comprehensive list of 33 social inclusion indicators (table three of annex four). In this report, however, dimensional indicators look like exclusion indicators.

Regarding the issue of social exclusion, ADB (2010) presents an overview of gender equality and social inclusion in Nepal. It focuses on citizenship, family law, property rights, the police, employment and labour migration, trafficking, conflict reconciliation and peace, gender-based violence, social security and protection, participation in governance, health, education, agriculture and natural resource management, water supply and sanitation, rural transport-infrastructure, and energy.

## **2.4 Social Inclusion in the Context of Nepal**

A vast socio-cultural diversity is one of the major characteristics of Nepal around which issues of inclusion and exclusion have emerged. SIRF (2011), one of the leading organizations working in the areas of inclusion/exclusion, provides an account of the social inclusion in Nepal as outlined below.

Nepal is home to a mosaic of ethnicities and languages. More than 61 ethnic groups and diverse nationalities reside in the country. Despite the socio-cultural diversity, Nepal is facing a vicious cycle of poverty which mainly is the cause of spatial heterogeneity and structural inequalities. The spatial causes of poverty can be seen due to the regional imbalance in the development process, while the structural inequalities have been coupled by “haves” and “have not’s.” Structural inequality has further been compounded by the caste system of the country. Although anti-discrimination provisions are contained in the 1990 Constitution, caste discrimination remains ingrained in Hindu-dominated Nepalese society. Poverty and lack of social services (health, education, water and sanitation, etc.) remain pressing problems for rural, lower castes and indigenous peoples, despite economic development and poverty alleviation having been the primary objectives of the Nepali budget for the past years. Additionally, the bitter truth is that lower castes and minority ethnic groups are disproportionately affected by widespread social and economic problems aggravated by poverty. Four groups of people are excluded from the contemporary development processes either through political exclusion (decentralized efforts of development, basic citizenship rights, etc.) or through economic exclusion (concentrated urban market

centers) or through social exclusion (socio-cultural attributes, a legacy of age old culture, etc.). These four groups are: i) Dalits or lower caste people, ii) Indigenous people or Janajati iii) Madhesi or Terai inhabitants and iv) Women.

Thus there are various dimensions of inclusion perceived in Nepal. The details of inclusion and categories explained in SIRF (2011) are elaborated in the following sections.

#### **2.4.1 Social Inclusion and Dalits**

The *dalit* community in Nepal is not only discriminated against in the use and access of public utilities and places, but also excluded from the legal system and public policies. Through laws and plans (e.g. the Local-Self Governance Act) which have made affirmative provisions for dalits' participation in local bodies, and the 10th Five Year plan aiming for the enhancement of *dalits* limited accessibility in natural resources, the government has been intervening to increase the participation of *dalits* in local and central governance. Yet the results of such nominal policies have been proved as tokens and can be labeled as formally inclusive only. Often *dalit* activists and people/institutions working for dalits raise their voices on pertinent issues like untouchability, discrimination, poverty, social prejudice and cultural barriers, inaccessibility in resources, and lack of representation in governance and the political system.

#### **2.4.2 Social Inclusion and Madhesi Community**

In spite of having a long history of origin and habitat, the *madhesi* community is practically considered to be foreigners. They continue to be marginalized and have faced exclusion in active political participation, administration and governance, decision-making, and policy planning. Moreover, they face problems like issues of citizenship. The *madhesi* people feel highly discriminated and have almost lost "the sense of belongingness to this nation." The exclusion of the *madhesi* community (comprising 32 percent of the country's human resources) from the national mainstream has been a negative factor for the sound economic development in the country.

Many of the modern-day basic facilities have not yet reached *madhesi* people. Nearly 40 percent of the *madhesi* population are *dalit* and indigenous *janajati* who are inherently disadvantaged in many social and economic aspects. Again, poverty is very high among the Muslim population living in rural areas who also have low rates of literacy. There has been little effort to prevent social, economic, and political exclusion and to reintegrate those who have become excluded through unemployment, landlessness, and homelessness. In addition, immediate attention needs to be provided to ascertain citizenship rights to the landless *madhesi* people, and to maximize their representation in the political and administrative units of the country.

#### **2.4.3 Social Inclusion and Women**

The Interim Constitution of Nepal (2007) has guaranteed the right of equality to women; however, discrimination and problems concerning women manifest themselves in a number of ways in Nepal. Due to an age-old patriarchal value system, women are inherently disadvantaged in many social and economic aspects. Only very recently were women granted the legal right to own property, and in 2003, women were granted the right to abortion, but with strict medical restrictions. Child marriages, restrictions on widows remarrying and arranged marriage practices are still followed widely. Women often face domestic violence and harassment, with little recourse to legal provisions, as gender discrimination is deeply entrenched in society. Comparatively, women work more than men in and outside the household and receive significantly lower wages. Their employment is limited to the unorganized sectors, and despite affirmative action programs, their participation in the government is low. The low status of women in Nepal can be traced to a number of interrelated economic, legal, cultural, political, and institutional factors. Women's poverty is exacerbated by caste and ethnicity-based discrimination, as the caste system defines access to resources and opportunities, leaving women more disadvantaged than men at every level. Women have unequal access to food, education, and health care, limited opportunities to earn incomes, restricted access to and control over productive resources, and few effective legal rights. They are further disadvantaged by a lack of awareness of their legal rights and opportunities in terms of gender.

#### **2.4.4 Social Inclusion and Indigenous (*Janajati*) Communities**

The Nepali state has recognized 61 indigenous communities only in 1999. However, the state has defined the communities conservatively by calling them “groups that face socio-economic and cultural backwardness.” Social scientists believe that there are more indigenous people/communities than recognized by the state. An in-depth anthropological-sociological survey is necessary for ascertaining the precise number of such communities and people. Indigenous people face consequences in terms of discrimination because of their small population and also historic and current inequitable treatment by the state and society. Some of the pressing problems relevant to the *janajati* groups are: linguistic discrimination, religious domination and cultural imperialism, abolishment of land rights, access to resources and inadequate recognition of indigenous/traditional knowledge endowment, exclusion in political participation and migration

### **3. Nepal Social Inclusion Index (NSII)**

Developing a social inclusion index for Nepal would be pioneering work. In order to develop NSII for Nepal dynamics of exclusion and inclusion in Nepal’s context must be clearly understood. A conceptual framework should be developed based on forms of exclusion prevalent in Nepal. The following section discusses this issue.

#### **3.1 Conceptual Framework on Nepal Social Inclusion Index (NSII)**

Most of the literatures on exclusion/inclusion (ADB 2010; AG 2009; Andrew 2011; 2005; Bennett and Dahal 2006; Bennett and Parajuli 2011; Frank 2009; Haan nd; Sen 1981, 1998; HDR 2001; HDR 2007-Ghana; HDR 2011; LRC 1996; NHDR 2007-Bosnia and Herzegovina; NHDR 2010-Kosovo; OPHI 2011; Silver 2010, and nd; UNDP 2011; World Bank 2006) focus on exclusion rather than inclusion. They define the term exclusion as multidimensional phenomenon in terms of processes and consequences. As a consequence, the concept exclusion is increasingly being used to indicate deprivation, on the basis of the fact that people are often deprived of different things at the same time. Accordingly, Arjan de Haan (nd: 26), also refers to exclusion

(deprivation) in the economic, social and political spheres. Social exclusion is often compared with poverty as deprivation. More broadly, social exclusion has been defined as the process through which individuals or groups are wholly or partially excluded from full participation in the society they live in. Importantly, the concept of social exclusion provides the basis for context-specific analyses and allows for definitions of integration to be contested. Thus exclusion, as a process and consequence, is a universal phenomenon that differs from context to context, country to country, and society to society, and so on.

The notion of exclusion is relative to the notion of inclusion. NHDR (2007) of Bosnia and Herzegovina discusses social inclusion there, primarily, based on Human Development Indices which, again, in fact highlights the Human Social Exclusion Index (HSEI) as another side of inclusion. RHDR (2011), on Beyond Transitions, recognized human development as the goal of development and indicates social inclusion as an important process for removing the obstacles preventing people from realizing their capabilities. It also offers a road map for the policy implementation for the achievement of higher levels of human development. This notion should be clearly reflected in the Social Inclusion Atlas (SIA) Project in Nepal. The concept is similar to EU's definition from Kosovo's NHDR (2010) that ***social inclusion is a “process which ensures that those at risk of poverty and social exclusion gain the opportunities and resources necessary to participate fully in economic, social and cultural life and to enjoy a standard of living and well being that is considered normal in society in which they live.***" It further ensures that they fully participate in the decision-making which affects their lives and ability to access their fundamental rights.

Social inclusion, therefore, is not simply a reversal of social exclusion in terms of status. Elements of the process of social inclusion that contribute to overcoming social exclusion (like participation and involvement) have intrinsic value. Social inclusion involves at least two steps. One is removing barriers in a wide sense: barriers to participation and to access to resources and opportunities. The second is promoting a change in attitudes. Even though legal structures might be in place, policies are needed to cultivate solidarity, counteract entrenched social prejudices, and encourage the participation of individuals facing barriers. Such barriers cannot be entirely removed only by government

interventions. Micro level interactions such as social harmony and integration can also eventually lead to social inclusion. Therefore these are important elements of the social inclusion process which involve changing attitudes towards what is accepted as “normal.”

### **3.2 Multiple Forms of Social Exclusion and Inclusion in Nepal**

The issue of social exclusion draws wider attention in a more diversified society like Nepal. Social exclusion in Nepal comprises multiple forms of deprivations faced by people. Here is a hypothetical story that reflects a real situation of a rural *dalit* family facing multiple forms of exclusion.

#### **A Brief Story of a Rural *dalit* Family**

*A poor dalit family was surviving with very minimum of resources. For a long time, the main source of income for the family was producing artisanal works fetching local demand. One unlucky day, a daughter fell ill. They did not know the reason for the illness and waited for a couple of days hoping that the fever would cure itself. When the situation became dire, they contracted a local ojha (priest). The ojha chanted something with wood ash and assured them that the child would be all right within a couple of days. This, too, did not work at all. Then their access to the local doctor was denied because the doctor was of a high class family. The father of the child went to the temple to pray for his child. He was not even allowed to enter into the temple premises because he was a Dalit. Unfortunately the situation of the child worsened, and ultimately the child died. The father of the child burst into tears and uttered in a crying voice that “had someone in the community suggested properly about the treatment of my child, had he had enough knowledge and money for treatment of my child, last but not the least if he would have been allowed inside the temple and had prayed to god his child would not have died.”*

The story highlights multiple forms of exclusion faced by a family simultaneously. The family, at first, is excluded economically. It has no access to productive resources or to formal labor market. This forced the family to survive with inadequate income. Consequently,

the family members are likely to live in unhygienic conditions, with no safe drinking water. They might be illiterate and their access to health services is likely to be limited, pushing them into social exclusion in terms of minimum social services. As they live on outskirts of the village, they may be socially disconnected too. They are discriminated to enjoy even the medical services available locally. They are grossly discriminated in sharing the religious temples also to pray for survival of the child. This is an example of discrimination on the basis of their belongingness to a particular caste. Their cultural freedom is also denied. One may go into details of the sex of the child and would probably come to know that the baby was a girl and that is why the parents responded so late in the treatment. Therefore, the quest for inclusion largely varies across communities and according to the local context.

**Figure1. Multiple Forms of Exclusion Faced by the Family**

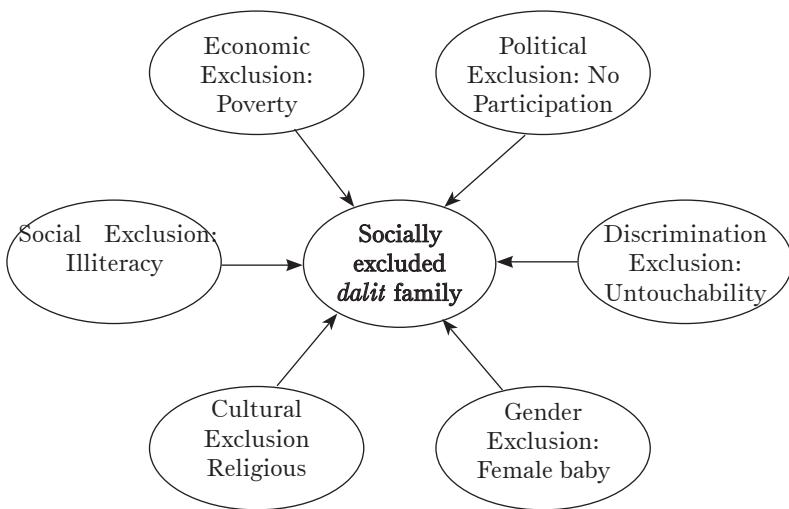


Figure 1. clearly demonstrates exclusion in multiple forms and paves the way to a social inclusion index envisaged here.

*The process of inclusion in a given context should have two simultaneous steps. The first step is to accelerate the drivers in favor of inclusion. The second step would be elimination of the exclusion risk factors. To increase the rate of acceleration of drivers demands the formation of legal structures followed by policies that*

***can cultivate solidarity and lead to a society where diversity is considered as strength. These two simultaneous steps demand attention to the various dimensions mentioned here.***

The social and economic dimensions are very much popular and have remained in the core of social exclusion/inclusion so far. These dimensions have, therefore, been widely used. However, the cultural dimension is all the more important to address because cultural freedom enlarges the range of options in any opportunity. For example, a single language, Nepali, was imposed in the past, which did not ensure basic literacy rights to all, and simultaneously restricted chances of being educated in other languages. The deprivations in normal culture are thus intrinsic to the context of social inclusion. Similarly, political dimension is important as it provides opportunities for changes in the way people value government and feel ownership over decisions. The persistent exclusion of the majority of people in the country is believed to have occurred because of the total deprivation of the common civic rights of the people. Consequently, the majority of the people are forced to lead miserable lives. Moreover, people of Nepal are further discriminated based on various socially constructed values and beliefs. Such discriminations include barriers to participate in or perform specific activities in the public sphere. For example, untouchability regarding dalits prevailed in Nepal and has cultivated discriminations of various kinds, including spatial segregation. These values, shaped on the grounds of untouchability, entirely restrict freedom of people to practice their own culture without being posed the risk of exclusion. Another striking feature of Nepali society is the persistent domination of males in all spheres, which has resulted in very strong social barriers to women when exercising their fundamental human rights. The patriarchal value system of male domination prevalent in Nepal is the root cause of female subordination and social exclusion. The gender dimension is thus all the more relevant in a country like Nepal. All dimensions discussed here, however, are equally important, relevant, and interlinked with each other. They interact simultaneously, leading to better or worse lives. The three dimensions—political, discrimination, and gender—are thus included here to represent the drivers of the social inclusion process. Social, economic, and cultural dimensions on the other hand have been introduced to focus on evaluating the inclusion process in terms of how far removal of the exclusion risk factors has taken place.

In this sense indicators selected in political, discrimination, and gender dimensions are indicators of the drivers of social inclusion in terms of policy, institution, and values. However, at the same time, the indicators in those dimensions, for someone, could be the indicators of empowerment as well as considered as exclusion. But we need to interrupt the pace of social process at some fixed point of time in order to measure the level of social inclusion or exclusion.

*This paper argues that change in value system regarding discrimination and gender is the change that leads to social inclusion. For example, allowing dalits to enter into temples is, in this research, an indicator of change in value system towards social inclusion. Likewise, wider acceptance of remarriage of a widow can be regarded as value changes towards gender inclusion.*

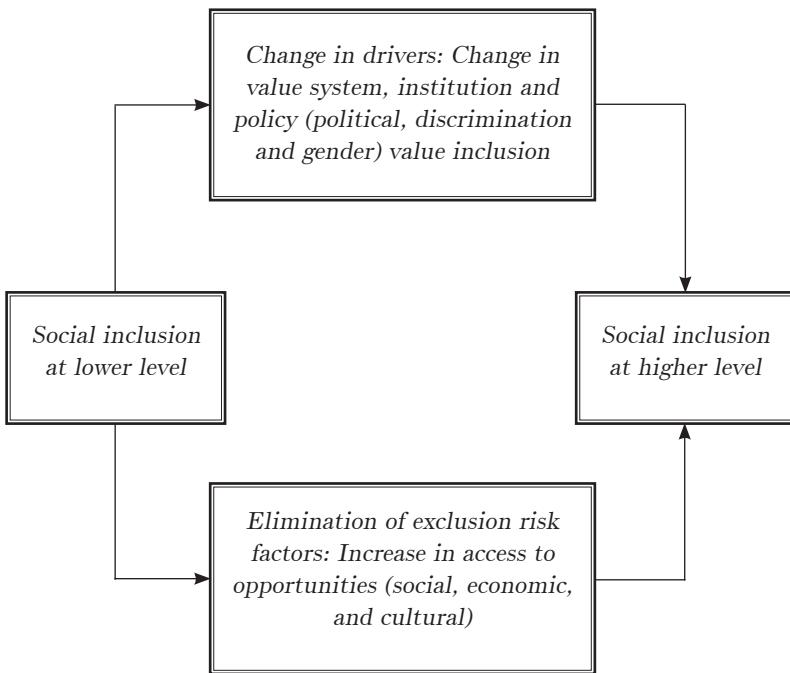
There could be numerous approaches for bringing changes that lead to people's well being. Empowerment has proved to be a viable complementary process of social transformation. It is a bottom-up approach and attempts from below to raise peoples' awareness to understand the value of and control over resources and opportunities around them. Inclusion, on the other hand, is a top-down approach that removes institutional barriers and provides incentives to uplift those who are deprived /excluded. Although the two complementary processes are undoubtedly geared towards human development, they differ in approach and pace. The pace largely depends upon the local context. However, in the Nepali context, where a majority of the population is out of the main stream of development, inclusion could be initiated faster than empowerment. Indicators could be common to begin with for the two processes. Female literacy level at a particular point of time, for example, could be an indicator of female empowerment in social dimension. Increasing awareness and understanding of the value of education to push them toward educational institutions are some of the empowerment processes which may increase the literacy level. Inclusion, on the other hand, is also initiated at the same level to remove institutional barriers. The institutional barriers could be both absence of educational institutions and female un-friendly educational facilities. Another form of distinct institutional barriers in the Nepali context are persistent social values which do not recognize the importance of female education and push them to operate within the social boundary demarcated

by men. Removal of these barriers in conjunction with incentives (i.e. scholarship for girls, free text books, extra classes, and strict instruction to schools to create a supportive environment for girls) are some of the ingredients that drive ahead the inclusion process. Measurement of inclusion with an indicator at a particular point of time may look like measuring empowerment, but the approach, as well as path to follow, is different.

The discussion above is geared toward all human dimensions. It also provides a basis to look into as many spheres of human lives as possible. The study, therefore, aims at designing a social inclusion index that encompasses both the components of social inclusion mentioned above. The Figure 2 clearly demonstrates how the process of social inclusion moves forward. The first box on the left indicates the level of inclusion to start with. The two boxes in the middle are simultaneous steps, i.e. the change in drivers as well as the elimination of the exclusion risk factors needed to arrive at higher levels of inclusion.

For the SIA Project, we need to develop a social inclusion index for Nepal. For this we have identified six major dimensions; four are new, which has been the major concern for us. These new dimensions were identified as political, cultural, gender and discrimination with specific indicators conceptualized to some extent (for example, EU talks about cultural life, ADB (2010) presents overview of gender equality and social inclusion in Nepal, HDR (2007)-Ghana and NHDR (2010)-Kosovo conceptualized cultural norms of discrimination and discrimination including spatial exclusion). *Therefore, in the process of developing Social Inclusion Index (SII) for Nepal in this SIA research, the unique socio-cultural context of Nepal determines/influences the dimensions and indicators of social inclusion here. Hence, this SIA research attempts to develop a multidimensional social inclusion index (NSII).*

**Figure 2. Change in Inclusion Brought by Simultaneous Interventions**



#### **4. Development of Social Inclusion Index**

The discussions above clearly demands an index to monitor both the built-in components of social inclusion. The development of the social inclusion index is far more challenging for simultaneous evaluation of both the components. Inclusion is a continuous process to be preceded by the formulation of inclusive policies. The implementation of very urgent actions to remove people from deprivations should be followed later. The forms of deprivations vary across local contexts and at different levels of development. As the society under consideration moves ahead, newer forms of deprivations may emerge with the change of social values and norms. As we go along, people may not value something in the way they did in the past. Rural people in Nepal, for example, used to consider deprivation of girls from educational opportunities as a normal phenomenon. But they now consider it as a form of deprivation. The measurements, therefore, should address the

dynamic nature of social inclusion. *The index envisioned here is, however, geared towards measuring the current state of inclusion in Nepal. It should, nevertheless, be able to accommodate the challenges to cater to the need of future challenges of inclusion. Thus, initiations and use of an index could be a good start to measure the present status. Furthermore, this forms a basis on which subsequent refinements in the index, both in terms of the approach and coverage, could be achieved.* The following sections accommodate full descriptions of all selected indicators by dimensions. It also contains a brief account of relevance of the selected indicators.

## 5. Selection of Dimensions and Indicators

The selected indicators by dimensions have been briefly discussed below. Each dimension and indicator is dealt with separately for clarity.

### Economic Dimensions

To survive is the fundamental right of human beings. Survival of people depends on economic activities performed by individuals. Type of economic activity, indeed, does not only demarcate individual's access to other resources and opportunities, but also determines level of living. Inclusion in economic dimension here means that people should have equitable access to resources and should also have full employment opportunities in order to lead a respectable level of living.

The following section is devoted to the rationale behind the selection of the indicators (annex 5) of social inclusion in the economic dimension.

**Land Holding (Resources):** The ownership of agricultural land, in the Nepalese socio-economic set up, is perceived to be an indicator of better social status. It is also considered as one of the essential productive assets in the rural agrarian economy. Every two in three employed persons are engaged in the agriculture sector (CBS/N 2008). Average area of land holding is, therefore, considered as a measure of productive resources. Per capita landholding is regarded here as access to productive resources.

**Non-agriculture Activities (Opportunity):** The “usually active population” comprises all persons above 10 years whose activity status, as determined in terms of the total number of months during 12 months period, is “economically active” and/or “inactive” as defined within the labor force framework. Non-agricultural economic activity of the population of the working age is one of proxies of better employment opportunity. However, the average duration of economic activity is a proxy of underemployment status and has implication in earning. Therefore percentage of person involved in non-agricultural activities and duration of economic activity are chosen as indicators of employment opportunity. It is measured in terms of number of months a person is engaged in non-agriculture activity, in a year, among the population of 10 years and above, within all ethnic groups.

**Food Sufficiency (Standard of Living):** Adequate food is an important pre-requisite for human survival. Moreover, it is the most fundamental right of the people. The proportion of people who consume adequate food in terms of two meals a day throughout the year is introduced as indicator of food sufficiency. Adequacy is supposed in terms of food sufficiency, as an individual requires at least two meals a day.

**Poverty (Standard of Living):** Every one in four persons in Nepal has until now been classified through the CBN approach as poor. The method considers basic calorie needs and minimum non-food expenses. Poor people are deprived of this very fundamental right of survival. Such people are also likely to remain in persistent poverty for many generations. Although head count poverty is one of the vital indicators of economic dimension of social inclusion, it is difficult to obtain it at disaggregated level. Therefore, two alternative indicators—share of food expenditure in total consumption and people in elementary occupation—are selected as the proxy indicators of poverty. It is a general assumption that higher share of food consumption implies higher level of poverty. Similarly, the elementary occupation is likely to generate low income leading to poverty.

**Housing (Standard of Living):** The type of house, examined in terms of foundation wall and roof, is used to assess the status of housing condition. Apart from the assessment of the quality of housing, efforts will also be made to explore the adequacy of

the living space per person as another indicator of quality of life. Standard size of dwelling space per person is measured adopting methodology of MPI-Oxford and regional human development report.

**Cooking Fuel Use (Standard of Living):** A majority of households in rural Nepal use traditional cooking fuel that has serious implications for their health. The percentage of household using commercial fuel is proposed here as an indicator of better standard of living and economic well-being as well.

**Access to Electricity (Standard of Living):** The access to electricity in the household is taken as an indicator of standard of living.

## Social Dimensions

Human capabilities—health and education—play a vital role in human development as they enable people to live a quality life. Social dimension covers the level of basic education, health, and sanitation facilities that enable individuals to lead healthy lives with full capability to communicate in the society they live in. Social relationships/connectivity are required to lead the happy life that each individual desires.

The following section accommodates a very short justification of the indicators (annex 5) in the social dimension.

**Access to Safe Drinking Water:** Drinking water is the second most vital human need after fresh air. Safe water is not only urgent for survival but it has close relation with better health. Although it appears very basic and irrelevant, it still has a major role to play in Nepal where a very small proportion of population have access to water at satisfactory level both in terms of quantity and quality. Percentage of household using safe water is introduced as one of the main social indicators. Here, tap water is regarded as safe water.

**Sanitation Status:** Better sanitation is one of the prime factors for healthy living. It should be in the core of health services. The effectiveness of other medical services has a bearing upon the sanitation level. This is an indicator of performance of the basic social services. Level of use of modern toilet is recommended here

as basic indicator of sanitation. “Modern” is used in the sense that the toilet corresponds to either of the two types: sewerage facility and safety tank.

**Medical Affordability:** Percentage of persons living in household who could not afford medication or dental checks for every child in the past 12 months is introduced to evaluate the use of health services. As it applies to all caste/ethnic groups it is important regardless of eco-belt and region.

**Malnutrition:** Malnutrition of the children is a painful event for many parents. It is a representative indicator for both health and quality of life. The nutritional level of persons of all ages does not seem relevant in the Nepalese context, where around one third of the children are malnourished. Percentage of malnourished children measured in terms of stunting is proposed here.

**Child Mortality:** Reduction of child mortality has long been in the core of health sector development. It is also a very important indicator of well-being. High child mortality rates imply poor life style because no parent can afford to keep a child unfed and under-nurtured. Percentage of persons living in a household which has experienced child death is introduced in the Index.

**Adult Literacy and Enrollment:** Literacy enlarges a person's ability to communicate in society. The literacy status of adults also enhances people's choices and has some consequences in skill development. Gross enrollment rate at basic, secondary, and tertiary education levels is chosen as another indicator of level of learning process, as well as access to educational services.

**Basic Level of Schooling:** Percentage of children who have completed primary level of schooling is an important indicator of level of schooling. (A Millennium Development goal to be achieved by 2015.) Completion of basic level schooling of grade 1-8 in the age reference of 13-14 is included.

**Social Connectivity and Social Distance:** Person to person contact and regular meeting with friends, relatives and other members of the society are equally important in leading respectable and happy civic lives. Although information would be based on recall memory of the respondent it is important to include from the

social connectivity point of view because it strongly signifies social harmony.

Frequency of meeting with friends and relatives indicates the social connectivity of an individual, which is an important indicator of the larger social network. Sometimes people perceive to be affected negatively by prevailing social distance and differences of identities, which is another important indicator of social capital. It is challenging task to measure this indicator. However, an attempt has been made to measure it as it is important from the perspective that social inclusion is possible through social cohesion.

## **Political Dimensions**

It is widely accepted that political exclusion leads to social disparities and distances, inequitable resource distribution, uneven development, and social unrest. After the fall of the Berlin wall, it is well recognized that political exclusion is the root cause of “deep-rooted” conflict. Identity-based chronic exclusion from access to state power is likely to push the mobilized excluded groups towards radical strategy—either paralyzing the state apparatus or overthrowing the exclusionary regime. Nepal has already learned a good lesson from the armed insurgency of 1996-2005 that successfully garnered the support of traditionally excluded groups like *adivasi janajati*, *dalit*, *madhesi* and women. On the other hand, experiences elsewhere divulge that political inclusion deradicalizes politically mobilized groups, provides opportunities “to accumulate greater influence and resources” at low cost and “discourages the sense that the state is unreformable or an instrument of narrow class or clique, and accordingly, needs to be fundamentally overhauled” (Goodwin 2001: 415).

Political inclusion manifest in various forms: participation in public life and decision-making process, representation in policy/decision-making institutions, full enjoyment/exercise of human/peoples’ rights, sharing power and resources, equitable “rules of the game,” increased “agency”—“a distinctive human capacity for reflection on action and innovative interpretation, despite the constraint of social structure” (*ibid.*: 51)— and effective “voice,” equalization of human dignity and so on. “Agency” is generally reflected in the level of political awareness, capacity to analyze the political events/phenomena and processes, collective claim

making and interest groups forming which can be better realized through political inclusion only. "Voices" are articulated in terms of "grievances," "demands," or "claims," and political inclusion is reflected in the accommodation of such claims. Voice and agency is also a marker of political empowerment as well as disempowerment. It is claimed that "lack of political voice," a broader indicator of social exclusion, "may contain elements that, although inherently subjective, may prove very useful for the analysis of certain aspects of poverty and social exclusion." Based on these concepts of political exclusion/inclusion, some key indicators have been identified to measure crucial aspects of political exclusion/inclusion.

Political inclusion enlarges people's capability to ensure their participation in the decision processes which shapes their lives in the way they desire. A conducive political environment which entails a good community life is also included in the index. Public and private sectors are both likely to contribute to exclusion by either fostering discrimination or failing to act to protect the excluded. In the political dimension focus here is geared towards enlarging people's capability to ensure their participation in the decision-making processes which shapes their lives in the way they desire. Decisions made at various levels of the government are very instrumental in shaping the lives of the people. Social mobilization, which utilizes social capital, has now emerged as equally important means for development. People now organize in groups and work for themselves. The role of such groups is not only complementary to the government activities but provides basis for its interventions for social change. In addition, the groups are viable means and ends of the social transformation process. Their participation in the context of social inclusion should, therefore, be initiated at all levels to frame the policy decisions in favor of people. To be able to do so, it becomes all the more important to ensure representation in legislative and executive branches of government. Although legal provisions are in place, their implementations are still to be realized. One of the main reasons behind this is the implicit bureaucratic hurdle which fuels the temptations of those who are in the main stream to discriminate against the voiceless. The followings are the indicators (annex 5) proposed to measure the level of social inclusion in the political dimensions.

**Involvement in the Election:** Percentage of people involved in the recent election will be used as one of the indicators of political

inclusion. Involvement will be measured in terms of recent election on the basis of proportion of individuals who voted.

**Representation in Political Parties:** The presence in the various tiers of the political parties is also considered relevant here in the context of political inclusion. However, the percentage of members at the central level committees of all the political parties is a measure of political inclusion in the party system. This appears to be good indicator of political inclusion for the voice of the excluded people. Therefore it is measured in terms of percentage of individuals represented in political parties from broad ethnic and gender categories.

**Representation in the Council of Ministers:** The council of ministers is the main implementing agency of the policy and programs for the people. The inclusion at this level is instrumental in policy and program interventions for inclusion. Thus the percentage of ministers from among the community under investigation is perceived to be a good indicator of political representation in decision-making position. It is therefore measured on the basis of the ministries convened during the last ten years reference period.

**Representation in the Bureaucracy:** The bureaucracy is the main implementing agency. Poorly enforced laws can make inclusive legislations meaningless. Ineffective implementation of the policy and programs is one of weakest characteristics of underdeveloped countries like Nepal. The implementation of social development programs, even if targeted, is most likely to lag behind when the voiceless are not included. Proper representation is not only a basis for effective implementation of special interventions. Rather it bridges the gap between the people and government to augment people's participation. The percentage of people in the bureaucracy is chosen as another indicator of political inclusion. The proportional share is measured regarding equal share of all social categories.

**Representation in the Local Users Groups:** Users Groups at the local level have proved to be an efficient implementing agency. The active participation of all the concerned people not only provides an opportunity to achieve what they wish to, it is also a very good platform to communicate with each other and lead a happy social life. Proportion of people in the user communities is conceived

to be a reliable indicator of political inclusion. In this research, participation of people in community forestry user's group is taken as reference of representation in the local users groups.

**Voice and Agency:** Voice and agency is a marker of political empowerment as well as disempowerment. Responding voice of people is a broader indicator of social inclusion. It is important in terms of both private and public sphere and therefore measured on the basis of perception of an individual respondent regarding whether their voices are listened to by the concerned agency or not. This indicator measures the proportion of individuals who consider their voice is listened to by the agency.

### **Cultural Dimensions**

Culture is the social heritage created by man through generations of its practices. It is developed in the course of its long term efforts made for enhancing the comforts for its existence. As a social heritage it is an inheritable resource. It is transmitted to people from one generation to another. It provides them the structured set of social condition for their living manifested in the form of their arts and artifacts, social organizations and commonly held ideas, beliefs, and values. Such a social and cultural setting evolved through generation of practices emerges in the form of symbolic identity of a community of people who follow a particular type of cultural tradition.

Language is one of the important symbols of culture of a population that helps its speakers to develop a sense of belongingness under a specific cultural tradition. There are cases that the common identities developed through speaking a common language have motivated people of some areas to raise a collective voice, even for the claim of their own separate state. The customary form of its political organization may also be taken as another kind of feature of culture of the population. Even in societies connected with formal type of modern bureaucratic organization, local affairs of the population are generally settled by their customary type of political organization. The attachment provided by adherence to a common form of religious beliefs and performance of related rituals also contribute to develop a sense of unity among the followers.

It is a fundamental right of all such cultural groups of a society to have freedom to follow their cultural practices. Where such a freedom is prohibited for some groups in comparison to others exclusion becomes a real risk. There are multiple manifestations of this type of exclusion across society. People speaking minority languages may not have adequate opportunity to read and write. This in turn prohibits their chances to reap the opportunity of job market and to take part in other social and political processes. The social, cultural and religious values of a society shape the attitude of its members to members of other cultural communities. Sometimes these attitudes may turn into discriminatory practices found in the behavior of these people. In a multicultural society like Nepal it is likely that such a risk of social discrimination is very high. This is the reason why cultural dignity has emerged today as an important dimension of human development. People everywhere are now demanding equal recognition of their culture. Therefore, social inclusion defined in terms of cultural features also needs special attention. Some proposed indicators (annex 5) are the following.

**Customary Politics:** The nationalities in Nepal are linked with customary political systems. However, all communities could have their own form of customary politics. The customary political system implies an inbuilt system formed by the community itself. The community usually reaches a consensus to elect a decision making body which deals with all the social affairs, including use of the resources, social activities, and providing justice in case of disputes. Persons may wish to be tied with the traditional system to lead a happy conjugal community life. Cultural inclusion, therefore, means that there should not be any interventions in these traditional political mechanisms by those who practice a different culture. Cultural freedom should lie with the person to choose to practice in the way she/he wishes to. This is an indicator of the group which is likely to have minimum intra group variance. Individual in the context of changing social values and norm should, nevertheless, be allowed to practice differently. Perception of the people in this regard should be respected. Percentage of persons who perceive to have enough opportunity to practice the customary politics of the community to which she/he belongs is perceived to be an indicator of cultural inclusion. It is measured by whether an individual of any community practices any customary politics or not.

**Religion and Rituals:** Nepal, although economically poor, is culturally very rich. Although dominated by the Hindu religion, almost all of the religions are practiced here. The Buddhist religion originated from the Nepali soil. Of around 80 nationalities reported in Nepal, 59 are officially recognized. They mostly share distinct cultures and values different from Hinduism. In addition to the nationalities, there are around 40 caste groups practicing distinct cultures. Cultural liberty means that everybody should have absolute freedom to practice their culture. Moreover, the state, which has been persistently dominated by Hinduism, should adequately address the problem to ensure cultural inclusion. Some of the indicators of the cultural inclusion based on the religion and rituals are as follows:

**Religious Recognition:** Percentage of persons who perceive that their religion is at the equal footing to rest of the religions practiced in the society, measured in terms of perception of an individual.

**Religious Discrimination:** Percentage of persons who have been discriminated on the basis of their religious background. It is measured in terms of individual feeling and experiences of religious discrimination throughout his/her life.

**Language:** Language is the main medium of communication. Apart from communication, its use largely projects culture. Freedom to use any language comfortable to a person is important component of cultural inclusion. The following are the indicators proposed for the study.

**Opportunity of Primary Education in Mother Tongue:** Percentage of persons who have opportunity to receive basic education in their mother tongue. It is measured in terms of availability of opportunity of getting basic education in their mother tongue or not.

**Linguistic Barrier:** Percentage of persons having experienced that linguistic barriers have constrained them from accessing opportunities. It is measured by whether he/she felt any linguistic barrier in accessing opportunities or not.

## Discrimination Dimensions

The notion discrimination has its connection with the notion of human dignity and respect. The notion, therefore, reflects the status of human value and self-respect in a society where she/he lives. In a broad sense, it is the additional concept that the characteristics of the people or community are also valued in the societies that construct the prejudices of dominance, denial, or restriction, and that lead to exclusion. Such personal characteristics are adduced on basis of ethnic or caste, sex, place of origin, or color of skin/race. In this section we are mainly talking about ethnic and caste based discrimination.

In ethnically diverse societies, dominant ethnic groups may define and impose many discriminatory practices including language, cultural, and religious practices for the disadvantaged groups. Social groups living in certain regions with poorly developed infrastructure may have limited access to state support and services that can lead to their exclusions. Humans are equally treated in all the religious beliefs. However, the Aryan civilization in this part of the world classified people according to their occupation based on *varnashram* system. The *varnashram* classified people into four groups. The Brahmin is at the top involved in knowledge generation and imparting it to the Chhetriya the rulers. The ruling group the Chhetriya is in the second tier. The traders and farmers are at the third layer. Those involved in rendering services to the community is put at the lowest. The *varnashram* had been legalized by Nepal's oldest law General Code (MulukiAin) 1854 AD. As a result, the Brahmin and Chhetriya are persistently occupying the top two layers of the society and continue to be in the mainstream in Nepal. This is a paradox that those who work hard and produce are considered inferior to those who usually exploit them. The persistent social values and prejudice in Nepal is the main determinant of the age-old discrimination. *Dalits* who are lowest in *varnashram* system are most oppressed group in Nepal. They are considered untouchable. There are some other groups such as *janajati*, *madeshi*, and women which are also lagging behind their counterparts. However the magnitude of such deprivation is not that acute for them as in the case of *dalits* mentioned above. Even though the constitution and law prohibited and imposed punishment on caste and ethnicity based discrimination, it is still prevailing rampantly and affects overall inclusion of discriminated community (which is normally not consider in scholarly development debates).

In the debates of development indexes (eg. Human Development Index, Poverty Index, or Exclusion Index) one may raise the question: can discrimination be an index since it is the process that brings outcome for the indexing variables? For example, due to discrimination in labor market (eg. discrimination in wage rate) the income level of a person or a social group differs from that reflected in the income index. But we argue that to understand overall contexts, the process should also be index so that it shows how processes are exclusionary in different social groups. Talking about discriminatory behaviors and process, Bhattachan et al. (2001) mentioned there are 205 types of discrimination practices for *dalits* in Nepal (even though there are some comments on this number) and similarly SAKSHI Human Right Watch Andhra Pradesh published 148 types of discrimination practices in India<sup>1</sup>. Similarly, there are ample of evidences that prove the caste and ethnic discrimination practices that lead to exclusion. A book edited by Prof. Sukhadeo Thorat and Katherine S. Attewell titled, *Blocked by Caste: Economic Discrimination in Modern India*<sup>1</sup> provides evidence on caste-based exclusion in Indian Society. For example, Thorat and Attewell ran an experiment to test caste discrimination in the urban labour market and found that in modern private enterprises (including IT), applicants with a typical Muslim or *dalit* name had a lower chance of success than those with the same qualification and an upper caste Hindu name. In another chapter, Jodhka and Newman report on detailed interviews with human resource managers of 25 large firms in New Delhi. All the managers insisted “family background” (including the educational level of parents) was critical in evaluating a potential employee. This is clearly discriminatory, for *dalit* applicants may not have the same social and educational background as those from the upper castes. Another set of chapters explores the patterns of discrimination in public services and public institutions, including in health care services, in schools, and in programmes of food security. Sanghmitra Acharya gives a detailed account of various forms of discrimination experienced by *dalit* children in gaining access to health care from both private and public providers in rural Gujarat and Rajasthan. Untouchability was reported by children “seven out of 10 times” from “doctors, laboratory technicians, and registered medical practitioners”, and it was “more vigorously practiced by

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1 [www.sakshiap.org/toplinks/aboutdalits/Current Situation](http://www.sakshiap.org/toplinks/aboutdalits/Current%20Situation)

pharmacists, ANMs and AWWs.” Geetha Nambissan writes of similar experiences of *dalit* children in schools in rural and urban Rajasthan. Similarly in the case of the public distribution system (PDS), an analysis by Thorat and Lee, drawing on a survey of PDS outlets in 531 villages across five states, shows that there was discriminatory behavior against *dalits* by the PDS staff in respect of prices in 28 per cent of villages and in respect of quality in 40 per cent. In 26 per cent of the villages, dealers practiced untouchability “by dropping goods from above into cupped Dalit hands below, so as to avoid ‘polluting contact’.”

All above mentioned studies show that there are exclusionary behaviors, prejudices, norms in social, economic, cultural and political activities for certain groups. But those behaviors, prejudices and norms have never been measured in national context so as to quantify as an index. When reviewing the different literatures, it is hard to find any studies or development indexes that mention a discrimination index.

The discrimination dimension, defined here as human dignity and respect, focuses mainly on discriminatory practices induced by social values and norms, and refers not simply to the discrimination in its usual meaning. Rather it encompasses wide range of phenomena regarding human value and self respect.

This research takes the first-step to measure discrimination to be included in a Social Inclusion Index.

Measuring the extent of discrimination and indexing poses a difficult empirical challenge. We have to be careful that self-reported data are unlikely to accurately reflect attitudes if there are perceived stigmas attached to caste, ethnic, gender and others discrimination views.

We try to measure this to develop the social inclusion index. On basis of review of type of discrimination practices in Nepal and India we categorized discrimination in three broad domains: spatial segregation, discrimination in access to goods and services, and discrimination by dominance due to prejudice and attitude. It is not possible to include all the discriminatory practices mentioned in literature to be included in this indexing but these three broad domains cover almost all main discrimination practices in Nepalese society (see annex 5).

In the exclusion debates, spatial segregation is one main area that frequently comes up. It mainly includes denial of entry of certain caste or ethnic group to enter house (or different section of house) of other social groups because of their caste and ethnic belonging. *dalit* caste group is normally not allowed to enter into other caste groups' homes even if they adhere to the same religious belief. Similarly, they are not allowed to enter religious place or temple or religious function. They are not allowed to share equal facilities like water source, tea-shops, milk collection center, schools, public meetings, and so on.

**Denial to Entry into the House:** Percentage of population that has experienced that they are denied entry into the houses of other social groups only because of their caste/ethnic background

**Denial to Entry into Religious Places:** Percentage of people that are not easily allowed to enter religious places established for the community to which they belong because of their faiths.

**Denial in Sharing Public Space:** Percentage of people which is not fairly allowed to share all social facilities such as water source, teashop, milk collection center, school, public functions like meetings, feasts, etc.

Discrimination in access to and delivery of goods and services is another main area frequently mentioned in literature. Discrimination in wage-rate on basis of caste belonging, free labor service from discriminated caste group, system of halia, or any form of bonded labor, forced labor (*sinofalne*), or denial of certain occupation. For example, selling milk by *dalits*, opening tea or food shop by *dalits*, are some of main features in exploitation on exchange of services and goods. Similarly, denial to admission in schools, health services, or any other institution, hostel and rent out room for certain caste groups, even if they can afford for the services, are also mentioned. And unequal access to government services from center to local level due to belonging to certain caste/ethnic groups is another frequently mentioned discrimination issues.

**Exploitation in Goods and Services:** Percentage of people who conceive that they have been exploited when exchanging their goods and services (mainly in traditional occupation, *sino*, *haliya*,

*bali ghare*, work without wage, selling/buying milk, sale meat, offer/receive help, etc.).

**Access to Goods and Services:** Percentage of people who conceive that they have equal access to all goods and services (including road, admission in any institute, room/hostel rent, etc.) available in the market, even if they can afford to consume it.

**Fair Access to Services:** Percentage of people who feel that they have fair access to all services provided by the government/community at local level.

**Identity and Respect:** Domination, downsizing, and insults to certain caste group due to prejudices or beliefs or attitudes are areas which frequently comes up. Besides these, there are other discriminatory practices, but due to limitation in data collection they have not been included here.

## Gender Dimensions

Gender dimension of social inclusion embraces several issues that are crucial in shaping female-male relationships under Nepali value system. This dimension, of course, intends to measure women's status induced by age-old patriarchal value system. The proposed Social Inclusion Index, however, takes into account 12 key indicators capturing the main problematic areas of gender disparity and inequality in the specific context of Nepal. These indicators are broadly categorized into four domains, as follows. This note briefly explains why those domains are considered important and why the particular indicators are chosen in each domain.

- Access to public services (primarily educational and health opportunities)
- Economic autonomy
- Participation and decision making in public life, and
- Sexuality, control over body, and gender based violence

Access to basic services, such as education and health, economic opportunities and autonomy, and opportunities to participate in public life (such as politics and local groups), are the critical areas of women's empowerment that can potentially bring women in

equal footing with men through the process of creating an enabling environment. This index, therefore, emphasizes on these domains of inclusion in a relatively extensive manner. For example, in education, we have chosen two indicators to decide how far women are discriminated against men in one of the vital areas of public opportunities. We look particularly at what level of disparity girls face while getting enrollment up to the secondary level of education. This is followed by an assessment of whether girls are discriminated in choice over types of school they are admitted compared to their male siblings. This, we think, best captures the foundational aspect of gender inequality that would vitally open up or constrain life chances for women and men in their later lives.

Access to key forms of assets (such as land) and opportunity for girls and women to have their own separate funds at their disposal is another important area in a society such as Nepal, where ancestral properties are inherited along the male lines. So we attempt to see what proportion of women own land as a proxy indicator of women's economic autonomy, complemented by what proportion of women have disposable assets of various kind (such as daijo-pewa) at their own control. As a point of caution, while we are aware that having land ownership alone does not automatically guarantee that women also have control over it (particularly in the changing policy landscape of tax exemption in land transaction if the land has been registered in female's name), we need to recognize that land ownership is still a critical form of asset in an agrarian society such as Nepal. Bringing women out of home is one of the critical junctures of encouraging women to break their confinement to domesticity so as to allow them to join the public life. Hence, women's engagement in social networks, organizations, and political forums is a matter of vital importance to their empowerment. We have taken three indicators in this domain to capture women's engagement and participation at different levels, from local social groups to representation in decision-making bodies such as the central working committees of political parties. There are many more areas to look at in this domain, such as women and men's representation in bureaucracy and in parliament (the current Constituent Assembly, for example). In order to maintain a balance with other domains of disparity and inequality, however, we preferred to reduce the list to a few key indicators only, and hence, representation of women in the local users' groups, management committees, sahakaris,

and representation of women in the central working committee of political parties have been taken into account.

Gender-based violence, particularly violence against girls and women, is one of the widespread and frequently observed and reported phenomena in Nepal. Girls and women experience violence not only in the public places, but also at home massively, where they are supposed to remain safe. Violence has many dimensions, from stereotyping to sexual harassment, from unwanted gesture of sexual intimacy to psychological torture, from workplace harassment to rape, and so on. Since it is very difficult to capture the prevalence of sexual harassment, which varies across society, we attempt to capture women's experience of what they think—whether they experienced a sense of offence by men at home and in public life during the last year. Since the debate of gender-based violence falls under the broader debate of women's control of over their own body, and their sexuality, we have chosen two more indicators to capture this by examining whether the married women were given opportunity to choose their life partners and to influence reproductive decision. Key indicators chosen (annex 3, table 4), in gender dimension, for the purpose of the social inclusion index are as follows:

**Gender Parity in Enrollment:** School enrollment provides an opportunity to enhance capability. Gender parity in enrollment (up to secondary level) is one important indicator of gender inclusion.

**Discrimination in Schooling:** Children should have equal opportunities in schooling. However, boys and girls are found to be treated unequally by parents. Percentage of boys/girls in private schools is another important indicator of social inclusion in terms of gender.

**Land Ownership:** Land is regarded as important asset, as well as means of subsistence production. Percentage of women having land ownership would be another indicator of gender inclusion.

**Economic Autonomy:** Women who report that they have (or do not have) "some" separate funds at their disposal (*daijo* (dowry), *pewa-pat* (personal assets) or any asset of that sort including bank deposits, deposits in local saving and credit groups, and *sahakaris* (cooperative)) indicate economic autonomy.

**Representation of Women in the Local Users' Groups, Management Committees, *Sahakaris*:** Representation is essential to influence decision-making. Decision-making starts from local level. Percentage of women in the local users' groups, management committees, *sahakaris* is one important indicator of representation.

**Representation of Women in the Central Working Committee of Political Parties:** Percentage of women in the central working committee of political parties.

**Involvement of Women in the Election:** Percentage of women involved in voting at local level in the recent election.

**Representation of Women in the Bureaucracy:** Percentage of women in the bureaucracy.

**Representation of Women in the Professional and Technical Jobs:** Percentage of women in the professional and technical jobs.

**Violence against Women:** Percentage of women who feel they have been (or never been) offended by men during the last one year in domestic and public life.

**Marital Decision:** Decision over marital partner has direct implication for women's life. Proportion of married women who consented before taking decision over their marriage

**Reproductive Decision:** Decision on reproductive activities has direct impacts on health status of women. Share of married women able to influence reproductive decisions is an important indicator of gender parity.

## **6. Computational approach of social inclusion index**

The Social Inclusion Index envisaged here should be able to assess the status of social inclusion. It should also facilitate valid comparisons over time. Six dimensions are included in the index. Determination of the relative weights for the specific indicator to arrive at the dimensional index calls for deeper investigation. The relative importance of the chosen dimension is equally important. This largely depends on the local context and is likely to vary as the context changes. Equal weights both for the dimensional

indicators and the indices are, however, proposed. The simple arithmetic mean is initiated at the present.

### **Economic Dimensional Index**

- 1 Land holding index =  $(\text{Mean area} - \text{Minimum area}) / (\text{Maximum area} - \text{Minimum area})$ .
- 2 Non-agri-index =  $(\% \text{ of persons in non agricultural activity} - 0\%) / (100-0)$ .
- 3 Economic activity index =  $(\text{Average duration of economic activity} - \text{Minimum observed}) / (\text{Maximum observed} - \text{Minimum observed})$ .
- 4 Poverty index 1 =  $1 - (\text{Percentage of food expenditure} - \text{Minimum \% observed}) / (\text{Maximum \% observed} - \text{Minimum \% observed})$ .
- 5 Poverty index 2 =  $1 - (\text{Percentage of population in elementary occupation} - \text{Minimum \% observed}) / (\text{Maximum \% observed} - \text{Minimum \% observed})$ .
- 6 Food sufficiency index =  $(\% \text{ of persons with adequate food} - 0) / (100-0)$ .
- 7 Quality of house index =  $(\text{Percentage of households living in house having at least two of three housing qualities} - 0) / (100-0)$ ; concrete roof, cemented wall, concrete foundation are only considered as quality of house indicators.
- 8 Living space index =  $(\% \text{ of person with living space } 5m^2 \text{ or more} - 0) / (100-0)$ .
- 9 Commercial fuel index =  $(\% \text{ of persons using commercial fuel} - 0) / (100-0)$ .
- 10 Lighting index =  $(\% \text{ of person living in electrified house} - 0) / (100-0)$ .

**Economic access index**=  $(\text{Average area of land holding index} + \text{Non agri-involvement index} + \text{Economic activity index}) / 3$

**Poverty index**=  $(\text{Poverty index 1} + \text{Poverty index 2} + \text{Food sufficiency index}) / 3$

**Standard of living index**=  $(\text{Quality of house index} + \text{Living space index} + \text{Commercial Fuel index} + \text{Lighting index}) / 4$

**Economic Dimension Index EDI**=  $(\text{Economic Access Index} + \text{Poverty Index} + \text{Standard of living Index}) / 3$ .

## Social Dimensions Index

- 11 Safe water index= (Percentage of people using safe water-0)/(100-0).
- 12 Sanitation index= (Percentage of people using modern toilet-0)/(100-0).
- 13 Heath service accessibility index=1-(percentage of people could not afford medication for every child in the past 12 months-0)/(100-0).
- 14 Nutritional index =1-(Percentage of malnourished children -0)/(100-0).
- 15 Child mortality index=1- (Percentage of people which ever faced the evidence of any Child death-0)/(100-0).
- 16 Literacy index = (Adult literacy rate -0)/(100-0).
- 17 Enrollment index = (Gross enrolment rate at basic, secondary, and tertiary level-0)/(100-0).
- 18 Education attainment index= (Percentage of children who have completed basic level of schooling-0)/(100-0).
- 19 Social connectivity index= (Annual frequency of meetings with friends and relatives- Minimum frequency)/ (Maximum frequency area-Minimum frequency).
- 20 Social distance index= 1-(Percent of population who have the feelings that they have been negatively affected by prevailing social distance and differences of identities-0)/(100-0).

Health index= (Safe water index + Sanitation index+ Heath service Accessibility index+ Heath care index+ Child Mortality index)/5.

Education index= (Literacy index +Enrolment index + Education attainment index)/3

Social dignity index= (Social connectivity index + Social distance index)/2

Social Dimension Index (SDI)= (Health index + Education index+Social dignity index)/3.

## Political Dimensions Index

- 21 Political representation index 1= (Proportional voting share in recent election -0)/(100-0).

- 22 Political representation index 2=(Proportional share in political parties -0)/ (100-0).
- 23 Political representation index 3= (Proportional share in council of ministers-0)/ (100-0).
- 24 Bureaucratic representation index = (Proportional share in bureaucracy-0)/ (100-0).
- 25 Local participation index= (Proportional share in the local users groups-0)/ (100-0).
- 26 Voice/agency index =1-(Percent of population who have the experiences of ‘not being heard’ of their voices by concerned governance institutions-0)/ (100-0).

**Political representation index=** (Political representation index 1 + Political representation index 2 + Political representation index 3 + Bureaucratic representation index+ Local participation index)/5

**Voice/agency index = Voice/agency index**

**Political Dimension Index (PDI)=** (Political representation index + Voice/ agency index)/2

### **Cultural Dimensions Index**

- 27 Customary politics index= (Percentage of person who perceive that they have enough opportunity to practice their customary politics -0)/ (100-0).
- 28 Religious recognition index 1= (Percentage of persons who perceive that their religion is at the equal footing to rest of the religions -0)/ (100-0).
- 29 Religious recognition index 2=1-(Percentage of population who have the experiences that they have been discriminated on the basis of religious background -0)/ (100-0).
- 30 Language recognition index 1= (Percentage of persons who have opportunity of getting basic education in their mother tongue-0)/ (100-0).
- 31 Language Recognition index 2=1-(Percentage of population having experiences that linguistic barrier has constrained them from accessing opportunities -0)/ (100-0).

**Customary politics index= Customary politics index**

**Religion index= (Religious recognition index 1+ Religious recognition index 2)/2**

**Language index= (Language recognition index 1+ Language recognition index 2)/2**

**Cultural Dimension Index (CDI)= (Customary politics index +Religion index+ Language index)/3**

### **Discrimination Dimensions Index**

- 32 Spatial segregation index 1 = 1-(Percentage of population who have the experiences that they are not allowed to enter the houses of other social groups only because of their caste/ethnic background-0)/(100-0)
- 33 Spatial segregation index 2= 1-(Percentage of people who are not easily allowed to enter religious places or temples established for the community to which they belong by their faiths-0)/(100-0)
- 34 Spatial segregation index 3= 1- (Percentage of people who are not fairly allowed to share all social facilities -0)/(100-0)
- 35 Fair market index=1-(Percentage of persons who conceive that they have been exploited in exchange for their goods and services-0)/(100-0).
- 36 Market accessibility index=(Percentage of persons who conceive that they have equal access to all goods and services available in the market even if they can afford to consume it-0)/(100-0).
- 37 Service accessibility index 1= (Percentage of persons who feel that they have free access to all services provided by the government at the local level-0)/(100-0).
- 38 Discrimination index =1-(Percentage of population who have experiences of being insulted or degraded due to their attachment to their cultural, religious beliefs or any caste and ethnicity or belongingness to particular region or they have experiences of discrimination of any other kind-0)/(100-0).

**Spatial segregation index= (Spatial segregation index 1+ Spatial segregation index 2+ Spatial segregation index 3)/3**

**Access to market index= (Fair market index+ Market accessibility index + Service accessibility index 1)/3**

## **Discrimination index= Discrimination index**

**Discrimination Dimension Index (DDI)= (Spatial segregation index+ Access to market index + Discrimination index)/3**

## **Gender Dimensions Index**

- 39 Gender non-violence index 1= 1-(Percentage of women who feel that they have experienced physical/psychological torture by men in the domestic/public life during the last year -0)/(100-0).
- 40 Gender non-violence index 2= (Percentage of married women who were consulted before taking decision over their marriage-0)/(100-0).
- 41 Gender non-violence index 3= (Percentage of married women who were consulted in taking reproductive decisions -0)/(100-0).
- 42 Gender balance index 1= (Gender parity in enrolment (up to secondary level-Minimum value)/(Maximum value-Minimum value).
- 43 Gender balance index 2= (Gender parity in enrolment in private school-0)/(100-0).
- 44 Gender resource balance index 1= (Percentage of women having land ownership -0)/(100-0).
- 45 Gender resource balance index 2= (Percentage of women who report that they have “some” separate funds at their disposal (daijo, pewa-pat or any asset of that sort including bank deposit in local saving and credit groups, and sahakaris, or somewhere else) (at least some level of threshold)-0)/(100-0).
46. Gender representation index 1= (Percentage of women in the local user’s group-0)/(50-0).
- 47 Gender representation index 3= (Percentage of women voted in recent election -0)/(100-0).
- 48 Gender representation index 4= (Percentage of Women in the working committees of all the political parties -0)/(50-0).
- 49 Gender representation index 4= (Percentage of women in Bureaucracy-0)/(50-0).
- 50 Gender representation index 5= (Percentage of women in Professional / technical jobs-0)/(50-0).

**Gender non-violence index= (Gender non-violence index 1+ Gender non-violence index 2+ Gender non-violence index 3)/3**

**Gender balance index= (Gender balance index 1+ Gender balance index 2)/2**

**Gender resource balance index= (Resource balance index 1+ Resource balance index 2)/2**

**Gender participation index= (Gender representation index 1+ Gender representation index 2+ Gender representation index 3+ Gender representation index 4+ Gender representation index 5)/5**

**Gender Dimension Index (GDI)= (Gender non-violence index + Gender balance index + Gender resource balance index+ Gender participation index)/4**

**SOCIAL INCLUSION INDEX=**  
**(EDI+SDI+PDI+CDI+DDI+GDI)/6**

## **7. Policy Implications and Limitations**

Social inclusion index (NSII) for Nepal has some policy implications, as well as some limitations. They are discussed here as follows:

### **7.1 Policy Implications**

Nepal Social Inclusion index proposed here goes beyond analyzing economic factors to encompass political, cultural, discrimination, and gender dimensions impacting the quality of human life. Political participation enlarges choice of the people to shape lives as they value. The cultural dimension takes into consideration freedom to express culture. The discrimination dimension accommodates the issues surrounding the removal of persistent discriminatory practices for social solidarity and harmony to lead a happy community life. The gender dimension has been included to shed light upon distinct discriminatory attitudes and practices to be changed for gender inclusion.

Apart from the measurability of levels of inclusion in aggregate by NSII, its built-in sub-indices could be policy tools to design inclusive policy formulation and program implementations. It provides the detail description of empirical aspects ethnic and gender categories in terms of a number of inclusion related indicators. Thus by

providing realistic scenario of the current situation of ethnic and gender categories it guides policy formulations. It also provides a basis for evaluation of inclusion-oriented policy and programs. Government of Nepal has formulated a number of inclusive policies in the past, reservation policy for example. Based on those policies various programs have also been designed. Indices computed in this research will thus evaluate the situation of effectiveness of inclusive policy and programs.

## 7.2 Limitations

Dimensions and indicators of inclusion vary across time and space since type and level of development directly influence social inclusion. Therefore, dimensions and indicators chosen here may not entirely cover all dimensions of social inclusion in the context of Nepal.

It is difficult to pinpoint any of the dimensions to be a cause of another. They are, however, highly correlated and are in interaction either on a one-to-one basis or in combinations. Likewise the indicators are most likely to behave so. The approach adopted does not take into consideration such inter and intra dimensional relations.

Indicators proposed here will be only obtained at the aggregate level. It will not be further disaggregated for inter-sectional analysis.

The quest for inclusion largely varies across communities and according to the local context. Some examples from the Nepali context are in order;

- *Dalits* need equal treatment in terms of their social equity in the area they live in.
- Females need equal treatment in the family they live in.
- *Madheshis* need their identification as equal citizens.
- The nationalities envisage retrieving their lost cultural values.

This poses a problem to infer the relative importance of the dimension as well as of the indicators therein. As the theories of inclusion are in the process of evolution, evidences could not be found yet to form a strong theoretical basis to attach unequal

weights. This calls for a deeper investigation which is beyond the scope of the present study. This is another striking limitation of the present computation method of the proposed index. Besides this, overall result of the computation depends on the quality and reliability of data to be obtained.

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## Annexes

### **Annex 1: Definitions of the Indicators Used in Various Dimensions**

#### **1. Social Dimension**

**Adult Literacy:** Adult literacy rate has been defined as the self-reported ability to both read and write. All persons of fifteen years of age and above have been included as adults.

**Gross Enrollment:** Gross enrolment rate at basic, secondary, and tertiary education level is defined as ratio of total numbers of persons enrolled at basic, secondary, and tertiary level educational institutions to the total persons in the age group 5-21 multiplied by 100.

**Basic Schooling:** Basic schooling completion rate is defined as ratio of total numbers of children (age 13-14) completing full course of basic (1-8) schooling to total children in the same age group multiplied by 100.

**Nutrition Level** is measured in terms of stunting. Level of malnutrition of children is defined as ratio of total numbers of children (aged 0 – 60 months) not having specified height to the total children in the same age multiplied by 100.

**Health Service Affordability** is defined as the percentage of persons living in household that could afford medication for every child in the past 12 months.

**Mortality:** Evidence of child death is measured as percentage of person living in household having experienced any child (age 0-14) death during past ten years.

**Safe Water** use is measured as percentage of persons living in households using tap drinking water.

**Sanitation Level** is measured as percentage of persons living in households using own modern toilet.

**Social Relationships** are expressed as frequency of meetings with friends and relatives during the preceding year.

**Social Connectivity** is measured in terms of percent of respondents who have the feelings that they have mostly been negatively affected (receiving no help even in the difficult situations, such as accident, illness, natural calamity, etc.) by prevailing social distance and differences due to caste, class, gender, region, religion, etc., affiliations.

## **2. Economic Dimension**

**Landholding:** Average landholding size is defined as the ratio of total agricultural land operated by the households to total number of population.

**Non-agriculture Activities:** Percentage of persons of working age in non-agriculture activities will be measured in one year reference period taking usual economic activity into consideration.

**Level of Underemployment:** Average duration of economic activity of the economically active persons in past one year proxies the level of underemployment status.

**Food Expenditure** to the total household expenditure expressed in percentage is used as a proxy of poverty level.

**Food Sufficiency:** Percentages of persons who consume adequate food in terms of two meals a day throughout the year measure the level of food sufficiency.

**Elementary Occupation:** Percentage of working population in elementary occupation mainly includes persons working on their own account as defined in census 2011.

**Housing Condition:** Percentage of persons living in a good house types refers to persons living in houses with at least two types of houses (concrete or brick foundation, concrete or tile roof, and brick wall).

**Dwelling Space:** Living space per person will be calculated as the ratio total living space to the total persons living in the household.

**Cooking Fuel Use:** Percentage of persons living in households using commercial fuel for cooking.

**Access to Electricity:** Percentage of persons living in electrified households.

### 3. Political Dimension

**Participation in Election:** Proportional participation of various social/identity groups in the recent election refers to percentage of votes cast by a particular group divided by percentage of voters of the same group.

**Representation in Political Parties:** Proportional representation of various social/identity groups in the central committee of political parties refers to percentage of persons in central committee of the political parties of a particular group divided by percentage of persons of the same group in the total population.

**Representation in Council of Ministers:** Proportional representation of various social/identity groups in Council of Minister refers to percentage of ministers of a particular group in the last ten years period divided by percentage of persons of the same group in the total population.

**Representation in Bureaucracy:** Proportional representation in bureaucracy refers to percentage of persons of a particular group divided by percentage of persons of the same group in the total population.

**Representation at Local Level:** Proportional representation in local user's groups/consumer's committees refers to percentage of persons of a particular group divided by percentage of persons of the same group in the total population.

**Voice and Agency:** Percent of population who have the experiences of "not being heard" by the governance institutions concerned is measured as the percent of respondent who mostly faced problem of not listening, such as treatment in health post, recommendation from VDC, receiving citizenship certificate, etc. and reflects the extent the voice/ agency not recognized by the state mechanism/ agency or any leader outside their group.

#### **4. Cultural Dimension**

**Opportunity in Getting Primary Education in their Mother Tongue:** Percentage of persons who have opportunity of getting basic education in their mother tongue refers to number of children in school who were at least facilitated in their mother tongue expressed as a percentage to total number of children of the reference group at school.

**Linguistic Barrier in Opportunity:** Percentage of population having experiences of linguistic barrier refers to perception of the respondents whether the barrier has constrained them from accessing opportunities, such as any opportunity in government, private, or public sector because of linguistic barrier.

**Religious Recognition:** Percentage of respondents who perceive that their religion is at the equal footing to the rest of the religions. It refers to the equal recognition, such as giving holidays for the religious festivals, assistance/support from the government sides given to that particular community.

**Religious Discrimination:** Percentage of population who have the experiences that they have been discriminated on the basis of religious background. It is measured in terms of persons who have frequent experiences of being discriminated because of their affiliations to religion, such as not providing government, community services, etc.

**Customary Politics:** Percentage of person who perceive that they have enough opportunity to practice their customary politics. It refers to the individual or community freedom to practice their customary rules and regulations without any state interventions, such as resolving community level dispute according to the customs of any particular community.

#### **5. Gender Dimension**

**Violence Against Women:** Percentage of women who feel that they have experienced physical/psychological torture by men in the domestic/public life during the last year will be measured on the response of the adult women in the sampled households.

**Marital Decision:** Proportion of married women who were consulted before taking decision over their marriage refers to all married women in the sampled household.

**Reproductive Decision:** Share of married women to influence reproductive decision refers to percentage of married women in the family who were consulted regarding child birth in terms of time of first birth, number of children, sex of children, birth spacing.

**Gender Parity in Enrollment** of a particular group is the ratio of number girls of the same group in secondary school to the number of boys in school of the same group.

**Gender Parity in Enrollment in Private School** of a particular group is the ratio of percentage of girls in private school of a particular group divided by percentage of boys in the private school of the same group.

**Land Ownership:** Percentage of women having land ownership refers to percentage of women living household having land registered in the name of any women in the household.

**Economic Autonomy:** Percentage of women having economic autonomy refers to reporting of some separate funds at their disposal (“daijo”, “pewa-pat” or any asset of that sort including bank deposit in local saving and credit groups, and sahakaris, or somewhere else) by adult women in the household.

**Representation at Local User’s Group:** Percentage of women in the local user’s group of a particular group will be obtained by dividing total numbers of women in the local user’s group of the selected group by total number of persons of the same group in the user’s group.

**Representation in Political Parties:** Percentage of women in the central working committee of a particular group will be obtained by dividing total number of women in the central working committee of the political parties of the same group by total number of persons of the same group in the central working committee of the political parties.

**Participation in Recent Election:** Percentage of women involved in the recent election from a particular group will be obtained by dividing percentage of women of the same group voted in the recent election by total percentage voter of the same group in the recent election.

**Representation in Bureaucracy:** Percentage of women in the bureaucracy of a particular group will be obtained by dividing total number of women in the bureaucracy of the same group by the total number of persons of the same group in the bureaucracy.

Percentage of women in the professional and technical jobs of a particular group will be obtained by dividing total numbers of women in the professional and technical jobs of the same group by the total number of persons of the same group in the professional and technical jobs.

## **6. Discrimination Dimension**

**Denial in Entry into Household:** Percentage of population who has the experience that they are not allowed to enter the houses of other social groups only because of their caste/ethnic background refers to the perception of respondents in the sampled survey.

**Denial in Entry into Religious Places:** Percentage of people who are not easily allowed to enter religious places or temples established for the community to which they belong by their faiths refers to the perception of respondents in the sampled survey.

**Fairness in Sharing Social Facilities:** Percentage of people which is not fairly allowed to share all social facilities such as water source, teashop, milk collection center, school, public functions like meetings, feasts etc., refers to the perception of respondents in the sampled survey.

**Exploitation of Goods and Services:** Percentage of people who conceive that they have been exploited to exchange their goods and services (mainly in traditional occupation, Sino, Haliya, Bali Ghare, work without wage, selling/buying milk, sale meat, offer/receive help, etc.) refers to the perception of respondent in the sample survey.

**Access to Goods and Services:** Percentage of people who conceive that they have equal access to all goods and services including road, admission in any institute, room/hostel rent, etc., available in the market even if they can afford to consume it refers to the perception of respondents in the sampled survey.

**Fair Access to All Service:** Percentage of people who feel that they have fair access to all services provided by the government/ community at local level refers to the perception of respondents in the sampled survey.

**Prejudices and Negative Attitude:** Discrimination by dominance due to prejudice and attitude refers to the perception of respondents in the sampled survey and will be expressed by percentage of respondents who have experiences of being insulted or degraded because of their affiliations to their culture, religion, caste, etc., such as calling by nickname, insulting or causing laughter in front of any group or mass people.

## **Annex 2: Indicators Chosen by the UNDP in Social Inclusion Survey (2011)**

### **A. Economic Exclusion**

**Inequality:** At-risk-of-poverty rate (60 percent of median equivalent expenditures in a country)

**Subjective basic needs:** In the past 12 months the household has not been able to afford three meals a day, or pay bills regularly, or keep the home adequately warm, or buy new clothes and shoes

**Employment:** Being unemployed or a discouraged worker

**Financial services:** Lack of access to a bank account on one's own name

**Material deprivation housing:** The household cannot afford a bed for every member of the household

**Material deprivation amenities:** Household needs a washing machine, freezer or microwave but cannot afford one

**Material deprivation ICT:** Household needs a computer or internet but cannot afford one

**Overcrowding:** Household with less than 6m<sup>2</sup> per person

### **B. Exclusion from social services**

**Public utilities:** Household with no running water or sewerage system

**Public utilities:** Household heats with wood or with no heating device

**Education:** Low educational achievements (basic schooling) and early school leavers

**Education:** Household could not afford to buy school materials for every child in the past 12 months

**Education:** Household with young children not in school or pre-school

**Health care:** Household could not afford medication or dental checks for every child in the past 12 months

**Health care:** Medical needs not being met by the health care system

**Social infrastructure:** Lack of opportunities to attend events due to distance (lack of transportation).

### C. Exclusion from participation in civic and social life and networks

**Social capital:** Rare or infrequent social contact with family or relatives

**Social capital:** Rare social contact with friends

**Social capital:** Lack of support networks that could help in the event of emergency

**Social participation:** In the past 12 months the household has not been able to afford inviting friends or family for a meal or drink at least once a month

**Social participation:** The household has not been able to afford to buy books, cinema or theatre tickets in the past 12 months

**Civic participation:** Inability to vote due to lack of eligibility or distance to polling station

**Civic participation:** No participation/membership in associations, teams or clubs

**Civic participation:** No participation in political/civic activities

### Annex 3: Links Between Human Development and Social Inclusion

The two concepts are complementary in policy terms: human development bears a stronger focus on what needs to be achieved; while social inclusion focuses on how it should be achieved.

Social inclusion adds the process dimension of exclusion (the agents, groups, and institutions that exclude) to the human development concept.

A social inclusion perspective can thus help sharpen strategies for achieving human development by addressing the discrimination, exclusion, powerlessness, and accountability failures that lie at the root of poverty and other development problems.

Social exclusion can limit freedoms and choices, both as a process and as an outcome, thus reducing human development. Inclusion is therefore an essential precursor to universal human development. Organizations and laws are vital but less tangible are social concepts such as values, trust, networks, family ties, and friendships.

#### **Annex 4: Summary Tables of Social Exclusion and Inclusion**

**Table 1: Methods of Inequality Analysis by ILO**

Analytical Dimension	Whole	Part
State	Inequality	Poverty
Process	Polarization	Social exclusion

**Table 2: Major Dimensions of Exclusion**

Dimension	Gender	Caste	Race	Language	Religion	Geo-political
Dominant	Men/ Boys	Tagadhari Brahman, Chhetri	Caucasoid	Nepali	Hindu	Parbatiya (Hill dweller)
Subordinate	Women/ Girls		Janajati/ Mongoloid	Other	Non-Hindu	Madhesi (Plain dweller)

**Table 3: Dimensions and Indicators of Social Exclusion/Inclusion by Various Institutional and Individual Studies**

Institution/Individual	Dimensions	Indicator	
NHDR (2007) 7 Indicators	Living standard	*population below the income poverty * long term unemployment	
	Health	* those without health insurance	
	Education	* those over 15 years who did not complete primary school	
	Participation	* those who do not vote in elections, * do not participate in organized social activities	
	Access to services	* household without a telephone	
	Dimensions	HSEI-I	HSEI-II
	Living standard	*population without any monetary income *housing-house/apartment without a telephone	*employment in a job below qualification *employment in the informal sector
	Health	* those without health insurance	* employment for health benefits based on the minimum wage
	Education	*those over 15 years without a full primary school	*employment with no opportunity for further education and training
Bennett and Dahal (2006) 9 Indicators	Economic wellbeing	* wealth and assets	
	Education	*percentage of male and female without education	
	Health	* maternal and child health and nutrition *fertility and family planning *fertility *family planning knowledge and practice	
	Empowerment	* citizenship *exposure to media *women's empowerment	
Bennett and Parajuli (2011) 8 Indicators	Income/ Consumption	* consumption poor	25 percent
	Health	* stunted * water excluded * sanitation excluded	25 (8.33x3) percent
	Education	* access deprived * quality deprived	25 (12.5x2) percent

	Influence	* influence excluded * empowerment deprived	25 (12.5x2) percent
HDI (NHDR, 2009) Montenegro 4 Indicators	Health	*Life expectancy at birth (years)	Life expectancy index
	Education	*Adult literacy rate (percent) *Combined primary, secondary and tertiary gross enrolment ratio (percent)	Education index Gross enrolment index
	Income	*GDP per capita income (PPP US \$)	GDP index
European Union (EU) 4 Indicators	Economic and labour market	*Markets and factors of production such as labour, land, capital, and ability to purchase good and services	
	Access to education	*Literacy and education focused on 'life readiness'	
	Health care services	*Equal access to quality health care help	
	Political participation	*Equally and fully participate in decision making processes	
OPHI (2011) 10 Indicators	Education	*Years of schooling *Child school attendance	* no household member has completed five years of schooling *Any school-aged child is not attending school up to class +
	Health	*Child mortality *Nutrition	* any child has died in the family * any adult or child for whom there is nutritional information is malnourished
	Living standard	* Electricity	*the household has no electricity
		*Improved sanitation	*the household's sanitation facility is not improved (according to MDG guidelines), or it is improved but shared with other households
		*Safe drinking water	* the household does not have access to safe drinking water (according to MDG guidelines) or safe drinking water is more than a 30-minute walk from home roundtrip
		*Flooring Cooking Fuel	* the household has a dirt, sand or dung floor *the household cooks with dung, wood or charcoal
		*Assets ownership	* the household does not own more than one radio, TV, telephone, bike, motorbike or refrigerator and does not own a car or truck
Australian Government (2009)	Poverty and low income	* At-risk-of-poverty rate after social transfers (EU) * Depth (degree) of deficient income (EU) * Income distribution (EU) * Income inequality (EU) * Persistent risk-of-poverty rate (EU) * More stringent risk-of-poverty rate (EU) * Income of people 65 years and over as a ratio of income of	

	people under 65 years (EU) * Housing affordability (S)
Lack of access to the job market	* Participation in the labour market (EU) * Employment rates (EU) * Employment of older workers (EU) * Long-term unemployment (EU) * Persons living in jobless households (EU) * People with a mild or moderate disability who are working (S) * Regional disparity in employment rates (EU)
Limited social supports and networks	* Assistance given and received (S) * Influencing decision makers (S)
Effect of the local neighborhood	* Fear, and actual experience of violence (S) * Neighboring, community involvement and communal relations (S)
Exclusion from services	* Early school leavers not in education or training (EU) * Persons (adults) with low educational attainment (EU) * Adult literacy (S) * Academic progress of Year 3 and Year 7 students in Australia (S) * Access to the Internet and information technology (S) * Homelessness (S) * Access to services (S) * Teenage mothers (S)
Health	* Life expectancy at birth (EU) * Healthy life expectancy at birth (EU) * Self-defined health status (EU) * Risk of mental illness (S)
Contextual	* Total health expenditure per capita (EU) * Total social expenditure per capita (EU)

## Annex 5: Summary of Dimensions and Indicators with Data Sources

<b>Social Dimension</b>			
<b>Domain</b>	<b>Indicators</b>	<b>Remarks</b>	<b>Source</b>
1.1 Education	1.1.1 Adult Literacy	HDI	Census
	1.1.2 Gross enrolment at basic, secondary and tertiary level	HDI	Census
	1.1.3 Basic schooling	MDG(modified to basic instead of primary)	Census
1.2 Health	1.2.1 Nutrition (stunting)	UNDP-HPI (Oxford) (Child instead of adult)	Survey
	1.2.2 Health service affordability	UNDP-RHDR	Survey
	1.2.3 Child death	MPI-Oxford	Survey
	1.2.4 Households using safe water	MDG, Oxford, RHDR	Census
	1.2.5 Households using own modern toilet	MPI-Oxford (modified)	Census
1.3 Human dignity and social relationships	1.3.1 Social relationships	RHDR-UNDP (2011)	Survey
	1.3.2 Social connectivity		Survey
<b>Economic Dimension</b>			
<b>Domain</b>	<b>Indicators</b>	<b>Remarks</b>	<b>Source</b>
2.1 Landholding / employment	2.1.1 Landholding (agricultural land)		Census
	2.1.2 Non-agriculture activities		Census
	2.1.3 Duration of economic activity		Census
2.2 Consumption/ Poverty	2.2.1 Share on food and non-food expenditure	poor or non-poor	Survey
	2.2.2 Food sufficiency	food sufficiency	Survey
	2.2.3 Elementary occupation	Poor or non-poor	Census
2.3 Living standard	2.3.1 House condition	MPI- Oxford	Census
	2.3.2 Dwelling space per person	MPI-Oxford, RHDR	Survey
	2.3.3 Commercial fuel/fuel for cooking	MPI-Oxford	Census
	2.3.4 Access to electricity	MPI-Oxford	Census
<b>Political Dimension</b>			
<b>Domain</b>	<b>Indicators</b>	<b>Remarks</b>	<b>Source</b>
3.1 Representation on/ Inclusion	3.1.1 Participation in recent election		Survey
	3.1.2 Representation in central committee of political parties	Parties represented in CA	Party office
	3.1.3 Representation of various social/identity groups in Council of Minister	Based on 10 year data	Council of Ministry

	3.1.4 Representation in Bureaucracy		Ministry of GA
	3.1.5 Representation in local user's groups/consumer's committees	Only one forest user's group from each sample location	Survey
3.2 Voice and agency	3.2.1 Access to power and services	Individual recognition	survey
<b>Cultural Dimension</b>			
Domain	Indicators	Remarks	Source
4.1 Language	4.1.1 Opportunity of getting basic education in their mother tongue	capability enhancement	Survey
	4.1.2 Linguistic barrier in accessing employment opportunity	linguistic freedom	Survey
4.2 Religion and rituals	4.2.1 Religious recognition is at the equal footing to the	religious recognition	Survey
	4.2.2 Religious discrimination	religious freedom	Survey
4.3 Customary politics	4.3.1 Opportunity to practice their customary politics	freedom to practice own customs	Survey
<b>Gender Dimension</b>			
Domain	Indicators	Remarks	Source
5.1 Sexuality, control over body and gender based violence	5.1.1 Violence against women	Gender violence	Survey
	5.1.2 Control over marital decision	Gender violence	Field survey
	5.1.3 Control over reproductive decision	Gender violence	Field survey
5.2 Discrimination in social services	5.2.1 Gender parity in enrolment (up to secondary level)		Census
	5.2.2 Opportunity in private schooling		Survey
Domain	Indicators	Remarks	Source
5.3 Economic autonomy	5.3.1 Land ownership	Economic empowerment	Census
	5.3.2 Economic control	Economic empowerment	Survey
5.4 Participation/Decision making	5.4.1 Representation in the local user's group		Survey
	5.4.2 Representation in the central working committee		Political Party
	5.4.3 Participation in the recent election	Represented in CA	Survey
	5.4.4 Representation in bureaucracy		Ministry of GA
	5.4.5 Representation in the professional and technical jobs		Census

<b>Discrimination Dimension</b>			
<b>Domain</b>	<b>Indicators</b>	<b>Remarks</b>	<b>Source</b>
6.1 Spatial segregation	6.1.1 Denial in entry into house	Access to public sphere	Survey
	6.1.2 Denial in entry into religious places	Social contact/mutual interaction among household	Survey
	6.1.3 Fairly allowed share community life	Community Life exposure	Survey
6.2 Access to good and services	6.2.1 Access to fair market	Access to fair market	Survey
	6.2.2 Fair access to social service	Access to social service	Survey
	6.2.3 Fair access to all services provided by the government/community at local level	Access to services from government and community	Survey
6.3 Prejudice and negative attitude	6.3.1 Identity, recognition and respect	Individual identity	Survey

# A Comprehensive Exclusion/Inclusion Index for Nepal: A Proposal<sup>1</sup>

Mahendra Lawoti

## Introduction

This chapter proposes constructing a comprehensive exclusion/inclusion index, which will measure important factors—culture, social, economic and political—that affect the phenomenon, for Nepal. A comprehensive index of exclusion/inclusion would be useful for lay people and policy makers interested in the issue to get a quick sense of different groups' positions, and to academic researchers for further investigating the issue. Even though detailed studies of each marginalized and dominant group is desirable for understanding and analyzing exclusion and inclusion, oftentimes it is necessary to compare among and across a large number of groups. An index would become very handy for such purposes. A comprehensive index is superior for such purpose because incorporation of as many relevant dimensions as possible that affect the phenomenon in the construction would make the index more valid and robust.

The index could become very useful to researchers for testing various hypotheses statistically, as well as non-statistically, on the causes and consequences of exclusion and inclusion, interaction of different dimensions and aspects of exclusion and inclusion, and how the different dimensions affect each other to produce, reinforce, or undermine exclusion or inclusion. For politicians and other policy makers, who rarely get time to read in depth studies and analyses, reliable and valid data they can easily understand and make sense of in limited time is necessary to address policy problems. Lay persons interested on the issue and advocates of inclusion and social justice would find the overall index and

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<sup>1</sup> An earlier version of the chapter was presented on April 11, 2012 at a workshop organized by the Research on Social Inclusion Atlas and Ethnographic Profile project in Kathmandu. I would like to thank Professors Om Gurung, Mukta Tamang, and Dambar Chemjong for the invitation and the participants at the conference and two anonymous reviewers and Mark Turin for helpful comments and feedback.

different constitutive components of the index useful for obtaining comparative insights on various groups' overall status, and in various dimensions.

I have been interested and have been working on exclusion/inclusion of multiple identity groups (*dalit*, indigenous nationalities, and *madhesi*) in democracy, particularly in Nepal, for around one and a half decade, including conceptualizing and measuring exclusion/inclusion. I have also worked as a consultant for measuring democracy and press freedom and reviewing indices for various countries. I propose this comprehensive index on exclusion/inclusion based on my long-term interest on the subject and utilizing experience gained along the way working in different research and consulting assignments.

## Why Study Exclusion and Inclusion?

More than two-thirds of the population, comprising of identity groups like the *dalit*, indigenous nationalities, *madhesi* and Muslims, encountered marginalization and exclusion persistently in cultural, social, political and economic realms for more than two centuries in Nepal. If women are included, the percentage of excluded population reaches a staggering 85 percent of the population. Even though the marginalization and exclusion became entrenched during the two centuries long (1769-1951, 1960-1990) authoritarian state dominated by elite families drawn from the caste hill Hindu elite (CHHE), which conceptualized and promoted Nepaliness exclusively in terms of language, religion, and culture of their groups, exclusion persisted and was perpetuated even during the democratic years (1951-1960, 1990-2002) (Bhattachan 1997; Lawoti 2005; Neupane 2000). While many CHHE members are poor, they do not face cultural and social discrimination and are not constrained by the socio-cultural discrimination in their pursuit of social mobility and hence often have better opportunities for social mobility than members of other groups in addition to being advantaged, such as through language and network.

The marginalization and exclusion has to be addressed if Nepal is to aspire for a just and equitable society. Inclusion is also imperative for preventing violent conflict and maintaining long-term peace in the country, if global and national trends provide any

indications. Ted Robert Gurr (1993, 2000) has authoritatively demonstrated that violent ethnic conflicts steadily increased after the end of Second World War and reached a peak in mid-nineties. Others have pointed out that most of the violent conflicts with large number of causalities after the Second World War have not been traditional wars between countries but rebellions against the state or civil wars between and among various groups within countries or across countries. A large number of these conflicts are identity based (Brown 2001; Harff and Gurr 2004; Harris and Reilly 1998; Kegley Jr. 2009; Wimmer 2013). Nepal has also seen the rise of mobilization based on identities, more so after 1990, as well as identity based armed organizations and violent ethnic conflicts among different groups. A large number of armed organizations emerged and operated in Nepal after the turn of century, even though there has been considerable decline in the number of active armed groups after the election to the Constituent Assembly in 2008 (Bhattachan 2000; International Crisis Group 2011; Lawoti 2005; Lawoti 2007a; Lawoti 2012b; Pathak and Uprey 2009). Exclusion has been identified as a major contributing factor of violent ethnic conflict in Nepal as well as around the world (Bhattachan 2000; Cohen 1997; Horowitz 1985; Lawoti 2012b; Wimmer 2013).

Inclusion is also necessary for economic growth and development of the country. A country cannot economically grow and develop if only a handful of its population has access to resources and opportunities. The small group with access and opportunities will be burdened for they will have to take the responsibility of economic growth and development of the whole population and the country, unless they want to remain as a well off group among the poor inside the country, but not well off compared to rest of the world. Extensive empirical analyses have demonstrated that exclusion contributes to continuation of economic stagnation and underdevelopment and that inclusion facilitates economic growth and development. Daron Acemoglu and James Robinson (2012) have demonstrated that countries with inclusive political and economic institutions that facilitate participation of everyone have been able to economically grow and develop while countries with restrictive institutions were not able to economically grow and continued to face poverty. People inherently want to work hard to improve their economic and other well being (De Soto 2002), and when people do not face restrictions, they do well, leading

to overall economic growth and development of their countries. Likewise, Esman (1997) has argued that non-group bureaucrats may not be able to serve groups with different language and culture in certain areas due to inability to speak the language and understand their culture, way of life, needs and interests, and inhibit the development of the group as well as the country.

Scott E. Page (2008), additionally, has demonstrated that when teams include members of different groups, the teams perform better because members of different groups bring varied skills, tools, and perspectives and such a make-up of the team enables it to perform better than teams composed of individuals from the same group, even if individuals in the homogenous team are high performance individuals. The heterogeneous team performs better because as a group it has more and wider range of skills and tools that the members from diverse groups and backgrounds bring. Thus including members of diverse groups is a recipe for better performance.

The Nepali state has begun to address the issue of exclusion, especially after the regime transformation of 2006 that eventually ended the nearly two and half century old Hindu monarchy. The policies and formal institutional reforms to address exclusion have often been targeted toward broad categories, such as reservation for *dalit*, indigenous nationalities and *madhesi* that does not make recognize different level of exclusion among individual groups within the broad categories.<sup>2</sup> These institutional reforms were carried out, to some extent, based on existing understanding of the issues, groups and problems after the state was sufficiently pressured by the groups to initiate reforms. Despite some progress, significant challenges still remain in addressing exclusion faced by the various groups. A full understanding of various dimensions of exclusion, interactions among the various dimensions, and their differential effects, individually as well as collectively, on different groups is still lagging. Even though considerable studies on exclusion have been conducted in Nepal in the last decade or so (Bhattachan 2008; Bhattachan et al. 2001; Gurung 2006; Lawoti 2005; Shah 2006; Tiwari 2010; Yadav 1997, 2005), and they have significantly enriched our understanding of dynamics

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<sup>2</sup> I label *dalit*, indigenous nationalities, and *madhesi* as broad identity categories that contain many individual ethnic or caste groups.

of exclusion, there are still gaps in knowledge base in important realms. Research and studies on the following lines could increase further understanding and could be useful for addressing exclusion in the society and polity.

One, as initial endeavors, the studies and analyses to date have focused on broad categories of excluded groups, such as the *dalit*, *madhesi*, and indigenous nationalities. Though groups within broad categories share common traits and sources of exclusion, there are differences among individual groups within the categories as well. In the Tarai, for example, the Tharus (indigenous), *dalit* and other “upper” castes, and Muslims face group-specific problems that contribute to their exclusion in different dimensions in addition to the common problems they encounter as *madhesi*. Individual group-specific problems and differential level of exclusion is an issue not only with regard to the excluded groups, as has often been pointed out, but even within the dominant group. For example, Chhetri and Sanyasi of the caste hill Hindu elite (CHHE) have been under-represented in the Parliament since the nineties, while Bahun and Thakuris have been over-represented despite sharing the same language, religion and culture (Lawoti Forthcoming). Anthropological literature on different ethnic and caste groups can be helpful in identifying and determining some dimensions of exclusion or inclusion of individual groups but such studies with different purpose, or even if positioned with subaltern angle, may not have information on all dimensions of exclusion and inclusion (Holmberg, March, and Tamang 1999; Tamag 2009). This points to the necessity of next generation of studies and analyses of exclusion and inclusion to focus on individual groups and the challenges and constraints they encounter and opportunities available to them, in addition to analyzing different aspects of phenomena among the broad categories.

Detailed information, knowledge and statistics on the status of different individual groups will enable comparative study and analyses of intra-categorical group dynamics. Among other things, such information and data will allow examination of questions, such as whether inclusion of one group leads to exclusion of other groups. These types of questions can be examined more thoroughly and definitively by comparing individual groups rather than broad categories, because the latter contain individual groups with varying position in the exclusion-inclusion continuum and a group

in the excluded category may be performing well economically when compared to a group from the dominant category, even though economic status is not the only dimension of exclusion.

Two, various dimensions of exclusion are not known or have not been recognized by the state, the larger society, media, and even the epistemic community, even for the broader categories in addition to individual groups. It is essential to understand different dimensions of exclusion if we want to address the problem because not only could each dimension intrinsically hurt various groups but they could have incremental and reinforcing effects on other dimensions of exclusion as well. Some exclusionary factors interact with each other and reinforce exclusion in other dimensions, creating a vicious trap of exclusion. In such cases, a couple of inclusionary policies targeted toward some dimensions for a group may not be effective to reduce or end exclusion because exclusion in other dimensions might hinder or resist the inclusive policy or undermine and limit its impact.

Likewise, knowledge about exclusion in various dimensions will also allow examination of whether a group might be performing well in some dimensions while facing serious challenges in other realms. The Thakali, for example, have done well economically, but they have lost significant aspect of their culture and traditions when the elite tried to emulate the Buddhist Tibetan rulers and their traditions followed by the Nepali Hindu rulers and their culture to gain access to the rulers at different times for economic and political benefits, in a context where pleasing the rulers was a condition (Bista 1971; Fisher 2001). The lack of their own script, for example, indicates and points to the challenges the group may face in preserving, developing, and promoting their culture.

More knowledge about individual groups in different dimensions, and more so if knowledge becomes available across similar dimensions (in addition to unique dimensions), would allow analyzing cross-dimensional impacts. For example, how does exclusion or inclusion in one dimension, say redistribution of resources, impact recognition and representation and, vice versa? Does increased political and/or economic representation, or in other sectors, lead to more recognition and economic mobility? The index and its various aspects could be particularly useful for examining these types of questions about individual groups

and drawing out generalizations from examining a larger number of cases. The findings could be useful in formulating additional policies to address exclusion that persist in different dimensions, despite some progressive changes in other dimensions.

Three, little is known about the various extent and types of exclusion faced by many small groups even though anthropological literature of small groups might provide exclusion faced by the groups in some dimensions during the period of the study. Building an equitable and just society requires that the different problems and exclusion these groups face have to be recognized and addressed as well as possible, not only of the numerically larger and mobilized groups who can pressure the state through mobilization or voting power. The task of addressing small group specific problems would incur more cost due to higher per capita investment necessary and become more challenging due to the groups' inability to influence politically, but perhaps is more urgent because they and their cultures could be in more dire straight because of their small population size, which could inhibit the communities from addressing some of their problems themselves.

Four, especially with regard to this chapter and the project for which it is written, indexing, as mentioned in the introduction, is important for comparing groups and analyzing the intra and inter dynamics of exclusion and inclusion among and between groups. Indexing would be possible with more knowledge and data on individual groups and more robust index can be constructed if more information is available or collected.

Increasingly, exclusion and inclusion could be affected by group members' mobility, forced or in search of opportunities elsewhere, as migration and immigration is increasing in many parts of the country, as well as to destinations abroad. Migration could improve economic conditions through new opportunities, but it could be detrimental in other ways. While migration from rural areas could lead to loss of culture and tradition, among other things, to those who are migrating, it could also affect their communities and its members who remain behind (Macfarlane 2001). On the other hand, migration could also affect recipient communities, such as the Newars, *madhesi* and indigenous groups of Tarai, where massive population shift has taken place, often displacing the indigenous communities from their land and increasing vulnerability of their

culture, tradition, and lifestyle (Gaige 1975; Guneratne 2002; Muller-Boker 2000).

The importance of studying identity-based exclusion does not mean negating class-based analyses. While the Nepali state recognized identity-based analyses of the marginalized groups in the last decade or so,<sup>3</sup> class-based analyses and policy formulation to address poverty and under-development has been in place at least since 1951 when Nepal became democratic, getting rid of the oligarchic Ranas. Nepal initiated and has consistently pursued development policies, programs and projects focused on reducing poverty and inequality since then. It is a different matter that the objectives and goals of the development plans and programs were not achieved. Further, as economic, social and political dimension of all Nepali citizens are taken into account in this study, even though as members of various identity groups, the class dimension is firmly ensconced within this study as well, even though not directly and not only from it.

### **"Exclusion" to Facilitate Inclusion**

Question as to whether to "exclude" members of some group to include members of others have often been raised by critics of inclusionary policies like affirmative action. In culturally diverse societies, if distribution of resources has been influenced by identities and culture of groups, the fair, just, and widely acceptable method could be to distribute resources proportionately, when that is possible, among the various groups. If some resources are not divisible, then groups could take alternation in accessing or using them or different groups could access or be awarded different resources with an overall balance on access to resources. The question of exclusion does not arise in such circumstances. If a certain group is over-represented in various public sectors consistently, then it is morally defensible to limit the over-representation of that group. Likewise, in some spheres, some dominant or privileged group may be causing exclusion of other groups. In such cases, some groups might have to be excluded in certain arenas to enable other groups to be included (Dovi 2009). Dovi (1982) argues "democracies need to marginalize (1) those who oppress and (2)

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3 The state promoted the identity of the dominant group since the formation of Nepal (Lawoti 2010b).

those whose privileged status sustains oppression. ” Exclusion in some dimensions could be necessary sometimes for democracy and liberal institutions to function and deliver (Tebble 2006).

Similarly, but in a slightly different context, Ostrom (1990) has argued that exclusion is necessary for viability and sustainability of a common pool of natural resources. Without exclusion, tragedy of the commons could occur because increased usage and/or consumption of natural resources among competitive rational human actors could lead to overuse, depletion, and ultimately extinction of the resources. If everyone is allowed to use a finite amount of resources, the free rider problem will arise. It will not be in the interest of a rationale user to contribute as he can access and use the resources without contributing toward its maintenance and development. Rational action at individual level could lead to collective tragedy (Olson 1971; Ostrom 1990). Self-governing institutions of communities have been shown to avoid the tragedy of the commons but one of the necessary conditions is the exclusion of non-community or user groups from accessing the resources to prevent over use. The successful community forestry in Nepal and elsewhere is an example (Agrawal and Ostrom 2001; Ostrom 1990).

Likewise, if some resources are essential for survival of some groups and their identity, culture, and tradition, and if identity, cultural, and tradition does not harm other groups, and the other groups do not need those resources for survival, the latter group can be excluded in those realms. Survival of any group should trump over accumulating wealth by others.

Exclusion of some groups from one or two spheres can be defended morally in a democracy. First, all groups may not be interested to be included in all spheres. On the other hand, even if all groups want to be included, practically it may not be possible to include them in all spheres and sectors. Such exclusion in specific spheres can be defended if various groups fare well overall because of their inclusion in multiple other spheres. Thus, all groups could be excluded in a couple of spheres, balancing out and avoiding persistent overall exclusion of any groups, if they are included in multiple other spheres. As a result, different groups could be more or less roughly equal overall (Walzer 1983). If some groups consistently face inequality and exclusion, then that needs to be

addressed. That is the scenario in Nepal.

## **The Question of Fluidity and Identification of Groups**

Some critics suggest that ethnicity is a social construct and are fluid, as identities emerge and change over time and as a result should not be studied or analyzed, or that it would be difficult to do so. Many Liberal and Marxist scholars often share this view (Esman 1994; Horowitz 1985). If the same logic is to be followed, then there would be no point in conducting class-based analysis, a favorite subject of the Liberals and Marxists because class is a much more fluid than ethnicity. While scholars point that it could take at least a few decades for ethnic identities to transform, even when it does (Chandra 2006; Chandra and Wilkinson 2008), class of a person could change several times within a decade. For example, once a student graduates and gets a job, his class position changes. If he gets a promotion after a few years or better job in another organization, his class position changes again. In a couple of decades if the person reaches a senior position, his class changes again. He becomes a member of an elite class. In between, if he loses the job, his class status could lower again. Hence, class status of a person could change several times within a life span whereas ethnic identity may not change as readily for a person in his lifespan. Thus, if the logic of some Liberals and Marxists that ethnicity should not be studied and analyzed because of its fluidity is to be extended, it would mean that they should not study class in the first place because it is even more fluid.

Counter to the opposition of such critics, studies of ethnicity and identities have become prevalent. “The ubiquity of identity-based scholarship suggests an emerging realization that identities... are ‘among the most normatively significant and behaviorally consequential aspect of politics,’” (Smith 2002: 302, cited in Abdelal et al 2009:17). Stewart (2009: 316) provides a good rationale for studying and analyzing ethnic groups: culturally determined groups "may be fluid, and individuals may have a more or less strong attachment to a particular group, may change their attachments, and so on. Despite this, the group or groups to which a person chooses to belong, or is seen as belonging to by others, can have considerable relevance to that person's life chances, well-being, and political options and actions."

In Nepal, the fluidity argument is being made by the dominant group to resist change that would empower the traditionally excluded groups through mobilization, which they have attempted and attained to varying degrees. The aim of many dominant group members is to undermine analyses of inequality among marginalized caste, religious, linguistic, regional and ethnic groups and to discourage mobilization along those identities. Group cohesion that facilitates organization and mobilization that is necessary for challenging oppression and domination is enabled by identification with certain identities (Gurr 1993; Lawoti 2012a). Such mobilization along caste lines fostered modernization and democracy in India by making "lower" caste groups more equal with "high" caste groups. Likewise, if causes and consequences of ethnic equality are not studied, then the status quo or the prevalent domination of the privileged group in cultural, social, political and economic realms would continue or get less eroded. When a new policy is not formulated, by default, old policies continue (Dunn 2011).

The importance to recognize and study ethnic groups in a diverse society does not mean that it is easy to do so, however. Due to state policies and institutions, new groups may emerge from "existing" ones or multiple groups will merge. On the other hand small groups may provide logistical challenges, especially if there are numerous such groups, because the per capita cost of studying the groups would be higher. Question could emerge about the population threshold for studying smaller groups. In such a situation, what should be the parameter for recognizing groups and studying them? Since consequential identities are formed either by the groups themselves or due to state recognition or imposition (that could be detrimental to some groups), groups recognized by the state and, if and when groups that assert their different identities than those recognized by the state and other groups should be studied and analyzed. Numerical requirements should not be the basis for cutting off groups as even less populated group may assert their identities. When people do not assert their particular identities, as may be the case when they want to merge with a larger group and take that identity, then a need to recognize them as a separate group will not arise. This approach of recognizing groups accepts the theory of social construction of identities.

## **Relevant Bodies of Knowledge for Constructing Index of Exclusion/Inclusion**

Literature dealing with identity groups provides information and analyses to understand the types and depths of exclusion diverse groups face. Exclusion of various ethnic groups (caste, linguistic, religious, national, regional identity) have explicitly or implicitly received attention, often to analyze sociocultural rights of minority groups, group mobilization, and violent ethnic conflicts (Aasland and Flotten 2001; Gurr 1993; Gurr 2000; Horowitz 1985; Wimmer 2002), economic deprivation and poverty, as well as under representation in politics and other influential sectors in society (Allen 2005; Kymlicka 1995; Sen 2000; Taylor 1998; Walzer 1993; Williams and Macedo 2005; World Bank 2001; Young 1990). Despite providing rich information and analyses on formation of ethnic groups, discrimination minorities face, and factors that contribute to their mobilization and consequences of such political actions, the studies do not facilitate easy and quick comparison of groups that policy makers and academics with interest in quantitative analyses seek.

While the literature on ethnic politics has informed about discrimination along ethnic lines and highlighted socio-cultural discrimination and political exclusion, the literature on social exclusion has pointed out the inequality in income level and social outcomes (for evolution of the concept of "social exclusion," see de Haan and Maxwell 1998; Sen 2000; Silver 1994). According to Silver (1994) there are three competing paradigms of inclusion and exclusion: "the solidarity paradigm, founded in French ideas about social solidarity; a specialisation paradigm, dominant in the US and perhaps the UK, where exclusion is tied to notions of discrimination; and a monopoly paradigm, dominant in Western Europe, in which exclusion is associated with group monopoly formation." Despite the different interpretation based on different national traditions, contexts, and debates, the concept of social exclusion has picked up considerably in recent years, including in Nepal. More systematic work on social and economic inequality and exclusion has contributed in laying the path for constructing an exclusion/inclusion index.

To enable systematic comparison of levels and intensities of different phenomenon for different countries, groups, and

regions, indices have been constructed. The indices on economic development, poverty, human development, freedom/democracy, press freedom, gender empowerment are some of the well-known ones. Indices to capture diversity have also been created, whether ecological, linguistic, and ethnic (Alesina et al. 2003; Biernat and Crandall 1999; Cederman and Girardin 2007; Chandra 2009; Fearon 2003; Fearon and Laitin 2003; Huxley et al. 2006; Ponterotto et al. 1995; Posner 2004; The Expert Group 2008). Many of the indices have been constructed to capture economic wellbeing or inequalities, including social inclusion that largely measure income related phenomenon and social outcomes such as education and wellbeing. Attempts have been made to construct exclusion and inclusion index in Nepal as well.

While most indices on social exclusion to date rely on data collected by taking an individual or household as a unit, there is a strong and urgent need for collecting data taking group as a unit as well. Frances Stewart (2009: 316), who calls group inequality “horizontal inequality” to contrast with “vertical inequality” that measures inequality among individuals, eloquently makes a strong case for the need to measure group based inequality to warrant an extended quote: “[Group inequalities] affect well-being directly and because they affect other objectives instrumentally. People's well-being is affected not only by their individual circumstances, but also by how well their group is doing. This is partly because membership of the group is often an important aspect of a person's identity, and hence the group's situation is felt as part of an individual's situation; and partly because relative impoverishment of the group increases the perception of members that they are likely to be permanently trapped in a poor position, or, if they have managed to do better than others in the group, that they are likely to fall back into poverty.”

## **The Nepali Context**

In Nepal the foundation for construction of inclusion/exclusion index was laid down by the work that demonstrated ethnic problems by exposing inequalities, injustice, and exclusion among various identity groups and providing rationale for further in depth studies, including comparison of groups. Dor Bahadur Bista (1991; 1996), Krishna Bhattachan (1995; 1999), Harka Gurung (1998; 2006), myself (2005; 2007b; 2008a; 2010a; 2010b) and many others

(Cameron 1998; Caplan 1972; Caplan 1970; Gaborieau 1972; Gaige 1975; Guneratne 2002; Hofer 2004; Holmberg 1989; Jha 1993; Yadav 1997) contributed in this endeavor.

The hierarchical caste order is probably one of the earlier framework that distinguished various groups existing in Nepal even though it reinforced inequality and injustice in the society (Hofer 2004; Levine 1987). The 1990s saw vehement rejection of the state imposed identity of being a part of the Hindu caste fold by the indigenous nationalities. The Muslims also began to claim that they were equal citizens of Nepal (Dastider 2007). The *madhesi* had a more illustrious history of mobilization than that of *dalit* and indigenous nationalities, but the state and “mainstream” academia dominated by the dominant group refused to recognize and treat it as a separate group till 2007 (Lawoti 2012a). The *madhesi* had formed a political party in the 1950s and mobilized yearlong in mid 1950s to oppose the imposition of Khas-Nepali all over Nepal as the only language of instruction in schools, and continued to organize and mobilize in the 1980s and the 1990s (Lawoti 2012a), but the very well-funded studies (such as UNDP's Human Development Report, Nepal), in line with the dominant group perspective, continued to lump *madhesi* Brahmin and Kshetriyas with hill Brahmin and Chhetris in the “upper” caste group, essentially refusing to recognize the *madhesi* as a separate group. This was despite some literature recognizing *madhesi* as a separate category with a unique set of issues and problems (Bhattachan 2000; Lawoti 2005; Neupane 2000). Only after the success of the *madhesi* movement in 2007 that paralyzed the Tarai for three weeks did the hill “upper” caste centric state and academia reluctantly recognized *madhesi* as a separate group.

## **Assessments of Exclusion/Inclusion Measures and Indices in Nepal**

Initial steps toward creating an exclusion/inclusion index began with measurement of inequalities and exclusion along a number of indicators, as well as conceptualization of various dimension of exclusion. The Human Development Reports measured economic and social wellbeing of number of ethnic groups with a number of indicators (NESAC 1998; The World Bank and DFID 2006; UNDP 2004; UNDP 2009). Conceptually I proposed that the marginalized groups in Nepal were culturally discriminated and/

or denied access to resources in the political and material realms (Lawoti 2002). Nepal Federation of Indigenous Nationalities (NEFIN) came up with a five-fold category of Endangered, Highly Marginalized, Disadvantaged, and Advanced in 2004 to classify 59 groups of indigenous nationalities recognized by the state.

Tiwari (2010) has identified horizontal inequalities in four sectors for the broad identity categories: (1) inequality in economic outcomes, (2) inequality in social outcomes, (3) cultural discrimination, and (4) unequal participation in state organs. I have discussed exclusion in eight spheres for the broad identity categories: (1) citizenship and participation, (2) cultural discrimination, (3) symbolic representation, (4) representation in governance, (5) public policies, (6) knowledge generation and dissemination, (7) civil society, and (8) material well-being (Lawoti 2008b). Both of our approaches measure exclusion and inequalities for various broad categories with data ranging across a decade in the 1990s. Importantly they both recognize cultural discrimination as an important dimension of exclusion.

Some have begun to compare exclusion among different individual identity groups in Nepal. Vollan (2010) identified representation data of 98 ethnic/caste groups in the Parliaments from the 1991, 1994, 1999 and 2008 elections to analyze the impact of quotas for excluded groups. Lawoti (Forthcoming) used the dataset to test claims and counter-claims made of the affirmative action policy. Bennett and Parajuli (Not dated) (from here on called the B-P Index) using the Multidimensional Poverty Index framework developed by Alkire and Foster (2009) propose what they call a multidimensional exclusion index that capture exclusion in four socio-economic dimensions. Sabina Alkire and Maria Enna Santos (2010) calculate a country profile of Nepal employing the Multidimensional Poverty Index.

The B-P Index has made considerable progress toward developing and constructing a social exclusion index, but it has major shortcomings based on its claim of measuring overall exclusion of different groups in Nepal. I discuss this index in more detail for two reasons: one, to suggest how it can be improved; and two, to develop an alternate index that will use the economic and social outcome indicators of the B-P index but incorporate exclusion in political, social, and cultural dimensions to come up with a comprehensive index of exclusion and inclusion.

The strength of the B-P Index is its analysis of data from the 2001 census and a couple of large surveys to construct an index for income/consumption, social outcomes in a few sectors, and access to influence.<sup>4</sup> They expand on the multidimensional poverty index (MPI) that is based on three dimensions (education, health and living standard) by adding a fourth dimension of access to influence<sup>4</sup> and employ econometric statistical tools developed by the MPI for calculating a social exclusion index for 80 identity groups. In the Nepali context this is a major contribution. However, it is still largely a social exclusion index, albeit an incomplete one, as I argue below.<sup>5</sup>

The major shortcoming of the B-P index is that it does not consider cultural and social discrimination as part of exclusion in Nepal. In doing so, in Amartya Sen's (2000) words, it leaves out intrinsic factors, or constitutive relevance, that have excluded numerous groups: "Being excluded can sometimes be in itself deprivation and this can be of intrinsic importance on its own. . . It is a loss on its own, in addition to whatever further deprivation it may indirectly generate" (13). For example, *dalits* are victims of untouchability, which harms intrinsically (in Sen's term) or directly (in Stewart's term) in addition to being instrumental in causing socio-economic deprivation. The rampant practice of untouchability humiliates and demeans the *dalit* every day. That itself is a major form of exclusion, in fact, it is the root cause, in addition to other forms of exclusion that the humiliating and demeaning practices contribute toward, such as socio-economic deprivation. Indigenous nationalities, on the other hand, have

<sup>4</sup> It considers female literacy rate and having someone from locality in influential position (administrators, managers, professionals, technical officers and legislators) as indicators of influence.

<sup>5</sup> The B-P index provides indices for 80 groups but does not provide data for 30 small individual groups, despite the title of the paper being "Making Smaller Social Groups Visible...." This is largely due to the methodology adopted and data source, which are several surveys and the census. It is very difficult to get adequate number of cases (n) of very small groups from national survey data to be statistically valuable despite development of statistical tools to analyze cases with small 'n'. Even statistical analyses of small 'n' would require some minimum number of cases, and further, one is more constrained to infer from statistical analysis of small number of cases. If available survey data do not contain relevant data, information can be generated employing other data collection approaches and methods, if resources are available.

suffered from cultural discrimination. Their language, religion, and ways of life have been discriminated for centuries, as well as in the contemporary period. Cultural discrimination and erosion have hurt them intrinsically and directly, and hence are major forms of exclusion, in addition to contributing indirectly in other forms of deprivation. Likewise, the *madhesis*, in addition to linguistic and other form of cultural discrimination, suffer from extensive prejudice that often suspects their loyalty toward the Nepali state. It has been a direct and major deprivation because they have often not been treated as equal citizens. Likewise, women face inequality and discrimination simply because they are women, in addition to the patriarchal norms contributing toward their socio-economic deprivations. Many of these major intrinsic cultural and social deprivations faced by identity and gender groups are not captured by the B-P index and hence it is far short of being a comprehensive index of exclusion, which should at least attempt to capture all forms of major deprivations faced by various groups.

In a multicultural society like Nepal, where both cultural and class cleavages exist, indices that either measure only cultural or economic aspects of exclusion are not sufficient to capture the complexity of exclusion of multilayered groups of people. While class and ethnic inequality may coincide to some degree for many groups, it may not, or may coincide to different extent for many others. To better understand the extent of exclusion/inclusion and thereafter promote inclusion, equality and justice among individuals and various identity groups, this chapter, taking lessons from various indices that provide quantitative measure of phenomena such as democracy and press freedom, and minority rights proposes a comprehensive Exclusion/Inclusion Index to be constructed for Nepal that incorporates four major dimensions: cultural, social, political and economic, and multiple sub-dimensions within them.

The cultural and social dimensions will be each recommended to be assigned 30 percent weight of the Index and the economic and political dimensions 20 percent each. The reasons for assigning higher weightage to cultural and social dimensions is, following Amartya Sen (2000), because they are intrinsic factors, while the economic and political dimensions are indirect exclusion and exist, to some extent, because of the intrinsic factors. Apart from the above rationale, the assignments are otherwise based on an ad hoc

basis. An alternate, but even more ad-hoc basis, would be to assign each of the four dimensions equal weightage of 25 percent each.

Social exclusion indices and multidimensional poverty indices have used various well tested economic and social outcome indicators. Hence I will not elaborate on the rationale for incorporating them in the proposed index. Similarly, the political dimension of exclusion is largely accepted in Nepal. In the following sections I offer rationale for measuring social and cultural dimensions and their various sub dimensions.

## **Why Social and Cultural Exclusion and Deprivation Should be Measured**

### **Cultural Dimension**

If the aim of an index is to measure social exclusion, then constructing an index based on economic and social outcome indicators like income, health, and education would be valid. If the aim is to measure under-representation in various public and private organizations, then a diversity index (The Expert Group 2008) as in India that calculates the under-representation of Muslims and others in various organizations would be fine. However, the aim of the Research on Social Inclusion Atlas and Ethnographic Profile Project of the Central Department of Sociology/Anthropology, Tribhuvan University goes much beyond that.<sup>6</sup> It is an attempt to measure diversity as it exists in the society, the myriad forms of exclusion numerous identity groups face in multiple realms, and identify factors that hinder or enable inclusion and management of diversity. The larger goal I think is celebrating diversity by recognizing and respecting differences, creating a society based on tolerance, dignity, equality and justice, and growing and developing by learning from and sharing with each other (Kymlicka 1995; Mahajan 1998a; Parekh 1994; Young 1990).

As mentioned above, a large number of people in Nepal face cultural (i. e. language, religion, ethnicity, and so on related) exclusion that

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<sup>6</sup> Please see the chapter by Om Gurung and Mukta Tamang in this volume for the details of the project.

has intrinsically and directly demeaned their lives. They suffer because of ethnic prejudice and cultural discrimination. These are major intrinsic factors of exclusion and if they are not captured, any index on exclusion could be off the mark significantly because the index will not capture the root cause of discrimination and exclusion as well as humiliation and demeaning encounter many members of marginalized groups face almost every day.

Multicultural citizenship requires that people belonging to all cultural groups should be treated equally, their cultural markers and elements recognized and protected, and that group members have the freedom to fulfill their potentials. Cultural freedom and equality are important elements essential in multicultural societies because human beings grow and develop to their possible potentials in their own cultural milieu and environment that provide a shared vocabulary of everyday life, embodied in practices and institutions covering most areas of human activity (Kymlicka 1995). As Kymlicka (1995: 105) argues, "cultural membership provides us with an intelligible context of choice, and a secure sense of identity and belonging, that we call upon in confronting questions about personal values and projects." On the other hand, options and opportunities available for members of a culture will shrink and their pursuit is less likely to be successful in situations where one's culture is discriminated against or is decaying.

Different ideas, experiences, perspectives, lifestyles, and cultures that enrich people and society are positive aspects of differences, which introduce the highly desirable quality of plurality or heterogeneity (Mahajan 1998b). Differences are a political resource that can deepen democracy and society and the inclusion of socio-cultural groups makes available such resources to the polity. Social and cultural difference brings in diverse perspectives, skills and experiences to joint endeavors and to the society (Page 2008; Young 1990: 115). Alternative models of socio-cultural organization make more choices available to everyone for adapting to new circumstances. Different ways of life and views correct and balance each other and restrain each other's partialities (Parekh 1994; Young 1990). When human beings step out of their culture and observe other cultures, they can appreciate strength and limitations of their own cultures. "Cultural diversity is therefore a necessary condition of the human search for freedom and critical self-understanding" (Parekh 1994). Hence various cultures,

especially minority cultures, should be protected and promoted.

Culture and its elements can be measured by looking at whether various identity groups have unrestricted freedom and environment to practice and follow religion, speak native languages (indicated by the vibrancy of the language, for example) and whether group's traditions and lifestyle are maintained and whether environment for such exist, and the state and society's attitudes toward peoples with different traditions, practices, and worldviews, and culture, as indicated by public policies and laws or their absence, and societal prejudices. Each group's wellbeing can be measured through whether the state recognizes their autonomy to live and govern their lives according to their values and preferences, and whether they practice autonomy, despite and in spite of the state awarding it. Group autonomy, in addition to individual autonomy, is important because it measures whether the groups and individuals can do what they want, whether it is about retaining, reforming or even discarding past traditions, and how they live their lives without imposition of values and practices by the state and others.

Some argue that intangible cultural factors should be left to qualitative discussion. They fear that attempting to reduce them to numbers runs the risk of distorting their meaning. This chapter, as well as the larger project, does not agree with such arguments, with good reasons. Social science has grown and developed and has innovated many approaches, methods, and techniques to such an extent that intangible cultural factors are routinely measured, as this and other studies that measure them demonstrate (Abdelal et al. 2009; Gurr 2000; Harff and Gurr 2004; Neuendorf and Skalski 2009; Robinson, Wrightsman, and Shaver 1998).

## **Symbolism**

An important sub dimension in cultural sphere is symbolism, as a sense of belonging as well as recognition of membership within a community through representation of elements associated with different groups. Through symbols, meanings and norms are constructed and communicated in societies. Symbols can be based on cultural values, norms, traditions, and rituals, but can go beyond them and be based on secular practices, such as the flag-raising in the US. Theories of nationalism have shown that

symbols play important roles in creating a sense of community, and traditions are often invented for such purposes (Anderson 1991; Hobsbawm and Ranger 1983). On the other hand, symbols can be used to exclude people from the community of “nation.” Symbols can convey messages of deprecating self-worth, and hence contribute in developing a sense of inferiority among marginalized groups while conveying subtle, less subtle, or even direct portrayal of dominant group members as superior in terms of intelligence, work ethics, cultural norms and practices, and so on.

Symbolic exclusion differs from cultural discrimination in that national symbols are supposed to be common for all citizens to bring them together and unite them into a single community of “nation” whereas different groups may have, and follow, different cultures. Group specific symbols could differ, but common symbols are necessary to create a common community acceptable to all.

The state and society can maintain symbolic exclusion by recognizing and imposing only certain groups’ cultural practices, traditions, heroes, and so on. Although cultural discrimination could cause direct harm (e. g. through restricting language, religion), the effect of symbols is usually more indirect, and by definition symbols are indirect. To a certain extent symbols’ effect will depend upon how people perceive and receive them. Symbolic politics could be played out by nominating members of diverse groups to political or other bodies to present a façade of representativeness but when such representatives either do not have power to introduce agenda and/or do not have equal voting rights at decision making stages or the circumstances do not allow their effective participation or the body does not enjoy power (for participation issues, see Arnstein; Cornwell 2003; Dahl 1989). Participation and representation and their limits will be measured under different dimensions and sub-dimensions as they are relevant to them.

Symbolic politics have been employed effectively in mobilizing groups in ethnically divided societies. Symbols have been invented, reproduced, highlighted and employed, however, to propagate domination, as well as to resist it. Symbolic exclusion could occur through non-recognition and non-incorporation of identities, culture, festivals, lifestyles, place names, and state declared national heroes while adopting common symbols for the country. Through manipulation of symbols, dominant ethnic elite often conveys that

they are the ruling groups because of special capabilities, skills and fate. Ethnic elites are often able to mobilize their groups even in situations where the masses may not materially benefit from the results of such mobilization. For instance, by raising the issue of recognition of languages, the elite have mobilized the masses even though the well-off strata disproportionately benefit materially if linguistic domination or equality is achieved. Civil service exams in a particular language would benefit mostly the elite but the masses nevertheless support linguistic movements because it provides them recognition and self-worth (Connor 1994; Horowitz 1985; Smith 1998).

Symbolic inclusion could construct a common community of equals acceptable to members of various groups. On the other hand, symbolic exclusion could, instead of bridging the gap, provide a further basis for domination while inviting mobilization against it by excluded ethnic, caste and religious groups. A deprecated perception of others created through symbols, among the dominant group, could become their basis for resistance towards reforms.

Symbolic exclusion could be measured through public holidays declared during festivals of various groups, national heroes declared by the state representing various communities, stamps publications commemorating different groups' culture, peoples and traditions, and so on. The argument, of course is not that every group's festival etc. be declared a holiday. Rather, if some groups' festivals are declared as public festivals, other groups' culture and traditions could be reproduced in stamps, place names, national heroes etc. declared by the state so that as many groups as possible could be included symbolically in one or other realm to some extent. The argument is definitely that national symbols etc. should not be dominated by culture, festivals, and members of one ethnic group, as in the case in contemporary Nepal, even after inclusion of a few symbols from a few marginalized communities in the national pantheons and declaration of public holidays during marginalized groups' festivals in the last decade or so. If per capita calculation of symbolic representation is considered, a more balanced representation of symbols among small and larger groups could be worked out.

## **Social Dimension**

Some overlap exists between social and cultural discrimination, but they have major differences as well. Cultural differences can exist horizontally, without a hierarchy and inequality among groups after ending subordination of some groups by others, but social differences like the caste system, underpinned by hierarchy, generate inequality among social groups due to the institutions itself until the institution itself is completely eliminated. Different caste groups may share language, religion and other cultural elements, but the hierarchy-based institution clearly establishes inequality among different sub-caste groups.

Even after discrimination based on culture, which existed to a large extent due to imposition of hierarchy for a long time by the state among ethnic groups by labeling and treating them as castes, is eliminated, cultural diversity should exist and be celebrated. Horizontal cultural differences are, and should be, treated as social and public goods, whereas hierarchical social differences are harmful and generate inequality. The aim is to eliminate hierarchical based social discrimination that treat humans beings unequally based on their membership in groups, whereas horizontal cultural differences should be recognized, tolerated and protected because it promotes equality, development and growth among members of different groups when different group members live based on their traditions, world views and values.

Social dimension can be broadly clustered into three sub-dimensions. First one is the discrimination members of different groups may face based on their membership of the group. This is an intrinsic form of discrimination. The discrimination could be based on caste or gender, for example. Caste system by definition creates hierarchy among different caste groups, while patriarchy creates inequality between men and women through social relationship backed by men's control over material resources that puts men above women.

The second cluster consists of social outcomes such as education and health. The unequal outcome is to a large extent the result of caste system and patriarchy, and hence can be termed as indirect consequences of intrinsic factors. Social outcomes have been extensively measured in social exclusion indices. Hence I will not elaborate the rationale for including them in this proposal. Some of the regularly used and accepted indicators can be used to

measure the social outcomes dimensions (see B-P Index) for the construction of a comprehensive exclusion/inclusion index.

The third cluster consists of solidarity among group members and their representation in civil society organizations, academia, and media. I will briefly discuss below the rationale for including them in an exclusion/inclusion index.

Mobilization of excluded groups is often necessary for the state and other members of the society to respond toward the demands of the excluded groups to end inequality and discrimination and promote equality (Harff and Gurr 2004; Rudolph 1965). Solidarity facilitates mobilization of groups and enables the groups to protect and promote their interests through mobilization, especially among the larger groups. Even the smaller groups could form coalition with other groups to increase their effectiveness in pressuring the state and other actors. Association of various groups promotes solidarity by bringing leaders and cadres together, identifying and/or constructing common agendas and developing objectives, and establishing networks within and outside the group (Gurr 1993; McAdam, McCarthy, and Zald 1996; Rudolph and Rudolph 1960; Tarrow 1998; McAdam, Tarrow, and Tilly 2001). Various ethnic associations like Tharu Kalyan Kari Sabha were able to create solidarity even among people speaking different languages (Gunaratne 2002). Since group solidarity could facilitate inclusion, solidarity within communities should be measured, and this could be achieved through measuring group's traditional and new institutions and associations and their frequency and vibrancy of activities.

Exclusion from civil society organizations could undermine interests of excluded groups. Gramsci (1971) has argued that the ruling group creates hegemony by not only dominating the state but also the civil society, which provides a discourse rationalizing the system and the subordinate position of marginalized groups. He argues that to obtain political power, one has to win over the civil society, which not only influences the society, but affect the state as well. Civil society groups often raise and develop new agendas and issues and propose new policy alternatives, which the state sometimes adopts (Young 2000). Civil society is also a sphere from which governments sometimes recruit experts when they adopt policies advocated by the movement. In the US,

environmental advocates were recruited to run the environment agency (Dryzek 1996) and public health advocates were recruited in Brazil after the government adopted the public health movement advocated policies (Weyland 1995). While the experts could steer the government into an appropriate directions after they join the state, the movement, however, could slacken and affect the overall continuous effective advocacy of the issues (Dryzek 1996). Exclusion in trade unions, non-governmental organizations and human rights organizations are examples of exclusion from civil society. The exclusion could occur at the level of membership, leadership and the policy and/or program. Even many Human Rights organizations have been dominated by the dominant group in Nepal and they have either largely ignored the issues of the marginalized groups, supported only those demands that do not appear to be threatening, or sometimes even worked against them when they perceived that the excluded groups' demand went against their groups' privileges and interests by arguing that such demands are against individual rights and national interests, many of which have been created and defined through universalization of dominant values, norms and cultural markers while many others have been influenced considerably by them.

Similarly, exclusion from knowledge generation and dissemination could be harmful and they could rationalize and encourage exclusion in other sectors by other actors. Knowledge and power intermesh and knowledge can be employed strategically to dominate, ignore and exclude others (Foucault 1980; Rudolph 2005). Foucault (1980: 133) has aptly described the phenomenon: “‘Truth’ is linked in a circular relation with systems of power which produce and sustain it, and to effects of power which it induces and which extend it.” Similarly, literary culture and dissemination of certain type of knowledge have played very important roles on the emergence and growth of nationalism (Anderson 1991; Gellner 1983). In divided societies, the government and dominant society have occasionally exploited media to perpetuate violence and genocide, as in Rwanda and the former Yugoslavia (Snyder and Ballentine 1997).

Over-representation of the dominant group in key knowledge generation and dissemination institutions in multiethnic societies could lead to production and reproduction of knowledge that is skewed against the marginalized groups. It could contribute to the exclusion of the marginalized groups and their issues in several ways.

First, as the same facts can be viewed and interpreted differently by members of different groups as groups' position, culture, worldviews, and socialization influence perspectives and views, when a group dominates knowledge generation and dissemination sphere, the dominant group's views and perspective could become dominant and the views and perspectives of marginalized groups could be excluded because researchers and opinion makers often investigate and write on issues in which they are interested in. Second, powerful positions in academia determine priorities over research, recruitment, and allocation of scarce research funds (Diesing 1992), while media editors, publishers and owners can influence coverage of issues and recruitment and deployment of reporters on issues that they think are interesting and should be covered. Thus, the marginalized groups' issues may not be researched or investigated, or could receive less time and other resources due to the priority and preference of the powerful. Many marginalized groups' issues have been ignored or have received less attention in Nepal because the dominant group administrators and editors consider them as "trivial." Third, when the dominant group members research and investigate the issue of exclusion, they often come with different findings than from that of researchers from marginalized groups. In such a scenario, the dominant group's views have often prevailed in contests over interpretation in the media and academia due to their overwhelming numeric overrepresentation, frequent repetition by the over-represented members, and plain "spinning" at times. Fourth, the media and academia dominated by one group often shut out or give less space and coverage to the news, events, and opinions of other groups that it considers "unimportant" or even "harmful." Fifth, many dominant group members, especially those in the media and academia, often perceive the issues raised by the marginalized groups as a threat to their privileges and interests, and hence have denigrated, defamed, and devalued those ideas and demands deliberately in the name of "national interest," "public interest," and so on.

Centuries-long promotion of the ruling group's cultural values, norms and perspectives by the state, and prohibition of organizations of other groups and their views, created an atmosphere where the CHHE controlled state, academia and media sponsored discourse became hegemonic in Nepal in the Gramscian notion (Gramsci 1971). Many members of the marginalized groups internalized

the discourse perpetuated by the dominant group that they were disadvantaged due to their inherent backwardness and incapability, while many dominant group members believed in their racist myth of superiority. The "high" caste hill Hindu norms and values guide even many intellectuals in Nepal, despite their claim to be liberal or progressive.

Distorted knowledge generation and dissemination not only undermined the marginalized groups and their issues, but also constrained the information rights of the larger society by not making available multiple and competing facts, opinions and views. As a partial result, the mainstream society and the state suffered from cognitive dissonance, due to which people unconsciously filter out information outside the framework they use to view and understand the world, and therefore have been repeatedly shocked by events such as the rise of ethnic assertion in the 1990s, the growth of the Maoist rebellion, the *madhesi* movement in 2007 and the electoral victory of the Maoists in 2008 that the media and academia had not analyzed and covered adequately and properly to provide a well-rounded view (Lawoti 2008a; Lawoti 2008b).

As mentioned earlier, I do not discuss rationale for including economic and political dimensions because they are generally accepted and included in the exclusion/inclusion indices. They would be incorporated as important dimensions in the proposed index.

### **Measuring Socio-Cultural Exclusion and Deprivations**

Various methods have been used to construct indices in different fields. Economists usually rely on quantitative data and formal modeling to create indices of poverty and wellbeing, such as the Human Development Index. Such indices can be created reasonably well in fields where necessary data are available. However, the lack of available data on all aspects of an issue could constrain measuring, even a well-discussed and quantitatively analyzed phenomena like poverty. For example, Baulch (2006 (1996) : 83) points out that the "traditional income/consumption approach's concept of poverty would prefer to focus on...private consumption, common property resources and state-provided commodities...but often settles for...private consumption alone...or private income due to the difficulties of measuring consumption of state-provided commodities and access to common property resources. " While

recognizing the usefulness of such measures and indices, one should be aware of their limitations as well.

Another example from beyond the field of economics could help to make the usefulness, as well as limitation, clearer. The Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ) (2011) publishes annually an Impunity Index, which is a list of the most dangerous countries for journalists to operate. It constructs the Impunity Index by dividing the number of unsolved murders of journalists per one million inhabitants in a country. It is relatively easy to calculate the Impunity Index and it can clearly identify the most dangerous countries based on killings and unsolved murders of journalists, and the index is very useful for getting a reasonably good sense of countries with dire threats to journalists, but it cannot shed information on other aspects of press freedom. For example, in 2011 the CPJ identified the 13 most dangerous countries for journalists solely based on killings of journalists and unsolved murder cases of journalists, when in fact a country could be dangerous for journalists due to many other factors even when no one is killed. Or, the situation may have become less dangerous, but if the old murder cases still remain unsolved, the index could project a more dangerous situation than the country may actually be.

Beyond developing indices with hard data obtained from events or actions, in different fields, scholars rely on expert or concerned individuals' assessments to construct indices. For example, political scientists, sociologists, and others working on various issues such as regime types, democratization, corruption, often rely on experts' assessments. The Transparency International's Corruption Index is constructed based on business people's perception of corruption (Transparency International 2013). The Freedom House, on the other hand, publishes annual scores for Freedom (political rights and civil liberties) and Press Freedom based on experts assessments of a large number of related issues. The Press Freedom investigates around 50 questions on three dimensions of legal, political and economic freedom. The processes occasionally lead to slightly varied interpretations from different experts and this is sorted out by discussion and comparison with past indices. It has produced an index that covers most countries and is reasonably valid and has been proven to be a robust measure (Freedom House 2000; Freedom House 2009; Freedom House 2011; Reporters without Borders 2010; Seligson 1997).<sup>7</sup>

A single methodological tool cannot capture the varied types of exclusion faced by diverse groups, who have very different characteristics, such as either having a very small or large population, concentrated in some localities or territorially dispersed or both, and face different forms and extent of cultural, social, economic, and political exclusion, and face different level of challenges, such as extinction or threat of extinction of languages, lack of script, lack of literary culture in the group's language, etc. The community's effort in promoting its needs and interests, and the state's response toward the community's needs and demands, as well as impact of external factors, could also affect exclusion and inclusion. Multiple approaches, methodologies and tools, which are increasingly becoming the norm for conducting good research for many issues and questions, are necessary to capture the complexity of the exclusion/inclusion in Nepal.

Multiple approaches should be employed for generating data and constructing the purpose of comprehensive inclusion/exclusion index in Nepal due to the nature of the Nepali society and the index being constructed. If executed well, it could be a model. If data are available (via census, etc. ) on income/consumption etc. , such hard data can be used. Such types of data are not available for measuring cultural discrimination, untouchability and other ethnic/caste prejudice. We can and should come up with quantitative data using scaling method relying on assessments of experts<sup>7</sup>, whose validity and reliability can be increased through triangulation, verification and vetting.

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- 7 I have provided consultation to the Freedom House to prepare Freedom Rating and Press Freedom for a few countries.
  - 8 For example, Gurr (2010) measures Severity of Cultural Restrictions of around 275 minority groups around the world by looking at restrictions on observance of the group's religion (s) ; restrictions on speaking or publishing in the group's language or dialect; restrictions on instruction in the group's language; restrictions on celebration of group holidays, ceremonies, cultural events; restrictions marriage and family life; restrictions on organizations that promote the group's cultural interests employing 4 point scale: 0= the activity is not strictly restricted; 1= the activity is restricted by widespread but informal social practice, for example, by job discrimination against people who observe group customs or use the group's language; 2 = the activity is somewhat restricted by public policy; 3 = the activity is prohibited or sharply restricted by public policy. The data set has been widely used by scholars studying ethnic movements, violent ethnic conflict, autonomy, self-determination movements and so on.

## Collecting and Generating Data

Data can be obtained for construction of an Exclusion/Inclusion Index in at least the following four ways. First, some data can be obtained from existing data sets and sources like the census and national living standard surveys. If sufficient sample sizes are not obtained for smaller groups from the national surveys, similar smaller groups could be lumped together, as Bennett and Parajuli have done, for the purpose of extracting data from the existing sources (see the fourth point below on collecting data on the whole population of smaller groups). Going beyond Bennett and Parajuli, however, the combined data can be extrapolated for constructing index for the constituent individual groups. Such a method of using available data is not the most desirable way to go about, but it is done frequently when funding is not available or to save cost. Even though indicators do not fully capture a phenomenon, they have their use as they can convey some useful information. The extrapolated data and index could represent and reflect the conditions of the very small groups to some extent, at the least. It might be better to have some estimated data and index based on it than not having anything at all.

Another set of data can be obtained from primary sources, such as representation of various groups in various state, civic, and media organizations, as well as data on public holidays during festivals of different groups, highway named after various groups and their heroes, stamps published to commemorate various groups and their heroes, locales, culture and tradition, etc. Archival and interpretive analyses of laws and public policy affecting the marginalized groups can be carried out. The unit of analysis for this data set should be the identity group. The data should be presented in per capita basis to enable balancing equitable representation between small and large groups. For example, if a national hero declared by the state hails each from Magar and Raute group, the per capita calculation would show that the Raute are over represented because less number of people have the same number of state-declared national heroes compared to a group with a large number of members. Since most of the smaller groups are excluded in most spheres, over-representation occasionally in one sphere would probably not lead to over-representation overall and become problematic. On the other hand, generally very small groups face many more and severe external threats (see Kymlicka

1995) and the culture, language or even group may be in danger of extinction (Bhattachan 2003; Gurr 1993). Over-representation of small groups in a few realms is probably necessary to counter the threats and challenges they face in everyday life in many sectors due to their small population. If need be, a graded per capita calculation could be carried out to balance the phenomena of under or over-representation.

The data should be broken down to gender in addition to ethnic/caste groups. Collecting data along individual ethnic/caste groups would allow flexibility in interpreting them, such as *madhesi dalit* could be lumped in the *madhesi* or *dalit* category depending upon the issue at hand (citizenship issue as *madhesi*, or untouchability as *dalit*). If some useful and relevant data is already collected and analyzed by some scholars, they can be used to save time and money.

The third type of data can be generated through assessment of experts. For example the practice of untouchability, ethnic/caste prejudice and cultural discrimination cannot often be captured reasonably easily and reliably through past surveys, census etc. New surveys can be launched to capture the attitudes of people on the issue but beyond the high cost, they may not be able to measure the phenomenon unless the questions are developed scientifically with multiple questions to locate an attitude on a scale and tested multiple times (for measurement of racism, see Biernat and Crandall 1999; McConahay, Hardee, and Batts 1981; Robinson, Wrightsman, and Shaver 1998; Virtanen 1998). The ethnic and caste prejudice data can be generated through assessments of experts and knowledgeable persons for a large number of ethnic and caste groups at a reasonable cost. Analysis of laws and public policies could be useful to know if the state is sensitive toward the marginalized groups' issues or is biased toward the dominant groups, but will not capture the prevalence of the practices in society. A number of experts specializing on different identity and gender groups could individually come with indices for the group/subject/gender. A joint meeting of the experts could settle the differences through deliberations by reaching an acceptable measure after each expert provides his/her rationale for awarding a certain rank/scale for different criteria under considerations. If disagreement persists on some indicators, then the average on that score could be taken as the final measure for that criterion. The

Freedom House uses such a methodology, in addition to making the data comparable with the past indices, to arrive at the Freedom (Democracy) Score and Press Freedom scores for all the countries in the world.

The fourth and probably the most expensive method could be to conduct a survey to capture both attitudes and general information of group members (and hence collective group). Attitudinal surveys that ask people whether they are allowed inside houses of "higher" caste for example could help to record the prevalence of untouchability. The responses could depend upon how the questions are framed, constructed and relayed. If attitudinal survey methodology is to be employed, scaling (a continuum of very high, high, not sure, low, very low or a range from 1-7 or 1-10, for example) and index construction (several questions asked from different directions on an issue to get a composite and more valid response) should be employed, and pre-testing carried out to obtain more reliable and valid responses. For very small groups, it might be necessary to conduct the survey to the whole population or at least with a sample that contains large number of their members.

The next section provides the questionnaire and instrument for collecting data needed for constructing the Exclusion/Inclusion index. They are organized based on issues. During the collection of data, the instrument could be additionally reorganized along data collection methods (lumping survey questionnaire separately from those dealing with expert opinions, for example). The instrument stand as a proposal and they would benefit from inputs of experts and other stakeholders before they are implemented for collecting data. The deliberations and input could make substantive (issues and dimensions to be added) and semantic revisions (language, terms etc. ). They could also revise on the weights of different dimensions and sub-dimensions. Finally, as per needs and funds available, some of the items could be dropped or added.

Data Collection Instrument for the Proposed Comprehensive Exclusion/Inclusion Index

M = male, F = female

Name of Group ..... ; Population of Group in the most recent

Issues/dimensions/sub-dimensions		Wt.	M.	F.	Data source
A.	CULTURAL				
<b>1. Religion</b>					
1. 1. The group is restricted or free to observe and practice and promote its religion without constraints, such as build worship places, publish religious texts, proselytize etc. ; Scale: 1-5 (1 = faces restriction in practicing; 2= free to practice religion, 3 = faces restriction in spreading awareness about group religion; 4 = free to spread awareness about religion without proselytizing; 5 = free to promote religion, including through proselytizing)	30%				
1. 2. The group's religion is treated equally by the state (legal equality, equal support, if any, such as broadcasting religious rituals, ceremonies in the state Radio and TV; its ritual is part of state agencies' ceremonies, such as in the security sector and inauguration etc. of state programs, etc. ) ; Scale 1-5 (1 = faces legal inequality, 2 = legal equality; 3 = legal equality but not supported by the state; 4 = legal equality and some support by the state; 5 = legal equality and extensive support by the state)	1. 5				
1. 3. The group's religion is tolerated/not tolerated, treated with respect and as equal by the society (extent of existence of prejudice, if any violent attack and coverage/under-coverage of its rituals, ceremonies in private TV and Radio stations) ; Scale 1-6 (1= religion and its infrastructure and people have occasionally faced violent attack; 2 = religion and its people face non-violent attack and criticism) ; 3 = religion is tolerated (indifference) but not treated with respect; 4 = religion is treated with respect; 5 = religion is treated with respect but does not receive equitable treatment, such as coverage in private media like the radio, TV etc. ; 6 = religion is treated with respect and receives disproportionate space in the private & public sector media)	1				
1. 4. The group's religion receives international support in terms of religious discourse and material and funding support for its survival, operational activities and expansion; Scale 1-5 (1 = no significant international support in discourse, material and funding; 2=international support in religious discourse; 3=some international material support and networking in addition to support in religious discourse; 4= some international support in networking, discourse, materials and funding; 5= extensive international support in networking, discourse, materials and funding)	1				
<b>2. Language</b>					
2. 1. The group's language faces restriction or is recognized equally or disproportionately by the state (language is recognized as language of governance in entire Nepal or provinces or sub-provinces) : Scale 1-6 (1=restricted in using it in public or private sphere; 2 = allowed to speak but no formal recognition; 3 = official language at local/sub-provincial level; 4 = official language at provincial/ regional level; 5 = official language at provincial and local level (in another region) ; 6 = official language for entire Nepal)	1				
		6 %			

Issue/dimensions/sub-dimensions	Wt.	M.	F.	Data source
2.2. State support toward group's language; Scale 1-6 (1 = no support at all; 2 = instruction permitted in public schools; 3 = instruction permitted in public schools and support for text books publication; 4 = instruction permitted in public schools, support for text book publication and hiring teachers; 5 = instruction permitted in public schools, support for text book publication and hiring teachers, and support toward establishing educational infrastructures like school buildings for promotion of the language; 6 = instruction permitted in public schools, support for text book publication and hiring teachers, support for establishing educational infrastructure and other additional support, such as scholarship (residential, tuition, stipend)	1			
2.3. Language is taught at schools; Scale 1-6 (1 = language is not taught at public schools; 2 = language taught up to grade 5 (primary); 3 = language taught up to grade 8 (middle school); 4 = language taught for 12 years (high school, intermediate) ; 5 = language is taught up to 16 years; 6 = language is taught beyond 16 years)	1			
2.4. The group's language has a script; Scale 1-5 (1 = no script; 2 = developing script; 3 = has a script; 4 = script is widely used by the group; 5 = script is used widely in the country beyond the group)	0.75			
2.5. The group's language has a literary culture; Scale 1-6 (1 = no literary culture; 2 = books are published in the language; 3 = books and magazines are published; 4 = books and magazines are published and grammar is developed;5 = Books and magazines are published, grammar is developed and books, magazines, newspapers are published and have wide circulation)	0.75			
2.6. Language retention by the group, in percentage (language speakers from the group/ population of the community) (0 = no one speaks the language; 100 = all members of the group speak language)	0.75			
2.7. Language of the group spoken by other group members of other groups, in percentage (language speakers from non-ethnic group/ population of ethnic/linguistic community) (0= no external speakers; high could go beyond 100 percent)	0.75			
<b>3. Symbolic Representation</b>				
3.1. The group's festivals declared as public holidays (0 if absent or a ratio number if present – number of festivals/group population; if half a day holiday is given, consider it as Half; if holiday only awarded to the group, consider it as One; if a day is a holiday in a number of groups/ festivals, divide One by the number of groups and divide the result by the population of the group)	1			
3.2. The group's members declared as national heroes by the state (0 if absent or a ratio number if present – number of national heroes/group population)	1			
3.3. The group's issues and members illustrated in stamps (0 if absent or a ratio number if present – number of stamps/group population)	1			
3.4. Adoption of group's name or word representing or associated with the group as the name of the country, province, and local governing units (0 if absent or a ratio number if present – number/group population)	1			
3.5. Major highways named after group or group members (0 if absent or a ratio number if present – length of highway/group population; level of highways could be weighted)	1			

Issues/dimensions/sub-dimensions	Wt.	M.	F.	Data source
3. 6. Names of places (rivers, villages, towns, mountains etc.) replaced, scale 1-5 (1= large number of place names replaced; 2 = some places names replaced, 3 = places names as they are or not replaced, 4 = group's names imposed in a few instances, 5 = group names imposed in many instances)	1			6 %
<b>4. Tradition and Ways of Life</b>				
4. 1. Restriction to wear and retention of group's dress, respect they receive, and adoption by other groups; Scale 1-7 (1 = restricted in private or public sphere; 2 = Not restricted to wear one group's dress in public places; 3 = group's dress denigrated by other groups; 4 = group's dress respected and adopted by other groups; 5 = group dress widely adopted by members of other groups; 6=the group's dress is promoted by the state; 7=the group's dress is imposed on others by the state)	0.75			
4. 2. Restriction to wear and retention of group's jewelleries, respect they receive, and adoption by other groups; Scale 1-7 (1 = restricted in private or public sphere; 2 = not restricted to wear in public places; 3 = denigrated by other groups; 4 = respected and adopted by other groups; 5 = widely adopted by members of other groups; 6 = the group's jewelleries is promoted by the state; 7 = the group's jewelleries is imposed by the state on the population)	0.75			
4. 3. Restriction to practice and retention of group's cultural events/rituals/ceremonies, respect they receive, and adoption by other groups; Scale 1:5 (1 = restricted in private and public sphere; 2 = no restriction to practice in public sphere; 3 = denigrated by other groups; 4 = respected and adopted by other groups; 5 = widely adopted by members of other groups)	0.75			
4. 4. Promotion or adoption (or the lack) of groups' tradition/rituals by the state, such as conducting particularceremonies during inauguration etc. ; Scale 1-5 (1 = none; 2 = adoption of some elements; 3 = adoption of considerable elements; 4 = significant elements adopted by the state; 5 = mandated by law)	0.75			
4. 5. Adoption of group's traditions/rituals by the society (such as celebration of Dashain, honoring with Khada) ; Scale 1-5 (1= none; 2 = adopted by some section of society; 3 = adopted by all or almost everyone)	0.75			
4. 6. The state recognizes and supports traditional institutions of the group; Scale 1-5 (1 = no ; 2 = recognizes some institutions; 3 = recognizes considerable institutions; 4 = recognizes significant institutions; 5 = policies recognizing traditional institutions are sincerely implemented)	0.75			
4. 7. The state recognizes and supports traditional professions of the group; Scale 1-4 (1 = no recognition and support; 2 = recognizes and but no support; 3 = recognizes and formulation of policies to support but lacks sincere implementation; 4 = formulated policies to support the profession and are sincerely implemented)	0.75			
4. 8. The group maintains traditions and practices that are detrimental to the wellbeing of other groups; Scale 1-4 (1 =none; 2 = some practices are detrimental; 3 = significant practices and traditions are detrimental; 4 = detrimental traditions and practices are supported by formal law)	0.75			

Issues/dimensions/sub-dimensions		Wt.	M.	F.	Data source
<b>5. Autonomy of Group and Individuals</b>		6%			
5.1. The state recognizes the right of autonomy of the group at different level (denial of autonomy by the center or autonomy at provincial, sub provincial, non-territorial level) and backs with necessary laws and support; Scale 1-9 (1 = denial of autonomy; 2= autonomy at sub-provincial level; 3= autonomy at sub-provincial level with adequate laws and support; 4= non-territorial autonomy; 5 = non-territorial autonomy with adequate laws and support; 6 = autonomy at provincial level; 7 = autonomy at provincial and sub provincial level; 8= autonomy at provincial and sub-provincial level with adequate laws and support; 9= the group dominates the center)	2				
5.2. The group has the formal right to veto on fundamental cultural issues that affects it; Scale 1-5 (1= no veto right; 2 = in some areas; 3 = in significant areas; 4 = group is completely autonomous; 5 = group dominates other groups on cultural issues)	1				
5.3. The group practices de facto autonomy over its own matters or faces constraints; Scale 1-4 (1 = none; 2 = in some areas; 3 = in considerable area; 4 = group has autonomy and dominates other groups)	1				
5.4. The state recognizes international laws, covenants, treaties, and declarations that provide autonomy of groups in different spheres and demonstrates sincerity in their implementation and supports international advocacy of autonomy to groups; Scale 1:6 (1= no recognition of international treaties on autonomy; 2 = recognizes some international laws, etc. ; 3= recognizes significant and relevant international laws, etc. ; 4= recognizes all relevant international laws, etc.; 5= recognizes all relevantinternational laws and demonstrates sincerity in their implementation by formulating necessary national laws; 6 = implements the national laws sincerely; 7= the state recognizes laws and is active in advocating autonomy rights of groups in the international arena)	1				
5.5. Individual members (women, men, and third gender; poor and rich; young and old) of group has equal rights in defining group's identity, community needs, aspirations, and objectives of groups as against often old males doing so (1 = no, for instance, only old males decide; 2 = have a role in some issues; 3= have role in significant issues; 4 = individual equality exists in most areas; 5= formal and informal equality among all members on community related matters)	1				
<b>B. SOCIAL</b>		30%			
6. Caste/Ethnic/Religious/Identity and Gender Discrimination and Prejudice		10			
6.1. The group suffers from untouchability; Scale 1-6 (1=victim of extensive (inter and intra) untouchability ; 2 = victim of significant (inter caste) form of untouchability; 3= victim of some level of untouchability; 4 = does not face untouchability; 5= group practices untouchability; 6= group is responsible for perpetuating caste based untouchability)	0.91				
6.2. The state has promulgated laws to end untouchability and is sincere in their implementation; Scale 1-5 (1 = laws promote untouchability; 2= no laws have been formulated to end untouchability; 3 = some laws have been formulated against untouchability but inadequate; 4 = state is not serious and sincere in implementing laws against untouchability; 5 = state is sincere in implementing laws against untouchability)	0.91				

Issues/dimensions/sub-dimensions	Wt.	M.	F.	Data source
6. 3. The group suffers from ethnic and caste based prejudice; Scale 1-6 (1= victim of extensive (inter and intra) ethnic/caste/prejudice ; 2 = victim of significant interethnic/caste prejudice; 3=victim of some level of ethnic/caste prejudice; 4 = does not face ethnic/caste prejudice; 5 = group is significantly responsible for perpetuating ethnic/caste prejudice)	0. 91			
6. 4. The state has formulated laws to end ethnic/caste prejudice the group faces and demonstrates sincerity in their implementations; Scale 1-5 (1 = laws promote ethnic/caste prejudice; 2 = no laws have been formulated to end ethnic/caste prejudice; 3 = some laws have been formulated to end ethnic/caste prejudice but inadequate; 4 = significant laws promulgated to end ethnic/caste prejudice but state is not serious and sincere in implementing laws against ethnic/caste prejudice; 5 = significant laws promulgated to end ethnic/caste prejudice and state is sincere in implementing laws against ethnic prejudice)	0. 91			
6. 5. The group suffers from religious prejudice; Scale 1-6 (1= victim of extensive (inter and intra) religious prejudice ; 2 = victim of significant interreligious prejudice; 3=victim of some level of religious prejudice; 4 = does not face religious prejudice; 5 = group holds prejudice against minority religious groups; 6 = group contributes in perpetuating religious prejudice)	0. 91			
6. 6. The state has formulated laws to end religious prejudice the group faces and demonstrates sincerity in their implementations; Scale 1-5 (1 = laws promote religious prejudice; 2 = no laws have been formulated to end religious prejudice; 3 = some laws have been formulated to end religious prejudice but inadequate; 4 = significant laws promulgated to end religious prejudice but state is not serious and sincere in implementing laws against religious prejudice; 5 = significant laws promulgated to end religious prejudice and state is sincere in implementing laws against religious prejudice)	0. 91			
6. 7. Group is suspected of not being loyal towards the Nepali state and nation; Scale 1-4 (1= faces extensive suspicion; 2 = faces some level of suspicion; 3 = faces no suspicion; 4 = group is responsible for generating suspicion on other groups)	0. 91			
6. 8. The state has formulated laws to end exclusion in citizenship; Scale 1-6 (1= laws deny citizenship; 2= laws and administrative mechanism delay in awarding citizenship; 3 = some laws formulated to treat equally in terms of citizenship but inadequate; 4= laws adequate to treat equally in terms of citizenship; 5 = laws are adequate but administrative mechanism delays in acquiring citizenship certificates; 6= adequate laws to acquire citizenship certificates and no delay through administrative mechanism)	0. 91			
6. 9. Group faces gender discrimination; Scale 1-7 (1=most members of group -face extensive gender discrimination, including violence in the household and outside; 2 = Most members of group ( ethnic, caste, religious communities) face extensive gender discrimination, including violence in the household but not outside; 3 = Most members of group face extensive gender discrimination but not violence; 4= Some members of group face extensive gender discrimination but not violence; 5= Most members of group face some level of gender discrimination; 6= Some members of group face some level of gender discrimination; 7 = no gender discrimination in the group)	0. 91			

Issues/dimensions/sub-dimensions	Wt.	M.	F.	Data source
6. 10. The state has formulated laws to end gender discrimination and demonstrates sincerity in their implementation; Scale 1-5 (1 = laws promote gender discrimination; 2 = no laws have been formulated to reduce gender discrimination; 3 = some laws have been formulated to end gender discrimination but they are inadequate; 4 = More or less adequate laws formulated to end gender discrimination but state is not serious and sincere in implementing laws against gender discrimination; 5 = adequate laws and state is sincere in implementing laws against gender discrimination)	0.91			
6. 11. Self-esteem/self-respect of groups with regard to individual and group abilities, hark working, social status, culture, history, networking, etc. ; scale 1-5 (1 = group feels that it is inferior to many other groups in terms of ability, working habits, culture, network etc. ; 2 = members of the group feel that it is inferior to some other groups; 3 = the group feels that it is more or less equal to other groups; 3 = the group feels that it is superior to some other groups in terms of ability, work habit, culture etc. ; 4= members of the group feel very able compared to many groups in the society in terms of ability, working habits, culture etc.)	0.90			
<b>7. Educational and Health Outcomes</b>	5			
7. 1. Educational Outcomes				
7. 1. 1. Child aged 6-13 in school (see B-P)				-
7. 1. 2. Child aged 14-20 completing Primary School (see B-P)				.83
7. 1. 3. Education level: number of school years completed				.83
7. 2. Health Outcomes				.84
7. 2. 1. Child height-for age (see B-P)				-
7. 2. 2. Access to clean drinking water (see B-P)				.84
7. 2. 3. Sanitation (household without toilet, see B-P)				.83
<b>8. Group's Identity, Strength, and Solidarity</b>	5			
8. 1. Percentage of the population of the group				0.55
8. 2. Strength of group identity: scale 1-4 (1= supposed group members resist and challenge the government or other designated identity; 2= challenge to the identity does not exist or is weak but less proportion of members identify with the group identity; 3 = High proportion of group members identify with group identity; 4=members of the group are active in promoting identity and protecting group's rights)				-
8. 3. Existence and vibrancy of traditional institutions and their representative nature; Scale 1-7 (1 = traditional institutions no longer exist; 2 = existence of traditional institutions/organizations; 3 = existence of representative traditional institutions/ organizations; 4 = regular meetings of traditional institutions/organizations; 5 = lobbying to the state by traditional institutions/ organizations for group's welfare and rights; 6 = peaceful protests by traditional institutions/organizations demanding rights and resources; 7= violent activities by traditional institutions/organizations demanding rights and resources)				0.55

Issues/dimensions/sub-dimensions	Wt.	M.	F.	Data source
8.4. Existence and vibrancy of traditional leadership and their representative nature; Scale 1-7 (1 = non-existence of traditional leadership; 2 = existence of traditional leadership; 3 = existence of representative (recruited through non-hereditary method) traditional leadership; 4 = some role of traditional leadership to lead the community in its internal affairs; 5 = active role of traditional leadership in lobbying to state agencies on behalf of community; 6 = leadership role of traditional leadership in peaceful protests against the state; 7= leadership role of traditional leadership in violent activities against the state)	0.55			
8.5. Existence and vibrancy of modern ethnic/caste associations and their representative nature; Scale 1-7 (1 = modern ethnic/caste association does not exist; 2 = existence of a modern ethnic/caste association but largely inactive; 3 = existence of modern representative/elected ethnic/caste associations but largely inactive; 4 = regular meetings of modern representative/elected ethnic/caste association; 5 = lobbying by modern ethnic/caste association; 6 = peaceful protests led by modern association; 7= violent activities led by modern association)	0.55			
8.6. Existence and vibrancy of NGO's in promoting group interests; ; Scale 1-6 (1 = NGOs of the group does not exist; 2 = existence of some NGOs; 3 = existence of large number of NGOs but largely confined to service delivery; 4 = Service delivery and some lobbying and advocacy by NGOs; 5 = service delivery and extensive advocacy by NGOs; 6 = peaceful protests led by NGOs)	0.55			
8.7. Existence and vibrancy of supra organizations/forums/fronts/federations and their vibrancy; Scale 1-6 (1 = supra organization does not exist; 2= existence of federations and are representative of federations and are representative of federations; 3 = existence of federations and lobbying by federations; 4 = regular meetings of federations; 5 = peaceful protests led by federations; 6= violent activities led by federations )	0.425			
8.8. Migration, a: out migration of Indigenous Peoples - percentage of group outside native land, in percentage	0.425			
8.9. Migration, b: migration among non-indigenous groups; scale 1-4 (1 = very high level of out migration; 2 = high level of migration; 3 = moderate level of migration; 4 = none or very less level of migration)	0.425			
8.10. Recipient of migration, a: percentage of its population in its core native areas	-			
<b>9. Representation in Media and Academia</b>	5			
9.1. Representation in editorial pool of A category newspapers categorized by the Press Council, in percentage (depending upon availability of data and resource, more media personnel could be included – in such cases weights could be given based on ranks and circulation of the media)	1			
9.2. Representation in academia (head of institutions, universities, office bearers of associations, and depending upon availability of data and resource more academics could be included, including all professors at public universities – in such cases weights could be given based on ranks and reputation of the institution), in percentage	1			
9.3. The state has introduced laws and policies to ensure the group's representation in the state media and demonstrates sincerity in implementation or has policies that favors the group, Scale 1-6 (1= laws that facilitate exclusion; 2 = no exclusively nor inclusionary laws; 3 = laws to ensure some representation, such as reservation; 4 = laws that ensure proportionate representation but lack of sincere implementation; 5 = laws to ensure proportionate representation and sincerity in implementation; 6 = laws facilitate over-representation of group)	0.60			

Issue/dimensions/sub-dimensions	Wt.	M.	F.	Data source
9.4. The state has introduced laws and policies to address the group's representation in academia (public universities) and demonstrates sincerity in implementation or has policies that favors the group (such as usage of group language in civil service examination). Scale 1-6 (1 = laws that facilitate exclusion; 2 = no exclusionary nor inclusionary laws; 3 = laws to ensure some representation, such as reservation; 4 = laws that ensure proportionate representation; 5 = laws to ensure proportionate representation and sincerity in implementation; 6= laws facilitate over-representation of group)	0. 60			
9.5. The media sector has introduced policies to increase representation of the group and demonstrates sincerity in implementation those policies; Scale 1-6 (1=policies and practices that facilitate exclusion; 2 = no exclusionary nor inclusionary policies and practices; 3 = policies and practices to ensure some representation; 4 = policies and practices to ensure proportionate representation; 5 = policies and practices to ensure proportionate representation and sincerity in implementation; 6 = policies and practices that facilitate domination of group)	0. 60			
9.6 The academic sector has introduced policies to increase representation of the group and demonstrates sincerity in implementation those policies; Scale 1-6 (1=policies and practices that facilitate exclusion; 2 = no exclusionary nor inclusionary policies and practices; 3 = policies and practices to ensure some representation; 4 = policies and practices to ensure proportionate representation but lack of sincere implementation; 5 = policies and practices to ensure proportionate representation and sincerity in implementation; 6 = policies and practices that facilitate group's over-representation)	0. 60			
9.7 Ethnic/easte specific media launched: Scale 1-6 (1= no group specific media launched; 2 = media launched but is irregular; 3 = Media is launched, including in native language; 4 = media is launched and is regularly published; 5 = media is launched, is regular, and widely circulated; 6 = Media in its native language dominates the media sector)	0. 60			
<b>10. Representation in Civil Society Organizations</b>	5			
10. 1. Representation in major labor unions, in percentage (based on membership-depending upon availability of data and resource more labor unions and their lower level membership could be included – in such cases weights could be given based on categories and level of unions)	0. 84			
10. 2. Representation in NGOs and INGOs, in percentage (representation in peak organization leadership - depending upon availability of data and resource leadership of major NGOs could be included – if large number of NGOs are included, weights could be given based on size – budget, personnel etc. - of organizations)	0. 84			
10. 3. Representation in leadership of major mainstream Human Rights organizations, in percentage (depending upon availability of data and resource more organizations could be included – in such cases weights could be given based on size/influence of organizations – budget, reach, staff)	0. 83			
10. 4. Representation in lawyer's professional associations, in percentage (peak organization -depending upon availability of data and resource lower level membership could be included, as well as other professional organizations like the professors', engineers' and doctors associations – in such cases weights could be given based on level of association)	0. 83			

Issues/dimensions/sub-dimensions	Wt.	M.	F.	Data source
10. 5. State laws and policies to ensure proportionate representation of the group in various professional civil society organizations; Scale 1= 6 (1=laws and policies facilitates exclusion; 2 = neither exclusionary nor inclusive policies or laws; 3 = policies and laws to ensure some representation; 4 = laws and policies to ensure proportionate representation; 5 = laws and policies to ensure proportionate representation and sincerity in implementation; 6 = state laws and policies facilitates domination of the group)	0. 83			
10. 6 Group specific civil society organizations; Scale 1-6 (1 = no civil society organization exist; 2 = civil society organization in one sectoramonglabor union, human rights, professional associations; NGO/INGO; 3 = civil society organization in two sectors; 4 = civil society organization in three sectors; 5= civil society organization in four sectors ; 6 = civil society organization in four sectors or more and vibrant in at least two sectors	0. 83			
<b>C. ECONOMIC</b>	20 %			
11. Income/Consumption (see B-P)	5			
12. Loss of Traditional Occupation, scale 1-4 (1=very high, 2 = high, 3 = moderate, 4= none)	2. 5			
13. Unemployment Level, in percentage	2. 5			
14. Land Alienation (none; some; considerable; extensive)	2			
15. Landholding (no landholding; moderate land holding; significant land holding; large landholding)	3			
16. Influence and/or Control Over Trade and Industry, in percentage (representation in peak organizations of trade and industry – depending upon availability of data and resources, lower level officer bearers could be included in the count with higher weights for peak organizations)	2. 5			
17. Influence and Control Over Natural Resources	2. 5			
17. 1. Representation in the community forestry user's groups in percentage (peak organization; if data and resources are available, top leaders and/or office bearers of user groups' could be collected)	1. 5			
17. 2. State recognition over uses of natural resources, laws and policies to facilitate control over natural resources and sincerity over implementation of the policies by the state; Scale 1-5 (1=laws that hinders accessing resources; 2 = neither exclusionary nor inclusive policies; 3 = recognition and passage of international laws that facilitate accessing natural resources; 4 = laws and policies of the state to ensure access to natural resources; 5 = laws and policies of the state that ensures access to natural resources and effective enforcement; 6= laws and policies that facilitate excessive access and use of natural resources)	1			
<b>D. POLITICAL</b>	20%			
18. Citizenship and Influence	10			

Issues/dimensions/sub-dimensions	Wt.	M.	F.	Data source
18. 1      The group faces difficulties in acquiring citizenship; Scale 1-5 (1 = considerable proportion of its population has not been able to acquire citizenship despite attempt to get it; 2 = some members of the group has not been able to acquire citizenship despite attempt to get it; 3 = considerable proportion of the group is without citizenship because it has not attempted to acquire it; 4 = group members face difficulties when applying for citizenship certificate due to language barriers, suspicion of the group's loyalty to the nation and state; 5 = group members do not face difficulties when applying for citizenship certificates).	2			
18. 2      The group's voting influence, percentage vote cast in election	2			
18. 3      Influence at local level (see B-P)	2			
18. 4      The state has formed bodies to study, develop, and empower the group; Scale 1- 6 (1 = state has not formed any special group specific organization, either for individual or category; 2 = the state has formed one organization for the category; 3 = state has formed organization/s but they are not supported adequately; 4 = state has formed group/category specific organization/s and they are well supported by the state; 6 = public organizations are dominated by the group)	2			
18. 5      The state has formulated laws and public policies to empower and promote political equality of the group (beyond policies considered in other dimensions) ; Scale 1- (1 = state has not formulated group specific laws/public policies, either for individual or category; 2 = the state has formulated laws/public policies targeted toward the category; 3 = state has formulated laws/public policies targeting the group; 4 = state has formulated laws/public policies but they are not enforced sincerely; 5 = state has formulated group/category specific laws/public policies they are sincerely supported by the state; 6 = laws and public policies generally favor the group)	2			
19. Representation	8			
19. 1      Representation in the executive, in percentage (provincial executives to be added after federalism is adopted with lower weights; different weights to different positions)	1			
19. 2      Representation in the Parliament, percentage (provincial legislatures to be added after federalism is adopted with lower weights)	1			
19. 3      Representation in the Judiciary, in percentage (provincial justices to be added after federalism is adopted with lower weights; justices from lower level branches to be included if data and resources permit )	1			
19. 4      Representation in civil administration, in percentage (special class; other levels to be included if data and budget permit) and constitutional commissions	1			
19. 5      Representation in security administration, in percentage (top level; other levels to be included if data and budget permit)	1			
19. 6      Representation in political parties, in percentage, with weight given based on party strength in the Parliament-Legislature (top office bearers and/or central committee members, different weights given to different position, with significantly high weight to the party head)	1			
19. 7      Representation in local governance, in percentage	1			

<b>Issues/dimensions/sub-dimensions</b>	<b>Wt.</b>	<b>M.</b>	<b>F.</b>	<b>Data source</b>
19. 8 The state has introduced laws and policies to assure the group's representation in various sectors and demonstrates its sincerity in implementation; Scale 1-8 (1= laws that exclude; 2 = neither exclusionary nor inclusive laws; 3 = inclusive laws in one sector; 4 = inclusive laws in two sectors; 5 = inclusive laws in three sectors; 6 = inclusive laws for four and more sectors; 7 = inclusive laws that ensure proportionate representation; 8= laws to ensure proportionate representation and sincere implementation)	1			
20. Group Specific Ethnic Party, ratio of votes received/population of the group	2			

## Concluding Thoughts

Some questions could be raised with regard to the suggested data collection proposal. Does it require collection of a very large number of data, and hence could the proposal be too ambitious? A national project, I think, should collect large number of data if funds are available. It should not be that daunting if determination exists. Govinda Neupane (2000) single handedly, and without funding support, calculated representation of various groups in numerous public, private and civic organizations and institutions. Other indices-constructing organizations probe issues extensively. For example, the Freedom House's Press Freedom scores are obtained by asking questions on three dimensions (legal, political, and economic environment) and 23 sub-dimensions with 126 questions for each country.

This type of indices are not based on neat and clean formulae as some econometricians would prefer, but are in a far better position to capture a complex reality than through simple and neat abstraction obtained with measurement of a few variables. In public policy domains, intuition based on experience can often lead to processes and policies that are often as good as, if not better than, rationalistic approaches. Lindbolm (1959) had argued, in a slightly different context, that the muddling through process, which builds on past experiences and exposure, for making incremental changes in policies are scientific even when they do not follow the rational-comprehensive approach the scientific community may call for. Likewise, with regard to contentious issues that deal with social justice movements and policy changes, Iris Young (2001) has argued that activists and their knowledge base of issues might be more useful and reliable in acquiring some type of information and knowledge and reaching informed decisions based on them in certain areas than "neutral," "scientific" method by those who believe in dispassionate deliberations.

The Freedom House' score can be pointed out as an example. Like the proposed index in this paper, it generates Freedom Score for all the countries in the world along two dimensions (political rights and civil liberties) based on numerous sub-dimensions. More importantly as it is relevant to this proposal, it appears less scientific and logical, and as such, some have criticized the score for having "inappropriate aggregation" and "multiple problems of

measurement, " as other measures have also been pointed out as having a number of "weaknesses" (Munck 2009). Despite different democratic indices being criticized for different shortcomings, including for their conceptualization of democracy, most of the well-known democratic indices, including the Freedom House score, highly correlate with each other, meeting the external validity criterion (Arat 1991; Mainwaring, Brinks, and Perez-Linan 2001; Vanhanen 2000). The world's leading political scientists have consulted for the Freedom House in refining its measures. The measure's strongest validity probably comes from its application—it is probably one of the most widely, if not the most, used data set to analyze democracy by social scientists.

Likewise, the proposed data set might be criticized in a number of ways but testing with other similar measures could demonstrate its robustness. More important, by attempting to measure numerous variables that have excluded various groups in Nepal, it will more truly capture exclusion that many groups in Nepal are facing. It is likely to meet both internal and external validity at a higher level than previous indices of exclusion/inclusion constructed for Nepal.

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# Nepal: Study of Political Inclusion and Research Methods

Krishna Hachhethu

This paper is framed with a proposition: *the higher the level of political participation, the greater the political inclusion*. Its purpose is to assist the methodologies designed for the Social Inclusion Atlas and Ethnographic Profile (SIA-EP) study. The SIA-EP study has four components and four methodological paths: Nepal Social Inclusion Index (NSII), Nepal Social Inclusion Survey (NSIS), Ethnographic Profile (EP), and Social Inclusion Mapping (SIM). The first section of the paper makes a brief review on literatures of social sciences in Nepal, a review of study/research on Nepali politics in particular. The NSII team will benefit from the secondary data sources and information included in the review. The second section deals with a case study of Nepal Democracy Survey in the hopes that the NSIS team will become informed about multiple dimensions of political participation and assist in designing a questionnaire related to political inclusion. The third section deals with the customary governance as one of the avenues of political participation and inclusion which could be useful to the EP team.

## I. Literature Review

The study of social inclusion is a new venture in social sciences research in Nepal. At times Nepal was under regimented partyless panchayat system (1960-1990), ethnographic study was dominated by cultural anthropologists, and political science research was focused mainly on conventional core issues like government, parliament, political party, foreign policy etc. (Hachhethu, 2002a). The dominant themes of social sciences study/research was something different from what it is now. Nevertheless, some previous studies brought into light the conflict between dominant *pahadi* and discriminated *madhesi* (Gaige 1975), between privileged hill Brahmins and marginalized Limbus (Caplan 1975). Recently the focus of social sciences has changed. New developments taking place in the landscape of Nepali politics and society – i. e. restoration of multiparty democracy in 1990,

rise of ethnicity and regionalism in the post-1990 period, ethnic mobilization during the Maoist insurgency (1996-2006), setting inclusive democracy as national goal in the post-April 2006 Jan Andolan II, legal provisions on reservation, affirmative action, and caste/ethnic based representation in the Constituent Assembly (CA), and adaptation of secularism, pluralism, and federalism as core principles of the new constitution under the making – have worked as motivational factors for making social exclusion/inclusion the topmost priority areas in contemporary social sciences' study/research. So, the contribution of foreign research funds is important to study on such pressing topics. The Social Inclusion Research Fund (SIRF) has contributed to explore the alternative sources of knowledge for research on issues directly related to the question of inclusion and exclusion.

Besides its provision for funding short term and long term research on different dimensions of inclusion of the excluded groups—women, *dalit*, *janajati* and *madhesi* in particular—to be carried out by selected individuals and institutions, the SIRF, in collaboration with Mandala Book Point, has published books on its own initiatives, i. e. From Exclusion to Inclusion (2007), Identity and Society (2009), State and Society (2010). Value is added in production of knowledge on social inclusion/exclusion by its partner organizations. Some noteworthy publications by its partner organizations are: Ethnicity and Federalism in Nepal (2012) by Central Department of Sociology/ Anthropology, Tribhuvan University; special issues of Contributions to Nepalese Studies (a journal published by Centre for Nepal and Asian Studies) on “Social Exclusion and Group Mobilization in Nepal” (V. 36. 2009), “Social Science Methodology,” “Social Movements,” “Identity and Inclusion,” and “Monism, Multiculturalism and Pluralism from Social Exclusion and Inclusion Perspectives” (V. 39. 2012).

At the outset, the social sciences study/research in the post-1990 period has exposed that the traditional hegemonic model of national integration in Nepal has eventually produced unequal citizens (Burghart 1996; Gellner et al. 1997; Gurung 1998). Four outstanding works that provide comprehensive data-based information about inequality between dominant hill high castes and discriminated *janajati*, *madhesi* and *dalit* are: *Question of Caste/Ethnicity in Nepal* (Neupane 2000), *Nepal: Human Development Report* (UNDP/Nepal 1998; 2004; 2009), *Unequal*

*Citizens: Gender, Caste and Ethnic Exclusion in Nepal* (World Bank and DFID 2006) and *Nepal Living Standards Survey (CBS 1996, 2004, 2011)*. Findings of these studies about inequality of social groups in terms of Governance Index (GI), Human Development Index (HDI), and Poverty Index (PI) have become major sources for studies carried out for advocacy and lobby, applied research, and academic research. There are some other noteworthy studies which have contribution in specific areas, i. e. rights of minorities and indigenous people (Bhattachan 2008), rise of ethnicity and ethnic activism (Gellner 2009; Hangen 2010; Lecomte-Tiouine et al. 2003), plea for consociational democracy in Nepal (Lawati 2005). Very recently, the study of ethnicity and regionalism is increasingly connected with discourse of federalism (Anand 2005; Khanal 2007; Lawati 2010; Manandhar et al 2009; Sharma 2008; Shrestha, 2011; Tamang 2011).

The social sciences research, including those mentioned above, have three limitations. One, a set of studies is confined to making case study of a particular group living in one particular area. CNAS's study of "Social Exclusion and Group Mobilization in Nepal" is an example. It investigated four social groups—Yadav, Tamang, Muslim and *dalit*—in sample areas of Dhanusha, Sindhupalchok, Banke, and Surkhet districts respectively. Two, another set of studies is research on one particular group of community, i. e. Madhesh (Gautam 2008), Muslim (Dastidaer 2007), Tharu (Guneratne 2002) etc. Three, most studies give a macro level picture of aggregated data of hill high castes, *janajatis*, *madheshis*, and *dalits*. At best, data analysis of groups having each of these four common identities is disaggregated into categories of hill high castes (Brahmin and Chhetri), *dalits* (Hill *dalit* and Tarai *dalit*) and *janajati* (Hill *janajati* and Tarai *janajati*). Some disaggregated data is also available among the *janajatis* that falls into five categories: most advantageous, advantageous, disadvantageous, most disadvantageous, and marginalized. So far as disaggregated data of all or most of the 101 caste/ethnic groups of Nepal is concerned, some previous studies give an account of tradition, culture, and history (Bista 1976; Sharma 1982) and caste/ethnic and language based geographical distribution of population (Gurung 2006; Gurung et al. 2006a; Gurung et al. 2006b; Sharma 2008), but none of these cover the pertinent issues of social inclusion and exclusion. The situation is rightly observed by the SIA-EP project, "Nepal currently does not have a comprehensive knowledge base of its caste and ethnic groups and social diversity. " So the project

sets its goal, "The primary objective of the research is to promote informed understanding of Nepal's social diversity by producing research-based, high quality and up-to-date information regarding the country's social, cultural and linguistic composition as well as the status of human and social development."

The study of Nepali politics has evolved following the trends of other social sciences. Most of previous scholarly works are concentrated on the description of political development and analysis of major events and trends in Nepali politics (Bara, 1977, 1983; Chauhan 1971; Gupta, 1964; Joshi and Rose 1966; Shah 1982). Exceptions are the research on Nepali state from political economy perspectives (Blakie et al. 1980; Pandey 1999; Regmi 1988; Seddon 1979; 1987) and investigation on state-society interface from ethnic and regional perspective but all are confined to micro-level case studies of inter-groups relations, i. e. relations between hill Brahmins and Limbus (Caplan 1975), between hill high castes and *dalits* (Caplan 1972) and between *pahadis* and *madhesis* (Gaige 1975). In aftermath of the restoration of democracy in 1990, the study of Nepali politics has increased and proliferated in both content and methodology for multiple reasons, including the entry of private research centers into areas of political research<sup>1</sup>, availability of research funding for critical political issues, and shift in the interest of anthropologists specializing in Nepal (Gellner, Lecomte-Tiouine, Pfaff-Czarnecka, Fisher, etc. ) from cultural anthropology to political anthropology. Unlike the traditional method of study – qualitative – adopted mostly by TU political scientists—different institutions applied quantitative studies on areas like elections, democracy, leadership, government, parliament, and political parties (POLSAN, IIDS, Interdisciplinary Analysis, SDSA/N etc. ). To react to faster changes in contemporary Nepali politics, priority has been shifting from the study of legal-structural aspects—i. e. political parties, parliament, election,

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<sup>1</sup> Some notable private research centers which have generated a large number of data and information on different aspects of contemporary Nepali politics are Political Science Association of Nepal (POLSAN) Nepal Centre for Contemporary Studies (NCCS), Society for Constitutional and Parliamentary Affairs (SCOPE), South Asia Partnership/Nepal (SAP-Nepal) Informal Service Sector (INSEC) Nepal Foundation for Advanced Studies (NEFAS), Institute of Integrated Development Studies (IIDS), Interdisciplinary Analyst, Martin Chautari, Social Science Baha.

local governance, decentralization in the 1990s (Baral, 2004; Hachhethu, 2002b; Kumar, 1995; 2010)—to Maoist insurgency and conflict resolution in the early 2000s (Baral 2006; Hutt 2005; Karki and Seddon 2003; Muni, 2003; Thapa 2003), to constitution making, including the agendas of state restructuring, inclusion, and federalism most recently (Baral 2008; Hachhethu 2009; Riaz and Basu 2010).

Rise of ethnicity and regionalism and its impact on contemporary politics and constitution making gained prominence in the most recent political study/research because Nepal, for post-April 2006 Jana Andolan, set inclusive democracy as its national goal. Article 138 of The Interim Constitution of Nepal 2007 states, "To bring an end to discrimination based on class, caste/ethnic, language, gender, culture, religion and region by eliminating the centralized and unitary form of the state, the state shall be made inclusive and restructured into a progressive, democratic federal system." In pursuance to this article, the Nepali state has taken several policy measures, i. e. declaration of Nepal as a secular state, recognition of multi-language policy, reservation and affirmative actions to the marginalized groups, inclusive electoral representation, and designing federal structure primarily on the basis of ethnic identity. But so far as the subject of inclusion and exclusion is concerned, a study of Nepali politics has its own limitation: There is lack of disaggregated data analysis of each of 101 caste/ethnic groups. Of course, Election Commission, Parliament, political parties' offices, Ministry of Public Administration, NEFIN and NFDIN could be good sources for getting disaggregated data of power distribution among the 101 caste/ethnic groups in terms of number and ranking of their representation in political and administrative structures. The second limitation is that political study/research has not yet been inclusion/exclusion specific. But several issues directly or indirectly related to political inclusion/exclusion have been dealt with among different titles of research, political participation in particular.

## **II. Political Participation and Political Inclusion**

Participation and inclusion are two different concepts, but are closely interrelated to each other. Political participation is largely a citizen centric notion that focuses more on (a) mode of people's participation, i. e. voting behavior, protest/rally/movements

etc. , (b) agencies that mobilize people, i. e. political party, trade union, civil society etc. , and (c) process/institutions that facilitates people's participation, i. e. decentralization, local self-governance etc. A man/woman interacts with the state institutions and governance at two levels: one, as an individual citizen of the country and two, as a member of social groups he/she belongs to. Participation with group identity begs the components of inclusion. Here, I see the logic of key proposition of this paper: the higher the level of political participation, the greater the political inclusion. The meaning of participation and inclusion overlaps when talking about group representation to and interaction with the state apparatus. In Nepal, social group as a constituency of political participation is legally acknowledged with a provision of reservation to the excluded groups (women, *dalit*, *janajati*, *madheshi*) and also with a quota system of representation (37% for *janajati*, 31% for *madheshi*, 30% for Khas-Arya, 13% for *dalit*, and also 33% for women) under Proportional Representation (PR) component of the mixed electoral system.

Inclusion "refers to policies of including diversity and plurality of peoples in decision-making and implementation process of governance. It also includes empowerment of the marginalized and the disenfranchised" (International IDEA and Forum of Federations, 2009: 31). The scope of inclusion goes beyond participation. The study of political inclusion inevitably demands the study of identity, autonomy, collective rights, etc. Moreover, it also includes agendas of restructuring the Nepali state, i. e. secularism, federalism, multilingualism, proportional representation of social groups in proportion to size of population. UNDP/Nepal's studies entitled Nepal Human Development Reports (1998, 2004, 2009) are significant to understand the nature and scope of exclusion/inclusion in Nepal. Social exclusion is defined as inequality among social groups based on gender, caste/ethnicity, and spatial categories. These reports list seven sources of inequality and exclusion: (1) unequal gender relations (2) hierarchical stratification of caste/ethnic groups (3) domination of hill high castes values and culture (4) linguistic discrimination (5) religions discrimination (6) spatial exclusion and (7) geo-political discrimination. HDI, GI and PI are taken as measuring rods to map out gender, caste/ethnicity, and spatial based inclusion and exclusion. The studies also recommend some inclusive measures, i. e. reservation and affirmative actions to the excluded groups,

inclusive electoral system, (i. e. proportional representation of social groups in proportion to size of their own population), and federalism.

Nepal Democracy Survey – conducted in 2004 and again in 2007 in a total of 162 sampled polling stations (23 urban and 139 rural) of 41 sampled parliamentary electoral constituencies with 3249 and 4089 respondents respectively – entertained several questions to find out people's response to inclusion/exclusion related issues. For instance:

**1. Identity related questions:**

- Q: How would you like to identify yourself?
- Q: How proud are you with community identity?
- Q: How proud are you to be a Nepali?

**2. Included/excluded groups**

- Q: Who/which would you say the excluded groups in Nepal?
- Q: Who/which would you say the included groups in Nepal?
- Q: In your locality, which groups are included and which groups are excluded?
- Q: In your opinion, which one is the most important reason for marginalization/ backwardness?
- Q: Who/Which are the most responsible for such backwardness?
- Q: Which has the greatest sympathy to promote the cause of backward communities?
- Q: Which one is the best mean to fulfill the backward communities' demand?
- Q: What changes have you observed in the condition of excluded groups during the last few years?
- Q: What is your opinion in giving special provisions for backward communities in the constitution?

**3. State Restructuring Agendas**

- Q: What is your opinion about retaining Nepal as a Hindu state or changing it as a secular state?
- Q: Which one do you like most about the form of government: unitary or federal?
- Q: In your opinion, what should be the official language of Nepal – only Nepali or other major languages also?

Nepal Democracy Survey revealed many interesting and important findings. Some of them are briefly highlighted below:

1. National identity remains the preference of many citizens, but the trend is towards assertion of ethnic/regional identity. People are proud of both their national and ethnic identities. People can have dual loyalties – to the nation and to their communities – at the same time.
2. The hill high castes are generally perceived as included, and others—*dalits, janajati* and *madheshi*—are considered as excluded. This converges with general discourse about caste/ethnic centric understanding of inclusion and exclusion in Nepal.
3. Besides rich, male, hill dwellers, *madheshi* high castes, urban dwellers, and youths are seen as included, whereas poor, women, plains settlers, villagers and old aged people are taken as excluded. This finding helps to inform horizontal dimension of inclusion and exclusion within each caste and ethnic groups, which is less talked about in general discourse of inclusion and exclusion in Nepal.
4. Respondents acknowledged the improvement of situation of excluded groups since the last few years and also opined that there should be constitutional provision for inclusive measures.
5. Support to state restructuring agendas, i. e. secularism, multilingualism and federalism is increased.

The findings of Nepal Democracy Survey more or less confirm the three broad conclusions drawn by previous studies (CBS 1996, 2004, 2011; Neupane 2000; UNDP/Nepal 1998, 2004, 2009; World Bank and DFID 2006). One, the state designed national integration process—monarchy, Hinduism and Nepali language had long been considered as three pillars of Nepali nationalism – is exclusionary, which led to produce inequality among the social groups. Two, Nepali state and politics is dominated by the Hill high castes (Brahmin and Chhetri) since they have overwhelming representation in all the structures of state apparatus, i. e. cabinet, parliament, judiciary, bureaucracy, political parties, constitutional bodies, etc. Three, recently the Nepali state has taken some inclusive measures on issues related to religion, language, recruitment, and representation.

Coming back to the question of political participation, I repeat the key proposition of this paper: the higher the level of political participation, the greater the political inclusion. Political participation is a multidimensional concept that can be broadly classified into five aspects:

1. *Becoming political citizens/community*, that entails knowledge on political issues, sources of political awareness and agencies of political socialization (i. e. family, educational institutes, mass media, activist organization, political party and leadership).
2. *Interaction with political institutions and movement*, that includes level of participation in movement, protest, campaign, election etc.
3. *Inclination to political ideology*, that seeks values and belief of citizens and their trust to political institutions and leaders.
4. *Involvement in formal and informal process of governance*, that includes interactions with community leaders, non-governmental organizations (CBO, NGO, civil society etc), government offices, political party and local leaders.
5. *Representation in state's formal organizations*, that entails membership of political party and other public platforms (i. e. CBO, NGOs, civil society etc. ) and position in formal state organizations, i. e. elected bodies (parliament, local government, national government) and politically nominated post (i. e. planning commission, constitutional bodies, bureaucracy, court, police, army and diplomatic jobs, etc. ).

As stated above, political participation is expressed in different forms. Surveys carried out by Political Science Association of Nepal (POLSAN) on voting behavior and opinion polls conducted periodically by Interdisciplinary Analyst also give about empirical data of different types of political participation of Nepali citizens. Questionnaires adopted in the CNAS's study of "Social Exclusion and Group Mobilization in Nepal" will also be equally important. Moreover, Nepal Democracy Survey entertained several question to find out people's political participation in different forms. Questions adopted by Nepal Democracy Survey in each of five different forms of political participation are listed below.

## 1. Becoming political citizens/community

Q: Do you know about:

- A. The *Jana Andolan II*
- B. G. P. Koirala becoming PM of the country
- C. Comprehensive Peace Agreement between the government and Maoist
- D. Maoist PLAs being kept in cantonments
- E. Formation of interim parliament including the Maoists
- F. *Madhesh Andolan*

Q: What is your level of familiarity with:

- A. Constituent Assembly
- B. Reservation
- C. Federalism
- D. Republic

Q: For news, how often do you:

- A. Read newspaper
- B. Listen radios
- C. Watch television
- D. Communicate face to face

## 2. Interaction with political institutions and movement

Q: Have you ever participated in:

- A. Protest/movement
- B. Involved in *Jana Andolan II* (if yes, nature of your involvement)
  - 1. Participation in rallies and protest program
  - 2. Mobilized people
  - 3. Defied curfews
  - 4. Arrested/imprisoned

Q: How much trust do you have in:

- A. National government
- B. Parliament
- C. Maoist
- D. Political parties
- E. Civil service
- F. Police
- G. Army
- H. Courts
- I. Election commission

### **3. Inclination to political ideology**

- Q: Which party do you vote in the upcoming CA election?
- Q: How suitable is democracy for Nepal?
- Q: In given three statements, which one do you like most:
1. Democracy is preferable to any other kind of government
  2. In certain situation, an authoritarian government can be preferred
  3. It does not matter to people like me whether we have a democracy or dictatorship.
- Q: What do you think about monarchy, should it be retained or abolished?

### **4. Involvement in formal and informal process of governance**

- Q: How frequently do you discuss politics with your friends and colleagues?
- Q: With whom do you feel free to discuss politics openly?
- Q: On the whole, how satisfied are you with the working of the government formed after the last year's *Jana Andolan II*?
- Q: If you or your family member is physically danger and need help, whom would you approach first?
- Q: What are two major challenges facing this country today?

### **5. Representation in state's formal organizations**

- Q: Are you close to any political party, if yes which party?
- Q: How often do you participate in the activities carried out by:
- A. COs/NGOs/civil society
  - B. Ethnic or *madheshi* or *dalit* organization
  - C. Women organizations
  - D. Political parties

Some key findings of Nepal Democracy Survey on implicit issues of political participation are highlighted below.

1. The higher the level of educational attainment, the greater the level of political participation. The higher the level of political awareness, the greater the level of political participation. The more the exposure to the media, the greater the level of participation. So, there is

- a correlation between educational attainment, political awareness, media exposure and political participation.
2. The hill high castes group had the highest number of respondents who participated in the activities conducted by CBOs/NGOs/Civil Society, women's organization and political party.
  3. Trust to state/political institutions by hill high castes is higher than trust of those considered as excluded groups (*dalit, janajati, and madhesi*).

### **III. Customary Governance**

The SIA-EP project has a component of ethnographic profile. Those listed for this methodological path are classified into five groups: Hill *janajati*, Tarai *janajati*, Hill *dalit*, *madhesi dalit*, and *madhesi* Castes. Of 42 identified groups for this purpose, all are highly excluded groups and are numerically very small communities, except the Tamang. The available literature suggests that small ethnic groups are less focused upon than numerically higher ethnic groups in social science research/study in Nepal. *Nepal Bibliography of Indigenous Peoples* (Gurung and Bhattachan 2006) gives a glance of publication about ethnic groups of Nepal, including those that belong to small minorities. A brief introduction of social and cultural life of some small ethnic groups is also included in some pioneer studies of Nepali people and society (Bista 1976; Sharma 1982). A publication by National Committee for Development of Nationalities also gives a brief introduction of 61 ethnic groups (N. D). Ethnography of some small ethnic groups is also available in book form, i. e. on Dhimal (Dahal 1980), Chepang (Dhungel 1994), Bhand, Bote, Kumal, etc. (Dahal 1999). SASON's publication (2012) includes ethnography of Yamphu and Chepang in article form. CNAS's journal Contributions to Nepalese Studies also occasionally gives coverage to small *janajatis*, i. e. an article on Dura was published in its volume 25, number 2, 2008; and another article on Pahari included in its volume 36, number 1, 2009. Occasional paper published by Central Department of Sociology and Anthropology/Tribhuvan University is another source for ethnography of some small ethnic groups, i. e. Chepang (1990), Sherpa (1994, 2003), Yolmo (2005). Recently, the scope of study on small ethnic groups is widening as indicated by publications of extracts of SIRF' granted research reports in title of Social Inclusion and Nation Building in

Nepal: Abstracts of Researches (2009, 2013). Researches carried out under SIRF's grants include ethnography of Chepang, Dhimal, Bankariya, Raji, Athpahariya, Darai, Santhal, Putwar, Rajbahak, Nagarkoti, Yamphu, Bote, Majhi, Uranw, Kumals, Pahari, Baram, etc.

Investigation on customary governance of *janajatis* among the listed 42 highly excluded groups, taken into consideration for ethnographic profile component of SEA-EP study, has its own value. Customary law recognizes social, cultural and religious practices, including community justice system, which exist as traditional usages. Customary practices that are contrary to democracy and universal human rights, e. g. child marriage, dowry, bounded labour etc. should not be allowed to continue. Some notes on customary law/practice/governance in Nepal are listed below.

1. Customary governance is largely existed as traditional practices of indigenous groups, for instance Bheja of Magar, Rodi of Gurung and Guthi of Newar.
2. Customary governance has some democratic attributes, like:
  - a. Direct election of community leader (often matured male);
  - b. Participatory process of decision making and rule by consent not by majority;
  - c. Volunteer services for community benefit so low cost of development projects; and
  - d. Accountable and free from corruption.
3. Customary governance has its own jurisdiction on following areas:
  - a. Social, cultural and religious activities of the community;
  - b. Irrigation, seeds, pasture and food security;
  - c. Labour exchange;
  - d. Dispute settlement; and
  - e. Management of informal structure of local power.
4. But customary governance is in decline due to number of reasons:
  - a. Longstanding state's design national integration through assimilation of indigenous groups into

- hill high castes' culture, language and religion, not through accommodation of indigenous' language, culture and religion. So Nepali state has a tendency to eliminate customary governance.
- b. Impact of modernization through centrally designed syllabus of education, expansion of intra-structure development, extension and expansion of bureaucracy, and internal migration leading to destroy cultural territory of indigenous peoples.
  - c. Customary law and governance is largely primitive, exclusionary, feudal and undemocratic. Young and women are excluded in decision making process. So new generation is less attached and attracted to customary governance.
  - d. Scope of customary governance is narrow confining intra-community affairs. It does not cover essential parts of modern life, like education, health and infrastructure development.

Nevertheless, the study of customary governance is important for many reasons. As impact of rise of ethnicity, the idea of autonomous region for ethnic groups is suggested by State Restructuring Committee of the self-expired Constituent Assembly. The proposed autonomous region is different from local government as the former is envisaged as an institution that operates largely in line with customary governance of the concerned ethnic group. It is, indeed, in conformity with ILO 169; Nepal is one of the signatories of this convention. The ILO 169 makes a mandatory provision for the state/government to respect the rights of indigenous people/community—prior consultation with and participation of indigenous people in areas of their inhabitation—in affairs, like political representation and developmental projects. Many groups in high Himalayan region still rely very much on their customary governance. This is not because the state recognizes them but because the presence of state and its legal regime in the region is minimal. The smaller ethnic groups are least exposed to modern state system and many of them live in particular cluster which suggest that the question of inclusion and exclusion of these groups should be investigated in different perspectives:

- The study of customary governance of each group could be a major thrust to measure the level of their participation

- in decision-making process.
- Relations with other groups living in neighboring clusters also gives a comparative picture of position of the marginalized group vis-à-vis other groups in arenas of political inclusion.
- Their interaction with modern formal organizations and institutions of the state (i. e. local elected bodies, local political parties, CBOs, NGOs etc. ) should also be included in preparation of ethnographic profile of each of listed groups.

## Conclusion

The SIA-EP seems a very ambitious project seeking a comprehensive study on inclusion and exclusion in Nepal. It is more broad-based, both in contents and methodology, than any other previous studies done on inclusion and exclusion in Nepal. The SIA-EP's contribution will not be confined to generating new data but will also be useful to review/re-analyze the available knowledge on the subject. This paper is expected to assist the study team of the SIA-EP by informing the available literature on social sciences in Nepal, particularly those related to political participation and inclusion. Besides, it briefly informs about conceptual notion of political participation, political inclusion and customary governance. Questions used by Nepal Democracy Survey and highlights of its findings, indeed, help the SIA-EP study team in sharpening the contents and methods of the research; Particularly the NSIS team is expected to take it into consideration while designing the questionnaire.

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# Ethnographic Research in Nepal: Methodological Approaches, Relevance and Applications

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## Introduction

Each social science discipline—anthropology, sociology, political science, economics, geography and psychology—has its own concepts and methods of research. Fieldwork is considered the “hallmark” or “trade-mark” of anthropology. Without doing some level of fieldwork, a person cannot become an anthropologist. In almost all the anthropology programs in universities of the United States of America, Europe, and India, empirical data is mandatory for preparing either an M. A or PhD thesis. This particular methodological approach is the major departure between anthropology and other social science disciplines when collecting data and interpreting “facts.”

Ethnographic field research in anthropology has a long history. The fieldwork tradition in anthropology began alongside the British colonial expansion in Africa, Asia, and Latin America. This tradition of fieldwork in academic anthropology was followed and elaborated upon by the leading anthropologists of the 20th century. Among them, Bronislaw Malinowski with the Trobriand Islanders in the Pacific (1914-18), E. R. Radcliffe-Brown with the Onge of the Andaman Islands (1910-11), and Franz Boas with the Inuit of Baffin Island (1920-22) were the pioneers. From the beginning, many anthropologists have carried on a cottage industry of writing about their fieldwork experiences as a way of passing accumulated “tricks of the trade” to the next generation of scholars (Becker 1998). Such fieldwork experiences were clearly jotted down in the excellent monographs by Malinowski (1922), Evans-Pritchard (1937, 1940, 1973), Berreman (1962), Chagnon (1992), and others. These fieldwork experiences of anthropologists eventually became the standard for ethnographic field methods.

My intention here is not to discuss in detail the philosophical and methodological approaches of ethnographic writings and their shortcomings in Nepal and elsewhere. The paper deals with three interrelated topics relevant while preparing the ethnographic profile of various ethnic/caste groups of Nepal under the scope of SIA-EP Project, and which are organized under the following three headings in this report: (i) Context of Ethnographic Research in Nepal, (ii) Preparing Ethnographic Profile in the Context of SIA-EP Project: Some Philosophical and Methodological Approaches and Issues and, (iii) The Use of Ethnographic Profile: Relevance and Applications.

The paper argues that without understanding the general theories of anthropology and ethnography as a subject and method, a good ethnography of the cultural group/community cannot be prepared. The major problem in ethnographic research in Nepal is the lack of use of appropriate theory and proper research methods required in collecting ethnographic data and interpreting “facts.” This is particularly true among Nepali scholars, who are attempting to write ethnographic accounts of various ethnic/caste groups of Nepal without knowledge of anthropological theories and field methods in ethnography. The other serious problem in conducting ethnographic research in Nepal is not only methodological, but also ethical. The question of “Human Subjects” is gradually becoming a serious concern in ethnographic research and writings in Nepal.

## **I. Context of Ethnographic Research in Nepal**

In Nepal, though efforts to describe an ethnography of various ethnic/caste groups began almost two centuries ago (Kirkpatrick 1811; Hamilton 1819; Hodgson 1874), there is little information on what kinds of tools and techniques were being used to collect ethnographic information on various groups presented in these texts. It is not known, “Who were their informants?” or “How the data were generated in the sense of academic anthropological fieldwork”? Brian Hodgson, a British Resident in Kathmandu, collected tons of materials (104 volumes) from Nepal concerning history, Buddhism, ethnography, language, flora and fauna (Dhungel 2010), but it is not known even today who were his informants or how ethnographic accounts of various ethnic/caste groups were generated and compiled in his text. In brief,

in the context of standard ethnographic format, the validity and reliability of his ethnographic data demand careful scrutiny.

Academic anthropology began in Nepal when Nepal was opened to the outside world after 1950, and since the 1960s hundreds of foreign anthropologists (particularly British, American, and French) were involved in collecting ethnographic information on various cultural groups (see Sharma 1973; K. C. et al. 1984; Khatry 1997). Some of the examples of excellent ethnographic monographs using anthropological tools were the books written by Fürer-Haimendorf (1964), Bennett (1983), Ortner (1976), Hitchcock (1966), and Pignede (1966). In brief, ethnographic research in Nepal is extensive and follows the traditions of both the Boasian School of America and that of the British School of Social Anthropology.

A number of Nepali anthropologists (Bista 1967; Dahal 1979; Regmi 1971; Rai 1985; Shrestha 1971) and Nepali scholars (Sharma 1982; Gautam and Thapa 1994) wrote books and articles on various ethnic/caste groups of Nepal. Some of the books written by Nepali scholars have attempted to write in the area of anthropology without giving due attention to anthropological theories and the use of standard anthropological research techniques. The most important weaknesses of authors of these books are that they attempted to provide ethnographic accounts of different ethnic/castes of Nepal without giving any information on how, where, and when the data were collected. Even Bista's charismatic book *Fatalism and Development* (1990) has serious methodological issues in presenting facts, though it is assumed that he used "unobtrusive measures" in collecting information. In other words, many books and articles on ethnography of Nepal were written without the knowledge of anthropological theories and research methods. In this context, it is worth mentioning Evans-Pritchard's remarks to his puzzled students on how one goes about anthropological fieldwork:

The first imperative is a rigorous training in general theory [anthropology and other social and natural sciences, my emphasis] before attempting field research so that one may know how and what to observe, what is significant in the light of theory. It is essential to realize that facts are in themselves meaningless. To be meaningful they must

have a degree of generality. One must know precisely what one wants to know and that can only be acquired by a systematic training in academic social anthropology (1973: 1).

## **II: Preparing Ethnographic Profile in the context of SIA-EP Project: Some Conceptual and Methodological Approaches and Issues**

There are both methodological and conceptual issues to consider while preparing ethnographic profiles in the context of SIA-EP project. The first part of this section briefly notes some of the methodological tools and related issues under consideration while preparing ethnographic profiles of the target groups of study. The second part highlights conceptual issues while dealing with topics, such as ethnography and social inclusion/exclusion, in reference to highly marginalized groups of Nepal.

The methodological tools for preparing ethnographic profile and problems associated with it are discussed in the following three sub-sections: i) Ethnic/Caste Groups Chosen for Preparing the Ethnographic Profile, ii) Topics Considered for Preparing the Ethnographic Profile and, iii) Ethnographic Techniques.

### **2. 1 Ethnic/Caste Groups Chosen for Preparing an Ethnographic Profile**

Nepal is not only a multi-cultural country, but also a land of diversity in terms of geography and levels of socioeconomic development. According to the 2001 census, there are 100 ethnic/caste groups, 92 languages, and nine religious groups in Nepal. The recent 2011 Central Bureau of Statistics (CBS) data shows that there are 125 ethnic/caste groups, 123 languages, and 11 religious groups in Nepal. However, while preparing the ethnographic profiles the SIA-EP project is guided to choose the “highly marginalized” 42 ethnic/caste groups based on Bennett and Parajuli’s (2010) socioeconomic analysis of 100+ ethnic/caste groups of Nepal (see Annex 1 for the list of highly marginalized groups with their population size based on the 2001 census). In fact, Bennett and Parajuli (2010) extensively relied on the few socioeconomic data provided by the CBS, hardly making any effort to cross-check whether the data sets are adequate for socioeconomic

analysis (some of the cultural groups have a low sample size) or to verify the reliability of the data. In brief, this sample of cultural groups for detailed study is purposively chosen, and there is little option except to prepare ethnographic profiles of these targeted groups.

## **2. 2 Topics Considered for Preparing an Ethnographic Profile**

Ethnography is the detailed description of custom or culture of a group of people, e. g. the ethnography of the Lhorung Rai or the Hawaiians. According to Weiser (1996: 307), “An important goal of ethnographic research is to describe and understand the cultural place and its influence on the everyday lives of its members.”

There are standard topical lists and domains around which to orient general ethnographic inquiry. The list used, however, depends upon the mode of inquiry, and sometimes modification of the topic is desirable considering the local cultural setting. The anthropological Survey of India launched a project on “The People of India,” where ethnographic surveys were carried out on 4, 635 communities of different states of India between 2 October 1985 and 31 March 1992. The topics considered for preparing ethnographic profile included four broad areas: (i) Population size and distribution, (ii) bio-anthropological information, (iii) socio-cultural and economic information, and (iv) change (Singh 1999). Of course, within these four broad areas there are many subtopics included for collecting information.

While preparing an ethnographic profile of ten ethnic/caste groups of Jhapa district, Nepal by the Center of Nepal and Asian Studies (CNAS) in 2010, 11 broad topics were considered:

- 1 Origin and History
- 2 Population Size and Distribution
- 3 Settlement Pattern
- 4 Language
- 5 Kinship, Descent, and Family Structure
- 6 Material Culture
- 7 Life Cycle Rituals
- 8 Economy
- 9 Traditional Leadership and Political Organization
- 10 Religion and Festivals

## 11 Change

On the other hand, Adibasi Janajati Uthan Prathisthan (AJUP) in 2010 prepared an ethnographic profile of 59 *adivasi/janajati* groups while considering 12 broad topics which are slightly different than CNAS:

- 1 General Introduction
- 2 Ethnic History
- 3 Geography or Territory
- 4 Social Structure and their Relationships
- 5 Religion, Religious Traditions, and Other Customs
- 6 Economy
- 7 Folklore and Material culture
- 8 Political System
- 9 Mother tongue
- 10 Education
- 11 Health
- 12 Participation and Counselling

These differences of topics are primarily due to the mode of inquiry. CNAS's research was carried out in a limited time because of constraints of funds available from the government, whereas AJUP lacked trained ethnographers for preparing a proper ethnographic profile. Eventually these value-loaded differences in topics impacted the importance of topics desirable for preparing the ethnography, eventually affecting its end products.

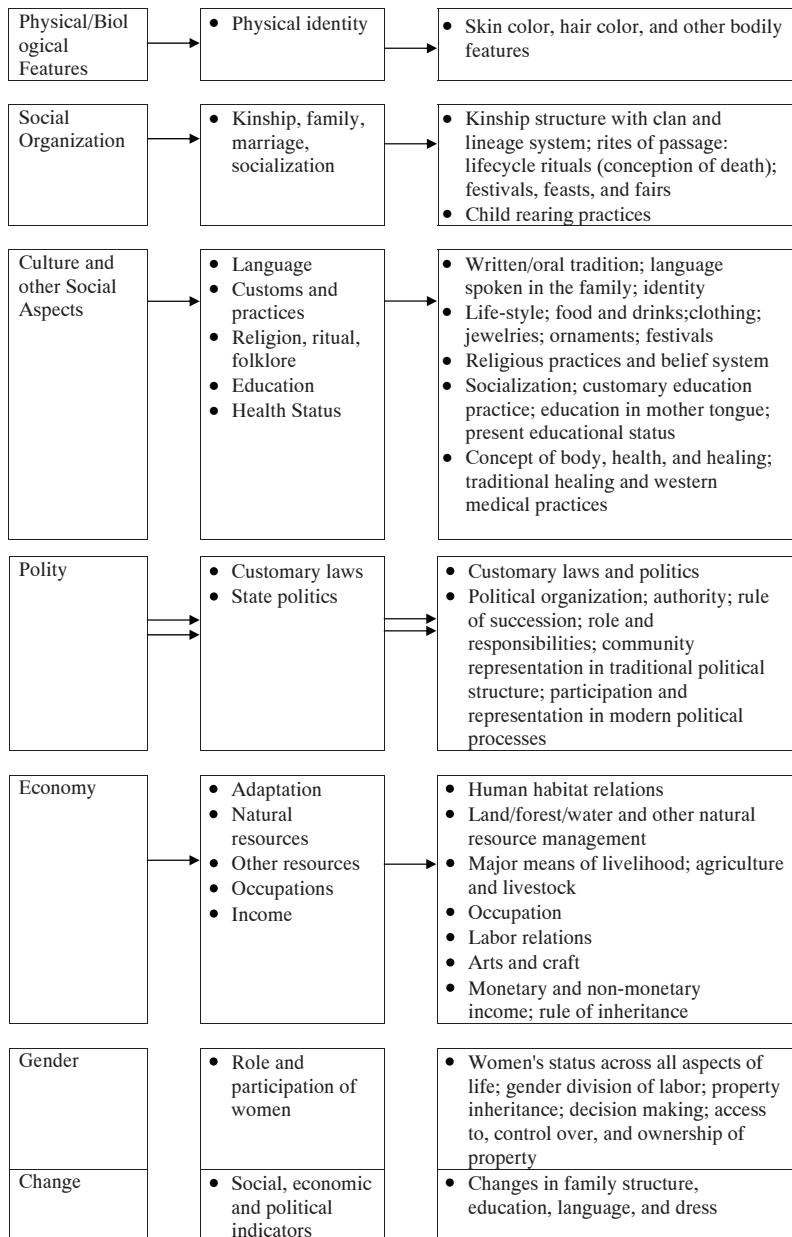
Though both institutions attempted to collect ethnographic data, they missed an important domain: "Local Knowledge" as a mode of inquiry, (as the reviewer of this paper has clearly pointed out). By "local knowledge" I mean the cultural categories of peoples expressed in myths, rituals and folk tales and in the knowledge of biodiversity and local medicinal plants. While preparing ethnography, in whatever form they exist, local knowledge needs to be collected. In Nepal, there is clear ambivalence in tracing the origin and history among various groups of people. With the rising development of "nationalism" among various groups of people in Nepal, collecting information on local knowledge of people is mandatory to preparing good ethnography. The notion of nationalism is systematically linked with the concept of cultural territory or belongingness of a group of people living

in a particular area (such as Limbuwan, Khambuwani, Tharuhat, Madhesh, and so on). In other words, the epistemological issues involved in the physical vs. the subjective aspects of reality of cultural territory is linked with nationalism, and can be resolved only by collecting detailed ethnographic information on the origin and history (through written and unwritten sources) of various groups of people concerned. According to Kottak (2000: 10), the predilection of anthropologists (ethnographers) is to move from setting to setting, place to place, and subject to subject, in order to discover the totality and interconnectedness of social life. The domain of local knowledge is clearly highlighted by the SIA-EP team while preparing ethnographic profiles (see Table 1).

In the context of SIA-EP project, the following nine broad domains of culture are considered for preparing the ethnographic profile of 42 highly marginalized groups of Nepal: (i) Origin and History, (ii), Population Size and Distribution, (iii) Physical/ Biological Features, (iv) Social Organization, (v) Culture and other Social Aspects, (vi) Economy, (vii) Polity, (viii) Gender, and (ix) Change. There are many subtopics within these categories and local knowledge is included in each topic. These larger domains of culture along with their dimensional indicators and specific cultural categories are given in Table 1.

**Table 1. Format of Ethnographic Profile: Domains of Culture, Dimensional Indicators, and Specific Cultural Categories**

Dimension	Dimensional indicators	Indicators
Origin and History	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Society and territory</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Concept of traditional territory or settlement history, self-ascription, and identification by others/state</li> <li>• local, regional, national, transnational, global</li> <li>• ancestry, genealogy</li> <li>• Inter-ethnic relations, migration and longitudinal length of settlement, territorial relationship</li> <li>• politico-historical process</li> </ul>
Population Size and Distribution	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Demographic structure</li> <li>• Kinship, family, marriage, socialization</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Number, distribution, and age and sex structure</li> <li>• Kinship structure with clan and lineage system; rites of passage: lifecycle rituals (conception of death); festivals, feasts, and fairs</li> <li>• Child rearing practices</li> </ul>



Source: SIA-EP Proposal, 2010

## 2. 3 Ethnographic Tools for Collecting Information

Doing ethnographic research includes two interrelated activities. First, the ethnographer enters into a social setting and gets to know the people involved in it and participates in the daily routine of this setting. Second, the ethnographer writes down in regular, systematic ways what he/she observes and learns while participating in the daily rounds of life of others (see Emerson et al. 1995). The basic idea of doing ethnography is to live in close contact with people. Fieldwork in its ethnographic sense would provide an immediate and uncensored sense of people in their surroundings and their everyday life.

According to Malinowski, the primary task of the ethnographer is “to grasp the native point of view, his relationship to life, to realize his vision of his world” (1922:25). In his famous book *Argonauts of the Western Pacific* (1922), Malinowski noted principals of method under three main headings:

First of all, naturally, the student must possess real scientific aims, and know the values and criteria of modern ethnography. Secondly, he ought to put himself in good conditions of work, that is, in the main, to live without other white men, right among the natives. Finally he has to apply a number of special methods of collecting, manipulating fixing the evidence (47).

Malinowski clearly said that an ethnographer must stay (place of context) among the people where he/she is going to do the detailed study. This notion of context is, of course, very important to any social science enterprise, both at the theoretical level, where we know how context is key to interpreting any behaviour, and also at the practical level of actually conducting research on the ground. For cultural anthropology this is especially important since few other disciplines require the total immersion in “context” that so pointedly defines fieldwork.

“Ethnographic Present” (i. e. that the ethnographic account applies only for a particular moment) was a distinct method of describing people at least some years ago. Now it is realized that

it is a rather unrealistic construct. Cultures have been in contact, and have been changing, throughout history (Clifford 1990). In the context of Nepal, the cultures of people have been changing over the years due to several social, economic, and political factors. While preparing ethnographic profiles, researchers were advised to collect information on change experienced by the targeted group.

One of the basic differences between ethnographic research and research in other social sciences is building rapport or validating legitimacy of the researcher in the field setting. An ethnographer is always prepared to be accepted by people who are the target of study. An ad-hoc and impulsive exercise without legitimacy in the eyes of the targeted people yields poor quality data. Earning research legitimacy is a big challenge for the researcher in any field setting. There are differences in character, in the very notion of person, and the idealized relationship between individual and group—in short, an entire cultural orientation that is part and parcel of everyday life and the research process for studying that life.

In this context, Evans-Pritchard (1973) puts forward fascinating remarks regarding what he had to do to be accepted while doing fieldwork with the Nuer of Africa around 1940s, “I had no particular interest in cows when I went to Nuerland, but the Nuer had, so willy-nilly I had to become cattle minded too, eventually acquiring a herd of my own as the price of acceptance, or any other rate of tolerance” (2).

In a similar way, Chagnon had to share his food to be accepted by the Yanomamo people and whenever displaying friendship, and he had to provide something to a Yanomamo when he became his informant; If a Yanomamo gave him something, he must reciprocate it with knives, fishhooks, axes and so on (1992:12)

There are varieties of ethnographic methods. Normally the ethnographic field techniques include observation, participant observation, interviews, genealogy, life history, case study, and unobtrusive measures. Ethnographic methods in understanding human culture typically include direct observation and interviewing of families in naturalistic settings in homes and communities over

long periods of time. Field notes and qualitative information are central (Weiser 1996: 310). The section below briefly highlights some typical ethnographic techniques used when collecting data in the field and explains how these techniques are being used by the SIA-EP Research Team.

### ***2. 3. 1 Observation***

In the initial stage of fieldwork an ethnographer watches and observes peoples' day-to-day behavior, and notes "why people do certain things in certain ways?" It is the direct, firsthand observation of daily behavior of peoples. A researcher has to pay attention to hundreds of details of daily life, seasonal events, and unusual happenings. He/she must observe individual and collective behavior in varied settings. Many ethnographers record their impressions in a personal diary, which is kept separate from more formal field notes. Later, this record of early impressions will help to point out some of the most basic aspects of cultural diversity (see Malinowski 1967; Emerson et al. 1995). Evans Pritchard (1940) experiences and observations were remarkable in the context of fieldwork among the Azande and Nuer.

Azande would not allow me to live one of themselves; Nuer would not allow me to live otherwise. Among Azande I was compelled to live outside the community; Among Nuer I was compelled to be a member of it. Azande treated me as a superior; Nuer as an equal (15).

Though Evans-Pritchard (1940) has not clearly mentioned why he was not accepted by the Azande to live among them, it is, however, clear that the situation or the cultural context differs from one place to another and an ethnographer must decide how he/she is going to do the fieldwork for the particular cultural group. The SIA-EP researchers not only observed the setting of the study area but also participated in cultural activities of the people, such as how Chidimar community hunts birds in the forest or how rituals, such as death rituals, are performed by the Musahar community.

### ***2. 3. 2 Participant Observation***

Fieldwork—especially what we call "participant observation"—

is the heart of cultural anthropology and a distinct method of ethnographers. A researcher has to participate in daily practices of people such as cooking, eating, agriculture (plowing, harvesting, etc.) as well as various life cycle rituals such as birth, death, and marriage. While participating with people we are more profoundly able to understand the day-to-day life of people.

Theoretically, this particular ethnographic technique looks easy, but it is one of the most time consuming techniques of collecting data as the researcher has to note down all events of the community and must participate in the community life accordingly.

### ***2. 3. 3 Interviewing***

Participating in local life means that ethnographers constantly talk with people in various day-to-day activities and ask questions to them about what they observe in the field. Interviews with people always yield better results if one knows the local language of people. Interviewing with people for certain kind of information generates information on the research topic. The interview is both quantitative and qualitative in nature. Interviewing is done with different types of people depending upon the subject matter. Interviews with the household-head for socioeconomic survey, or key informants interviews, or in-depth study, or case study are among the types of information to be collected in the field.

However, defining the head of household is a little complex and tricky, particularly in Nepali society. Normally the head of household is understood as the eldest male or female in the family. In many situations elderly people are not able to tell exactly the required socio-economic data for analysis (such as income, expenditure, the education level of the family members and sometimes even the right age of a person in the family). In this kind of situation, the role of informant could be played by any knowledgeable person of the family. Especially in the nuclear family, when the man is away for work abroad, it is the eldest female or spouse who has to play the role of the head of family.

Normally a questionnaire is prepared for the household survey or some check-list questions are prepared for key informant interviews

or focus group discussions, or the “case study” method is adopted for generating ethnographic data.

### ***2. 3. 4 How to put questions to an informant?***

There are hundreds of styles of putting questions to an informant. But it should not be forgotten that one must place “culture” at the center for framing questions to an informant. Let me cite my own example of how I was ignorant in framing questions to an American farmer in North Dakota when I was doing ethnographic research with them in 2001-2002. I noticed that even in the rural setting, American farmers are like other Americans: They are very sensitive about their property and the privacy of their way of life. Once I innocently put a very straightforward question to an American farmer: “How much land (in acreage) do you own as a farmer?” This straightforward and direct way of asking made this a quite sensitive question. The farmer was a little embarrassed, uncomfortable, and reluctant in replying to my question. I later realized that no farmer would answer if the query were put in this way since it violated the American sense of individual privacy and the sacredness of the relation between property and the self.

In Nepal, of course, ownership of land is systematically linked to the economic status of the family. The higher the amount of land owned by a family, the higher its socio-economic status. There is a natural tendency here, too, for a farmer to conceal this kind of information in the first conversation with an outsider (even to a Nepali researcher). Yet his motivation is not so much to maintain privacy *per se*, but to avoid showing to be either rich or poor in the local context. Nevertheless, family ownership of land can be easily verified, either by asking neighbours (they know it and are happy to share it, in contrast to American farmers who may know it but be equally reluctant to share it) or from the District Land Record Revenue Office (NEP:Mal) where the land record of an individual farmer can be found.

Understanding the cultural sensitivity of respondents/people is very important while gathering ethnographic and socioeconomic information in the field. Let me put here my own experience of how I was kicked out from the field by a local male respondent while gathering basic household level data of a Tamang family.

When I first entered into the Melamchi Valley (Sindhupalchowk district, Nepal) with my research colleague in connection with the Melamchi Water Supply Project around 1990, it was difficult to collect the basic household level information from the respondents. Informants of these areas, the Tamang people, were rather reluctant to provide the detailed household level information, particularly regarding the females of the household and information such as the name of the wife, daughter-in-law, daughters, and sisters, and their social characteristics, such as age, education, and work. When I was collecting information with a Tamang informant, he became very angry with me and asked, "Why I wanted to know about his *chelis* (wife, daughter –in-law, sisters, and daughters). " "Why I am interested in them?" Though I tried to convince him, he was not satisfied with my answers and literally took a stick to push us out from his village area.

The reasons were obvious. The Melamchi Valley was famous for women trafficking in those days. Even the fathers and husbands were encouraging their own *chelis* to go to Bombay to make money (see Dahal 2011). In this case, I should have avoided asking questions about this kind of family background information in the initial stage of fieldwork. Later, when I knew the people better, it would have been easier for me to collect such information. In other words, this example raises the issue of how research methods are themselves structured by the culture in which they originate.

### **2. 3. 5 Genealogical Method**

In many parts of the world everyone is related to, and spends most of his/her time, with everyone in their immediate social environment, and this affects rules of behavior. This is most common in Nepali society whether one talks about Hindu caste groups or *adivasi/janajati* groups. Anthropologists even classify such societies as kin-based.

Anthropologists normally develop genealogical notation to deal with principles of kinship descent and marriage, which are the social building blocks of non-industrial cultures.

People in non-industrial cultures spend their lives almost exclusively with relatives. An ethnographer must record genealogical data to reconstruct history and understand current relationships. In

many ethnic/tribal and peasant societies, where there is no formal political structure, these links are basic to social life and to political organization. Marriage is also crucial in organizing non-industrial societies because strategic marriages between villages, tribes and clans create political alliances. In the setting of Punjab province of Pakistan, Kurin (1980) explains how he had difficulties in collecting the genealogy of people of the area after Punjabi villagers said, "You never really know who a man is until you know who his grandfather and his ancestors were. "

However, this distinct ethnographic tool has not been widely used by native and foreign anthropologists to understand a culture of the group of people in Nepal. This could be due to two reasons: a) lack of theoretical understandings in kinship studies and b) It requires patience in collecting this kind of data as it demands good informants to provide a genealogy of EGO's (i. e. informant) family. The SIA-EP researchers were clearly advised to collection information on genealogy of selected families under the target group so that it becomes easier to understand the number of generations they have been living in their area, population growth, marital alliance, and so on.

### **2. 3. 6 Unobtrusive Measures**

Unobtrusive measures involve a collection of techniques in social sciences for collecting data without the knowledge of respondents. Bernard (1995:) writes, "Unobtrusive observation includes all methods of studying behavior where informants don't know that they are being studied" (332).

Marshall (1994) notes two types of unobtrusive measures: the covert and indirect. The covert, not openly practiced, included covert participation, undisclosed note taking or use of one-way mirrors. The indirect techniques involve the use of personal documents and other records which might offer indirect measures of variables such that the need of interaction between the investigator and his/her subject is obviated. Tools used are journals and diaries, letters, reports, and papers.

In the context of ethnographic research in Nepal, Dor Bhadur Bista used the techniques of unobtrusive measures while writing his most popular book, *Fatalism and Development* (1990). Bista's

usual technique of collecting information for this particular book was to raise an issue such as “*bahunbad*” in any discussion forum (whether it is in the classroom or among friends and colleagues in CNAS). In fact, most people had little idea how Bista was clandestinely using such information for the book.

## **2. 4 Some Methodological Issues**

The nature of ethnographic research, however, varies according to the research area – the rural or the urban. Some of the problems doing fieldwork in the urban area and narrated by anthropologists are: (a) The appropriateness of the sample size and demarcating the boundary of the field (Ortner 1993), and b) the lack of participant observation and relying exclusively on field-based interviews (Sanjek 2000). The other serious methodological issues in the context of preparing ethnographic profile of target groups in Nepal are: (a) Duration or length of field work, (b) location of fieldwork and sample size, (c) protecting human beings while doing ethnographic research, and (d) conceptual issues in social inclusion/exclusion research in Nepal.

### ***2. 4. 1 Duration/Length of Fieldwork***

While preparing an ethnographic profile of various cultural groups, the collection of primary data of the respective ethnic/caste group is mandatory. But the major question is how much time is required or what length of the fieldwork is desirable when collecting the ethnographic information of the concerned group? In this context remarks by Evans- Pritchard (1973) is fascinating, “I would say that the first study of a people takes, if it is to be thorough, up to two years” (10). Evans Pritchard himself spent 20 months while studying the Azande (1937) and one year in Nuerland. Malinowski (1922), who is also considered as the father of ethnography, spent almost four years in the field because of unavoidable circumstances. Chagnon (1992) first spent 15 months, and a total of 60 months (1964-1991), while studying the Yanomamo in different contexts and situations.

In the context of Nepal, length of fieldwork of foreign anthropologists varies under different field settings. Most of them spent 8-20 months in the field, for example Hitchcock (14 months at Banyan hill in 1961-62; Caplan (13 months, 1964-65) ;

Ortner (18 months, September 1966-February 1968) ; Holmberg (20 months, December 1975-July 1977) ; and Fricke (8 months, June 1981-January 1982). Both Holmberg and Fricke, however, continue spending some time with their target group Tamang in their respective areas of study to collect longitudinal socioeconomic data since the 1990s.

On the other hand, the Anthropological Survey of India launched a project on “the People of India” where ethnographic surveys were carried out on 4635 communities of different states of India between 2 October 1985 and 31 March 1992. This particular project spent an average 5. 5 days in the field for each community (Singh 1999: xi-xiii). However, this project has prepared a brief ethnographic profile only (hardly 2-6 pages for most of the groups under study).

Though we expect that some level of quantitative socioeconomic and political data of the target group will be obtained directly from another research team of this project (i. e. the Nepal Social Inclusion Survey), some other domains of culture (see Table 1) of the target group must be collected in the field while preparing ethnographic profile. Considering the emerging issues of cultural identity and social exclusion of the target groups in question, some specific socio-economic and cultural domains, such as the history and origin, social organization, material culture and economy, and life cycle rituals, must be considered. In other words, 4-5 days are simply spent in the field while developing rapport with the people concerned.

It should be noted here that the common practice of ethnographers is to spend a fair amount of time in the societies they study before actually beginning to collect data in a formal way. Again the ethnographic research is planning to collect information at least in two sites of the target group wherever possible: Core areas (Nep. *Thak Thalo*) and the peripheral areas (where a lot of the same cultural group migrated in recent years, or where the concentration of people is higher than other areas).

In brief, the basic issue when conducting ethnographic study on the target groups is real vs. ideal number of days to be spent in the field while collecting ethnographic data. Preparing a true ethnography takes time (Shwedner 1996). My concern as an

ethnographer for the SIA- EP Project is that an ethnographer must spend a maximum number of days in the field (90-120 days), and, if possible, two times in the same year for the same group, considering festivals, rituals and other social occasions of the community/cultural group to be studied.

In brief, using ethnography in the format of actor's concept of society is very well represented in the SIA-EP project while preparing the ethnography of various groups of people. But at the same time, lived-in-models of experience, practice, and sensation of ethnography is not well reflected because of short duration of field work (also see Bloch 1992). Preparing ethnographic profile of this nature demands more time and resources.

#### ***2. 4. 2 Location of Fieldwork and Sample Size***

The Ethnographic Research Team (ERT) is prepared to conduct field research in at least two locations of the target group where the Nepal Social Inclusion Survey (NSIS) is also conducting household surveys of 98 ethnic/caste groups of Nepal. The NSIS has identified 2-6 places (i. e. settlements) for the survey of each community.

The ERT will consider two sites (i. e. settlements) for their field research to provide comparative data for the same group: The core area or the original settlement (Nep. *Thak Thalo*) of the target group and the peripheral or new migrant areas of a cultural group (where the density of population is highest compared to other areas). The sample size of the particular cultural group (number of households for detailed study) will be considered based on the number of days to be spent in the respective field location.

#### ***2. 4. 3 Protecting Human Beings While Doing Ethnographic Research***

The other major problem in conducting research in social science is not only methodological, but also ethical. Ethnographic research is not an exception. A note on the question of "Human Subjects" issue (that is, protecting the privacy of research informants) in Nepal is gradually becoming a serious concern. Anthropologists and other social scientists working in Nepal have long been free to do whatever they like to do in collecting and publishing their

research products. There is always potential for doing harm to the very people being studied. Little is known about the implications of private matters made public in Nepal. Lionel Caplan's, *Land and Social Change in East Nepal* (1970) is one of the examples of such books in Nepal (see Dahal 1996 for details).

In the United States of America and Europe, protecting human beings in research is a serious concern. As of 2000, approximately four thousand Internal Review Boards (IRB) of the government were operating in the United States for protecting human beings in research, mainly at universities, hospitals, and private research facilities (AAA 2001). Because of the heightened concern for these matters in western countries, ethical concern while doing ethnographic research in Nepal is warranted.

In the context of preparing an ethnographic profile in the SIA-EP Project, serious attention was paid to protecting the privacy of individuals and whether an informant was willing to provide information on a particular event or family matter and so on. Photographs and audio-visuals of the particular group were prepared seeking their consent only.

#### ***2. 4. 4 Conceptual Issues While Doing Research on Social Inclusion/Exclusion in Nepal***

One of the major problems in doing research on social inclusion/exclusion in the light of the highly marginalized 42 groups of Nepal is not only the meaning and interpretation of the term, but also determining who are really the included/excluded groups in reference to other groups in Nepal. The other major concern is the value loaded western concepts and definitions on social inclusion/exclusion in which most of our indexes on social exclusion are being developed in recent years.

The three major constraints/processes that need to be clearly understood while explaining the larger issues of social inclusion/exclusion in the context of Nepal are: (i) Lack of disaggregated socioeconomic and political information within the various groups of people in question, ii) forms of exclusion and discrimination among various groups, and iii) intra-group exclusion and discrimination.

It is clearly mentioned in various reports that there is intra-group exclusion and discrimination within *dalits* (Bhattachan et al. 2003; Dahal et al. 2002). There is a clear hierarchical structure, ranking, and discrimination among various Dalit groups and social discrimination among them is clearly observed in food and drink and while performing the life cycle rituals

Let us talk about the “*dalit* groups” of Nepal. According to Dalit Commission (2002), there are 22 cultural groups within *dalits*. These *dalit* groups can also be broadly categorized into three distinct cultural groups of people: Hill *dalit*, Tarai *dalit* and Newar *dalit*. Except a few western anthropologists such as Gellner (1995) and Maharjan (2012) it is rare to encounter studies about the Newar *dalits* living in the Kathmandu Valley. No doubt, some of these groups are quite economically well off within the Newar community. Some Newar *dalit* groups even do not like to call themselves as *dalits* (Nepal Rastriya Dalit Ayog 2011). While comparing the socioeconomic situation of Hill and Tarai *dalits*, Hill *dalits* are socio- economically and politically much better off than the Tarai *dalits* (TEAM Consult 1999; Dahal et al. 2002). There is little known about the socioeconomic status among various *dalits* groups in this larger Dalit category as data are simply aggregated all the time in the single “*dalit*” category.

In Nepal, serious discussion has been avoided on intra-caste based discrimination and exclusion. This kind of discussion makes many elites and leaders of *dalit*, *adibasi/janajati*, and women groups who are much benefited socially, economically and politically when addressing the issues of vertical dimensions unhappy. Subba (1992) has clearly pointed out how intra-group conflict and discrimination has emerged among the scheduled caste and tribes of India because of the quota or reservation system that has benefited the few rich and educated groups within them.

Other major discriminations are related to culture, language, and religion, whereby the ethnic/caste groups are marginalized in terms of education and other development efforts. The vertical hierarchy of society leading to exclusion is entirely a cultural or political construct. On the other hand, spatial diversity has contributed to significant level of social inequality in Nepal. In a way, spatial diversity has also contributed to rich cultural variety even if those in remote areas are more deprived than others.

Up to today, the process of exclusion of various groups of people in general is understood in vertical dimension as part of the historical legacy of the state apparatus. There is little sincere effort to understand inter and intra group differences in inclusion/exclusion of the various groups of people in question. In brief, because of the lack of proper understanding of the socioeconomic status of various groups of people in Nepal, forms of exclusion and discrimination vary greatly among various cultural groups (see Dahal 2012 and Gautam 2014). There is a need of systematic data collection efforts on social, economic, and political indicators for every *dalit*, *adibasi/janajati*, women, and *madhesi* groups so that it becomes easier to assess their socioeconomic status compared to other groups within them and Nepal as a whole.

By the nature of its distinct methodological approaches, the results of ethnographic research are complex, subject to multiple interpretations in meanings and analysis (see AAA 2009). In other words, the ethnographic research is not the kind of silver bullet that provides immediate benefits to individuals and society. The subject matter itself is closely embedded with different goals of the researcher, partly linked with the academic goals guided to fulfil his/her theoretical ideas. In other aspects, it provides in-depth knowledge of the social, cultural, economic, and political dimensions of the concerned community, society, and nation as a whole. Academically it could develop a new theory in understanding human identity in the strict sense of biological and cultural terms. The most relevance and applications of ethnographic research, as Weiser (1996) puts it, “Ethnography gets out there in the midst of some cultural place and in the midst of cultural practices and gets at the meanings and experiences and moral significances of those cultural activities to the participant themselves” (309). The following are some of the applications and relevance to preparing ethnographic profiles for Nepal:

It explores cultural similarities and differences and provides cross-cultural examples of various marginalized groups in question and their abilities to cooperate and understand each other. It attempts to prepare 42 cultural monographs of highly marginalized cultural groups of Nepal, providing electronic portal to ethnographic text, photography, video, audio and other materials.

In recent years, ethnic, linguistic, sectarian, and regional contrasts have become robust and assertive in Nepal, and elsewhere. In other words, there has never been a frank, critical, and open discussions about who or what is a particular ethnic identity of people. For example: How has the concept of *madhesi* been conceptualized by various ethno-linguistic groups, government, and elites of Nepal? Is *madhes* or *madhesi* a cultural term or a geographical territory? In recent years, why have the Tharus of the Tarai not wanted to label themselves as *madhesi* as they demand a separate territory within the Tarai? To address these questions the researchers attempt to provide the history of people through oral traditions (if there is no written history of the target cultural group). Detailed accounts of rites de-passage and social organizations of a cultural group are the links to understand a separate cultural identity than others.

In Nepal, some scholars have attempted to provide ethnographic accounts of various cultural groups, but because of poor methodological and theoretical guidelines their books are not up to the mark of scientific anthropology. Sometimes some scholars simply lined up a few dubious "facts" to fulfill their political agenda in the name of the culture and people of Nepal. The present SIA-EP reports are a guide to all who are interested in ethnographic research in Nepal. The marriage of extensive fieldwork and theory helps us discern ways in which different cultures interacted and asserted themselves in various relationships.

Finally, its relevance to students and teachers is immense with reference to the concepts of caste/ethnicity in Nepal and elsewhere. This is more so in the context of newly developed course on "Master of Philosophy in Anthropology" at the Central Department of Sociology and Anthropology, Kirtipur. Caste as an ideology and values practiced in Nepal is little understood up to today. The ethnographic data related to the untouchability in Nepal, its practices, ethnic/caste relations, issues of ethnic/caste identity and its process of transformation help to understand the process of inclusion/exclusion and level of socioeconomic development of various groups of people.

#### **IV: Conclusion**

The major problem in ethnographic research in Nepal is the lack of appropriate theory and proper research methods required when

collecting data and interpreting ethnographic facts. The other serious problem in conducting research in anthropology vis-à-vis ethnography is not methodological, but also ethical. The question of responsibility to “Human Subjects” is gradually becoming a serious concern in Nepal. The concept of social inclusion/exclusion is also under-theorized in Nepal. The SIA-EP project is expected to produce excellent monographs on 42 marginalized communities of Nepal by applying sound theory and methods of anthropology. Based on the latest data available on the subject (a social inclusion survey of 14, 709 households of 98 ethnic/caste groups of Nepal), the SIA-EP Project would further sharpen the theory of social inclusion/exclusion in general and Nepal in particular.

## **Annex : 1**

### **Highly Marginalized Groups (Studied by Bennett and Parajuli)**

#### **1. *Hill Janjati* (9 groups)**

1. Chepang (52237; 0. 23%)
2. Kusunda (164)
3. Majhi (72614; 0. 32%)
4. Pahari (11505; 0. 05%)
5. Raji (2399)
6. Raute (658)
7. Sunuwar (95254; 0. 42%)
8. Tamang (1282304; 5. 64%)
9. Thangmi/Thami (22999; 0. 10%)

#### **2. *Tarai Janjati* (8 groups)**

- Bote (7969)
- Jhagad (41764; 0. 18%)
- Kisan (2876)
- Koche (1429)
- Kusbadiya (579)
- Meche (3763)
- Munda (660)
- Santal (42698; 0. 19%)

#### **3. *Hill Dalit* (5 groups)**

- Badi (4442)
- Damai/Dholi (390305; 1. 72%)

- Gaine (5887)  
Kami (895954; 3. 94%)  
Sarki (318989; 1. 40%)
- 4. *Madhesi Dalit (10 groups)***  
Baantar (35839; 0. 16%)  
Chamar (269661; 1. 19%)  
Chidimar (12290; 0. 05%)  
Dom (8931)  
Dhobi (73413; 0. 32%)  
Dusadh/Paswan (158525; 0. 70%)  
Halkhor (3621)  
Khatawe (74972; 0. 33%)  
Musahar (172434; 0. 76%)  
Tatma (76512; 0. 34%)
- 5. *Madhesi Other Caste (10 groups)***  
Bing/Binda (18720; 0. 08%)  
Dhuniya (1231)  
Kahar (34531; 0. 15%)  
Kamar (8761)  
Lodha (24738; 0. 11%)  
Lohar (82637; 0. 36%)  
Mali (11390)  
Mallah (115986; 0. 51%)  
Nuniya (66873; 0. 29%)  
*Rajbhar* (24263; 0. 11%)

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# The Inclusive State: A Philosophy and Sociology of Social Inclusion

Gérard Toffin

“My view of social science, certainly of sociology, is that it has very little to contribute in the form of social engineering, but much to contribute by way of critical understanding”

André Béteille, 1991: 35

## Introduction

I am deeply honored to be invited to comment on the papers edited by Om Gurung, Mukta S. Tamang and Mark Turin in this volume on inclusion and exclusion. My remarks are first and foremost a way of strengthening my links with sociologists and anthropologists from Nepal, as well as with their respective institutions. Although we hail from different cultural worlds, we belong to the same international community of social scientists. We are all sailing together in one direction, even if some of us are more drawn to theory than to empirical issues, or vice versa. A common sense of belonging has to be preserved and reinforced, not only to make our voices louder but also to direct the course and development of our research. The future of sociology and anthropology lies not only in the West—as some Euro-American anthropologists still strangely believe—but depends upon our collaboration and mutual understanding. As we know, post-colonial and subaltern studies have mounted a serious challenge to an exclusive Western approach that ignored political issues and local forms of knowledge, to note just two of its failings. These critics themselves may sometimes be criticized, and I would strongly argue that science cannot—and should not—be provincialized. Yet, in our fast-changing world, we simply can no longer practice anthropology and sociology the way that we did in the past.

This epilogue is also a platform for me to express my own ideas on the current state of Nepal and reflect on the conceptual tools that are used to understand the social realities of this country.

Among these tools, those of inclusion/exclusion are of the utmost importance since they are implemented, in Nepal just as in other countries, by government and civil society bodies alike to define social policies. In addition, they are part of a long-term reform agenda that has been adopted throughout the world. Matters of inclusion and exclusion in fact lie at the very core of the political and moral discourse. And the concepts have a political dimension: they are entangled with numerous contentious issues (reservation, language policy for instance) and are more difficult to grasp than abstract notions. This is a difficulty with which we have to come to terms. How is it possible to demarcate the respective realms of science and politics, of research and journalism? The answer is far from clear. I have encountered a large number of rising MA graduates in sociology and anthropology from Nepal who view their disciplines as a mere variant of social work. It is also tempting for a number of them to defend their own communities or promote their own cultures through their studies, rather than conceiving of their collected findings as but one inflection of a diverse range of cultures that exist in the world, or as an instance of more general rules that regulate society.

More often than not, we find ourselves working in a field that consists not only of theoretical issues and the advancement of scientific research, but also one of practical action. Inclusion is both a concept and a toolbox that can be used and mobilized. At worst, it risks becoming an ideology that serves specific interests, functioning as a source of politicking. Despite this, social scientists need to discuss social policies from their own perspective as much as possible—Independent of current politics—and challenge simplistic, common knowledge. Scientific premises always require a certain detachment from society and one's cultural values, and socio-anthropological analyses must be kept distinct from social demands.

### **What Does Social Inclusion Cover?**

In these concluding thoughts, I will focus principally on inclusion, a topic that covers a number of subjects and can be viewed from many angles and intellectual vantage points, as this collection clearly demonstrates. More generally, I contend that the notion of inclusion—which emerged only recently—occupies a key role in the history of political ideas and therefore warrants careful

study. The genealogy and trajectory of inclusion therefore has to be reconstructed, and one of my aims in this epilogue is to demonstrate that social inclusion functions as an overarching and broad notion, with powerful gearing, that at once covers economic and cultural registers. Inclusion is a multidimensional narrative that immediately refers to every form of injustice and remedy, without distinction or analysis. While the project of inclusion aims at creating a more equitable society, at alleviating poverty and recognizing and even rewarding difference, one of its hallmarks is a wide variation in use and application.

Inclusion does not in fact have precisely the same meaning in Europe as it does in South Asia. As I will demonstrate, inclusion in Europe refers primarily to a decline in social solidarity and to failings in integrative institutions. The concept addresses the rise in endemic unemployment from the end of the 1970s onwards and increasing religious and cultural diversity. In Europe then, inclusion is a way of reforming the capitalist and liberal democratic system from the inside, with occasional help from socio-democratic political forces. In India and Nepal, on the other hand, social inclusion has become an all-encompassing instrument, a core value to remedy society's ills and to restructure the state. Based originally on a political device of modest ambition and limited scope, it has become a project of overarching importance that affects the structure of society and its primary social ties.

Many questions remain unanswered. Social inclusion policies may aim at reforming society, but on what scale and to what extent? Is reform occurring at the heart of society or only on the edges? Does inclusion imply systemic or only marginal change? The answers vary according to the context and the countries in which it is used. As a matter of fact, social inclusion today encompasses a polyvalent portfolio of social policy theynamics and methods that are often difficult to delineate. There is a demonstrated lack of theorization and of scientific background in these matters, as well as in the analysis of the phenomenal rise of this new concept. Likewise, consistency and rigor are lacking in attempts to understand how social exclusion comes about. What is, for instance, the ultimate reference point for ranking groups in some hierarchical order?

Despite such variation in definitions, the repertoire of social inclusion has a common feature the world over and extends

beyond formal conceptions of democracy and political institutions. Inclusion does not target modes of political functioning, such as the respective roles of parliamentary and executive power, for instance, nor does it address the electoral procedure. Rather, inclusion addresses social problems, substantive inequalities, disadvantages and social issues, similar to the approach taken by Karl Marx in his works at the end of the nineteenth century. Yet the final analysis and conclusions offered by inclusion differ profoundly from those of the great German thinker. Social inclusion does not rest on a theoretical analysis along the lines of *Das Kapital* as it does not view conflicts between social classes as the source of historical development and of changing political regimes. Rather, in inclusion thinking, diversity, minority rights, democracy, recognition of gender and social upliftment replace older Marxist models of revolution, strike, rebellion and dictatorship of the proletariat. By recognizing diversity and by stigmatizing exclusion, social inclusion aims to restore cohesion in both the social structure and the political body. Inclusion aims at providing new reasons for changing society and for believing in progress, and encourages models of mobilization based more on consensus than on conflict.

This paper aims to explore and clarify these issues in three main stages. First, I deal with the emergence and the particular itinerary of the concept of social inclusion in European countries and how it moved on to developing countries, in particular to Nepal. I argue that the trajectory from Europe to South Asia involved an important transformation in the shape of the concept. Simply put, collective inherited disadvantages have become more important than individually achieved inequalities. Second, I stress the theoretical content of this politically-loaded concept and its epistemological uncertainties. In my view, the repertoire of inclusion marks a move towards a more holistic mindset in South Asia. At the same time, Europe is dealing with increasing cultural diversity and increasingly tending towards giving social inclusion a similar ethnic meaning to that found in India and Nepal. Third and finally, I discuss the different categorizations at work when speaking of discriminated groups. Here, we are forced to deal with the pitfalls, social pathology, and difficulties in applying the concept of inclusion; issues that at first sight appear to be wholly positive.

On the whole, I hope to demonstrate that social inclusion is directly linked to central concerns in socio-anthropological research, namely the link between individuals and society, and the nature of social bonds. In this contribution, these key issues are addressed from a sociological, if not philosophical, perspective. While some of the topics are referenced in the previous chapters of this book, in my opinion they form a logical and interlinked chain, an ensemble that needs to be considered globally. I hope that this contribution will be useful for the Social Inclusion Atlas (SIA) and Ethnographic Profiles (EP) project funded by the Royal Norwegian Embassy through Social Inclusion Research Fund (SIRF) of SNV/Nepal and implemented by the Central Department of Sociology/Anthropology (CDSA) of Tribhuvan University. My paper may also be seen as a contribution towards broader questions and epistemologies, particularly in the interconnected fields of political anthropology, analyses of inequalities, and the sociology of developing countries. A backdrop to this is my ongoing effort to develop a theory of democracy (the most common definition of this term is “power to the people”) based on a comparison between Europe and Asia. Before measuring social exclusion, then, it is worth clarifying the definitions and meanings of the terms that are used.

## Social Inclusion: The Birth of a Concept

The concept of social exclusion emerged in France in 1965 with the publication of Jean Klanfer's *L'exclusion sociale. Étude de la marginalité dans les sociétés occidentales*, which may be described as an anthropology of poverty. However, the concept only became more prominent and a major theme of political rhetoric with the 1974 publication of René Lenoir's book, *Les exclus (The excluded)*, whose title is not very different in meaning from the term “outcaste.” Lenoir was a high-ranking civil servant and future Secretary of State for the disabled in France, and his work met with great success. The scope of the term was suddenly broadened to a diverse group of marginalized persons who felt like strangers, disconnected from mainstream French society. *Les exclus* was wide ranging in application: the mentally and physically disabled, young unmarried mothers, asocial persons who fell outside the employment-based social security system, various marginalized individuals, the desperately poor, drug addicts, the homeless, elderly isolated persons, and others. Objectively speaking, all of

these people, with their prevailing social handicaps, were excluded from society and deprived of the common social rights of citizens. They were also united in being frowned upon by the majority and treated with great disdain—a contempt sometimes fuelled by xenophobic prejudices. René Lenoir estimated that the number of people living on the margins of French society totaled around 10%. Experts have since calculated that the figure had nearly doubled twenty years later, by the end of the 1990s.

Within a relatively short time period, social inclusion (rendered in French by the terms *intégration* and, more recently, *insertion*) has become a commonplace term and dominant policy paradigm when addressing poverty, exclusion of the disadvantaged, marginality, and maladaptation to the social environment. The concept—in the sense of exclusion from normal exchanges, practices and rights in modern society—was rapidly adopted throughout Europe for the simple reason that all European countries were confronted with related problems and faced the same economic crisis. The dissemination process for the concept of social inclusion began in the mid-1980s when Jacques Delors, then president of the European Commission, stressed the need for a strong social dimension to the European project. Social inclusion became a major policymaking device to restore social cohesion and make up for the failures of the welfare state in an increasingly complex international context. For instance, social inclusion was one of the first policy platforms launched by the newly elected Blair government in the United Kingdom in 1997. Though almost unheard of in the 1980s, social inclusion has now become a cornerstone of European Union social policy and a foundational basis for the reform of some nation states in Europe.

In 2000, the meeting of the European Council in Lisbon formally adopted the related concepts of inclusion and exclusion, and introduced common guidelines for their understanding and implementation. These were meant to reconcile economic and social issues, and restore the social link that had been broken by the slowing down of the economy. Social inclusion is thus in keeping with the legal tradition of social protection (*État social* in French) that prevailed in developed European countries since the nineteenth century, associated with workers' living conditions and the organization of the labor market. Like the notion of the “welfare state,” policies of inclusion aim at complementing the

formal equality that a democratic regime pledges to guarantee with real forms of equality in social conditions linked to a person's basic economic and social needs. Such concepts therefore tend to reintroduce particularistic values into the universalistic ideology of the first republicans of post-revolutionary France.

It is important to underscore at the outset that "social inclusion" was not originally a sociological concept, but rather that its locus resides in the borderlands between academia and policy. While it has subsequently been reformulated by various governments to adjust to differing political ends and specific contexts, for the large majority of European nation-states, social inclusion is still fundamentally a concept that legitimizes social policies. There is general consensus that social inclusion is a "good thing," whereas social exclusion is "bad" because it is unfair and jeopardizes social cohesion. In others words, social inclusion has become the expected norm. As rightly stressed by sociologist Mary Daly from Queen's University in Belfast, this notion is deeply rooted in European culture and echoes older forms of common action and solidarity towards the poor. Furthermore, social inclusion is ideologically embedded in European social Catholicism and in the social democratic tradition.

### **The Trajectory of Social Inclusion in South Asia (India and Nepal)**

Social inclusion rapidly developed beyond its birthplace in Europe, spreading first to other developed countries in the Pacific, in North and South America, and then to Asia and Africa. In Australia, it first emerged in South Australian government policy in 2002, and then rose to prominence at the federal level during the 2007 election campaign and in the subsequent Labour government. In both cases, it drew on the British model. The United States, for its part, fell further behind the European Union in the conceptualization of poverty and the understanding of those living at society's edge. American governments still understood poverty in stricter terms as insufficient income for basic necessities.

In this collection, Mukta Tamang recalls how social inclusion has been adopted by the United Nations and several international state agencies, such as the ILO (International Labour Organization), in their respective programs. It has since become a policymaking

*mantra* around the world. Several private and public European organizations, such as the Norway Social Inclusion Research Fund (SIRF) and the SNV Netherlands Development Organization, have started exporting the concept to fund research and carry out programs classed as “inclusive development” in poor countries across the South. The emphasis in such programs is on fostering the resourcefulness of development actors and developing local capacity. Limiting ourselves to Nepal, we may say that impact of such interventions on small-scale projects and research training has proved to be extremely positive.

In India, exclusion/inclusion themes were adopted in the 1980s. They were applied to social categories such as the disabled, Scheduled Castes (SCs), Scheduled Tribes (STs), denotified [i. e. ex-criminal] (*vimukta jati* in Hindi) & Nomadic tribes (DNSNTs), minority religious groups, and other marginal and excluded sections of society. Some arenas in which these themes were experimented with include empowerment projects, access to basic services including water, sanitation and hygiene, education, reservations and quotas, mechanisms of social protection, preservation of cultural diversity while promoting communal harmony, and many other so-called “good practices” relevant to a particular time and space. In India, affirmative action was legally adopted in the early 1950s, and even before in some regions. Multicultural values are perceived to be as central to the Indian Constitution as equalitarian values, despite persistent Islamophobia and high-caste consciousness in some sections of the Hindu population. The Indian Constitution has granted linguistic minorities the right to establish separate institutions to promote their cultures and languages, and the National Commission adopted inclusion in its 12<sup>th</sup> Plan (2012-2017).

The philosophy behind such action in India is to construct a more inclusive society by countering discrimination and providing better economic facilities, better schooling, improved social protection, and wider political representation for the underprivileged. In other words, inclusion aims at ensuring that everyone benefits from equal opportunities and fundamental human rights. Nevertheless, some societal issues have been violently contested, such as the extension of affirmative action to OBCs (Other Backward Classes) and the process of detribalizing ethnic groups to integrate them fully into mainstream society. In this respect, it

is worth remembering that Prime Minister V. P. Singh's decision to implement the recommendations of the Mandal Commission, which largely extended the caste reservation policy from scheduled castes to OBCs, brought about a number of self-immolations in 1990. That year, 159 young people attempted to commit suicide by setting fire to themselves in protest against the new policy; 63 of them succeeded (Dirks 2001). Young people with upper-caste backgrounds saw in this decision the prospect of losing their own employment opportunities in various state administrations. In some cases, self-assertiveness, revivalism, and identity preservation can run counter to the dynamic of inclusion.

The repertoire of inclusion has met with similar success in Nepal. It was rapidly adopted by the authorities and became part of the political agenda (Nep. *samajik samabeshikaran* for “social inclusion,” *samaveshiyata* or *samaveshita* for “inclusiveness” and *samabeshi loktantra* for “inclusive democracy”). Even before the ending of monarchy in Nepal (2008), the concept of inclusion had been adopted as one of the four pillars of the 10<sup>th</sup> Five-Year Plan in 2003 (Rawal 2008: 175). Inclusion was subsequently endorsed in 2006 within the framing of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement between political parties united in their opposition to the monarchy. The first Constituent Assembly (2008-2013) similarly laid emphasis on social inclusion and asserted its commitment to respecting the social, economic, cultural, and political rights of excluded communities. A consensus seemed to have been reached between the major political parties on the topic, even if some aspects remain contentious. As a case in point, from now on, Constituent Assembly members have the right to use their mother tongue in the swearing-in ceremony at the beginning of their mandate (*The Kathmandu Post*, 18 February 2014). This is remarkable in a country where 123 distinct languages (2011 Census) have been officially recognized and where only half of the population uses Nepali as their native language. Likewise, the Interim Constitution of Nepal (2007) grants each community the right to both basic education in their native language and provisions to promote and preserve their spoken tradition, scripts, and cultural heritage. Furthermore, a policy of recognizing *janajatis*, *dalits*, muslims, and *madhesis*—to mention only a few disadvantaged groups—has now been implemented. The Constituent Assembly also stipulated that at least one third of its members should be women.

The notion of an *inclusive state* has thus become an essential instrument for building a republican democracy in Nepal. It aims at rectifying the inequalities associated with caste and helps to rally government agencies behind issues of equity. Mechanisms of inclusion are based on an assumption that society is unable to make up for its own failings. As in Europe, intervention by the state is deemed to be necessary to satisfy the social, cultural, and economic needs of individuals. Historically, such an orientation, sensitive to political ideologies and national discourses, has gradually supplanted the earlier policy of Hinduizing Nepali society that had been enforced by the Ranas/Shahs for most of Nepal's recent history. Inclusion also fits within the wider multicultural and multiethnic policy forwarded by successive post-monarchy governments, and is accompanied by measures that favor affirmative action and federalism. The state itself is openly participating in the construction of collective identities and the creation of internal boundaries. These guiding principles are in explicit opposition to the exclusionary and divisive dynamics of caste-based society. They are also in response against uncontrolled Anglo-American liberalism.

In all of this, there exists a striking contrast between Europe and South Asia. Historically, the inclusionary policies adopted by European countries first targeted individuals who were in difficulty. By contrast, the Indian and Nepali fight against exclusion has rapidly and principally taken on a collective dimension. In South Asia, a number of measures concern "low" castes and tribes. These social and/or occupational groups are considered collectively and are granted privileges or facilities accordingly. In other words, inclusion in South Asia has been articulated as the right to be different. By taking the form of a policy of recognition, it has acquired a very different meaning from its European origins.

### **Europe and South Asia: Differing Social Horizons**

The main cause of the difference between Europe and South Asia lies in the contrast between the structures of the two civilizations. In South Asia, social textures are highly differentiated and are based primarily on hierarchies. Societies are fragmented and divided into castes, sub-castes, and ethnic groups, sometimes each of them speaking their own language. These groups play a considerable role in social life, even if the sociological realities are slowly

changing, especially in larger cities (Pfaff-Czarnecka and Toffin 2011). In such contexts, Man's presence is largely determined by the past history of the group. The production of subjectivities exists everywhere, including in the Himalayas, but so far Nepal has not abolished the subordination of individuals to existing basic groups. To take just one example, albeit one that is decisive in my eyes, religious conversion in modern Nepal still takes a collective form (e. g. Tamangs converting to Christianity) as opposed to the personal individual processes that can be observed more often in modern Western societies. Moreover, in Europe, nation-states are much more homogenized. Lines of cleavage operate according to other principles, many of which are economic, but which are also crossed by considerably more upward and downward individual social mobility.

In a multi-caste, multi-lingual, and multi-ethnic country like Nepal, where self-identity is still mainly determined by kinship, caste groups, ethnicity, and locality, any strictly individualistic approach is likely to fail. At a more primitive stage, individuals exist and often clash with each other, yet individual values—and the emphasis on personal issues—are frowned upon and remain heavily dependent on collective groups. The common bond and loyalty towards one's inner circle of relatives and close friends (Nep. *aphno manche* or *chineko manche*) are much more developed than those that individuals exhibit towards the national community. Admittedly, a distinction has to be made between urban zones and rural districts, but by and large, as Dor Bahadur Bista said: "Nepal is an ascriptive rather than an achievement orientated society" (1992: 99).

In point of fact, the shift towards a more inclusive approach in government policymaking over the last three decades in Nepal is a major sociological phenomenon that needs to be thoroughly analysed. I argue that it involves a *paradigmatic shift*. In my view, the success of the concept marks the failure of the strictly exclusive *equality* model in developing countries in South Asia. In India and in Nepal in particular, the original Western inclusive paradigm that was more individualistic has been domesticated, translated ("internalized" might be another appropriate word) into communal terms. In such an approach, inclusion is more linked to diversity than it is to equality.

The crisis concerning the very notion of equality is increasingly also affecting the Eurozone, a failure that is partly due to the economic crisis and the consequent breakdown of internal social cohesion. The term “equality” which was, and still is (at least theoretically), the basis for the ideals of many European countries, is on the decline. While the concept of equality was without doubt a noble model, it proved to be rather difficult to achieve in concrete terms. These days, it has been supplanted by a concept of *equity* which does not have the same meaning (Schnapper 2006). The global economic downturn in the early twenty-first century has heightened this ideological crisis. The world economic and financial crisis during the period 2007-2008, and the ensuing global recession, has significantly impacted the world economy. This slowdown has affected Western countries in particular, which since then have suffered several chronic imbalances (with emerging developing countries maintaining high rates of growth). Moreover, the rise in petrol prices over previous decades (1980s and 1990s) has seriously crippled aspirations towards full employment and economic growth.

### **The Shifting Lines Between Individualism and Holism**

In my view, the success of the repertoire of social inclusion marks a reactivation of the “holistic” ideology to the expense of the pure individualist and formal egalitarian approach that gradually appeared in the West during the eighteenth century. We may recall here Louis Dumont’s assumption that “holism” is opposed to “individualism” as two different structuring principles and antithetical forms of social organization. Similarly, the French anthropologist argued that hierarchy and egalitarianism are symmetrically opposed to each other. According to Dumont, contrary to modern Western societies that valorize the individual, most other societies remain fundamentally holistic and hierarchical. From a holistic viewpoint, the whole dominates to the detriment of its constituent parts: the different realms of society are structurally intertwined around specific non-modern values, contrary to more individualistic modern societies where the different components have been detotalized and segmented between different domains (i. e. politics, economics, private religion, and so forth) over at least the last two centuries. In South Asia, on the other hand, society is first and foremost made up of social groups. Individuals are entrenched in ascribed groups such as clans, lineages, ethnic

groups, and castes. Similarly, before the modern age, Europeans lived in a holistic society. This was the case, for instance, during the medieval period with its inherited social orders.

Dumont's overarching and somewhat schematic opposition has rightly been criticized by a number of sociologists. André Béteille (1992), for instance, stressed the weakness of the material collected by Louis Dumont relating to equality in his comparison between traditional and modern societies. In fact, the parallel between the two sociological sets of values looks awkward. Similarly, the French anthropologist Michel Panoff contested the symmetry between the holism/individualism opposition and the dichotomy between hierarchy/equality (1978). Holism is not synonymous with hierarchy, and individualism does not always lead to equality. To take but one example, some traditional segmentary societies are basically egalitarian, whereas individualist societies, such as North Italian towns during the Renaissance, were highly hierarchical. Yet, in my opinion, such a duality should not be rejected entirely. Individual/holist concepts are still useful in the comparative analysis of societies, especially if they are understood as ideal-types (in the Weberian sense) rather than concrete scenarios. They need to be imagined as two extreme modes of relationship between an individual and society that can coexist in the same lived community.

The return of holistic values to the forefront of the agenda must not be seen in a negative light. This alternate model is more in tune with societies that are heavily bound by tradition or that face new forms of ethnic hybridity. Radical criticism of Western universalistic individualism and egalitarianism often accompanies a defense of such inclusive models. Mahendra Lawoti, for instance, argues that *individual rights* and the *formal equality* of “classical liberalism” are not enough to protect the freedom and equality of different socio-cultural groups in multicultural societies (2005: 161). “When groups are not equal, members of the unequal groups cannot become equal” (*ibid.* : 120). Canadian official texts take exactly the same position in favor of their own communitarian policy (Schnapper 2006). In addition, Lawoti writes: “Rights guaranteed by the Constitution based on universal individualism are based on the values and norms of the dominant groups” (*ibid.* : 120). The argument in favor of a group-based particularistic approach to social inclusion is thus highly disputed. The aim is

to achieve more *substantive equality* in a way that is distinct from the Western social welfare state by granting new rights to social communities and no longer only to individuals.

Philosophically speaking, this reoccurrence of holism is all-important and needs to be situated in a broader context in order to be properly understood. In my view, the mindset according to which individual formal equality gives precedence to collective social inclusion is a wider general trend, as we will see below. It can be associated with other streams of thought: for example, the tendency to underestimate the original division of humans between the sexes and to stress the social identities that are constituted by each sex over a lifetime. The universal division between the sexes as well as Man's fundamental identity (equality) on a planetary scale are particularized here for the sake of substantive gender or substantive equality (versus inequalities constructed by society). This significant shift leads to a de-universalized world where everything varies depending on the country, the cultural model or the social forces. The universalistic ideas of the eighteenth-century European Enlightenment are thus challenged by particularistic values, and relativistic perspectives prevail.

### **Facing Ethnic Diversity in the West**

In Europe, the concept of social inclusion rapidly came to refer to other social categories, especially to migrants belonging to communities other than white European Christians. Part of this new migrant population does not want to assimilate to Western norms. Instead, they insist on remaining distinct and on adhering to their own non-Christian culture and values. Ethnic riots that erupted over the years in French and British urban suburbs have increasingly forced governments to address issues pertaining to cultural diversity. Therefore, as far as its actual meaning is concerned, a policy of social inclusion in Europe does not only target poverty and underprivileged persons facing economic difficulties, but also has a cultural component that increasingly embraces non-monetary aspects of deprivation. Such an orientation questions the very basis of pure liberal democratic doxa and entails the need to accommodate cultural diversity. Yet, issues regarding reservation and quotas are still highly controversial. In France, for instance, a recent report presented to the French Prime Minister by a group of experts in favor of multiculturalism in

November 2013 led to a heated debate about its merits throughout the country. Questions of poverty and cultural assimilation are increasingly and revealingly intertwined since migrants, who often work illegally, make up an important section of the poor and are victims of residential segregation. Cumulative disadvantages have heightened marginality. At present, asylum seekers and *sans papiers* (Fr. “illegal immigrant workers without documents”) are some of the most vulnerable groups, because access to employment, health care, housing, and suffrage is entirely dependent on their legal status.

As a consequence, European countries are now more open to multicultural models than in the past. This shift is of great importance because, since the French Revolution in 1789, European norms of equality have prevailed over plurality. In fact, the conventional Western European notion of democracy is built on national homogeneity with no cultural cleavages, the latter seen as potentially jeopardizing a citizen’s social and political equality. Assimilation to the mainstream was traditionally expected to be a panacea. Democracy was a means of destroying cultural diversity rather than of maintaining it. French Republicanism, which identified with universalism, originally rejected difference. By turning towards a more global recognition of diversity, political authorities are currently challenging the founding universalistic and individualistic principles of these democracies which are supposedly free of any communal identity other than citizenship.

The contrast between the two sociological orientations of holism and individualism is thus slowly vanishing. The collective component of public policies is progressing in Europe, although it often takes on a more territorial dimension than an overtly ethnic one. This group-based dimension was not accounted for in the original universalistic ideological agenda—which is consistent with the importance of individuality in these countries—nor in state welfare policies implemented in Western Europe since the end of the nineteenth century. Needless to say, the individual dimension has also not to be overlooked in South Asia. At a time of mass democracies, the politics of the self is everywhere on the rise, including in Nepal and India. The possibility of initiating individual friendships and of deciding who is a friend and who is an enemy has become gradually more significant in these two countries, especially in urban areas.

The world is witnessing a shift in social realities. Holistic values are increasingly at work in the West, despite a basic outlook that remains individualistic. Pluriculturalist dispositions were, for instance, officially adopted in Canada and Australia in 1971 and 1982 respectively. These rearrangements have changed the nature of the state. All over the globe, the focus is progressively more on real, substantial equality in the place of simple formal equality. Such developments are coterminous with the rise of what can be called the *inclusive state*. The sociologist Dominique Schnapper (2002) speaks of a gradual “ethnicization” of social life in several Western countries. Respective governments are becoming more cognizant of cultural and social differences. Social inclusion along holistic lines is therefore becoming a common trend worldwide. Everywhere, multiculturalism and hybridity are on the rise. Obviously, the link between democracy and society needs to be reframed along more pluralistic lines. This contribution makes a plea in this direction.

## Categorizing Marginalized Social Groups

Let us return to South Asia. Most of the papers in this volume deal with the methodology of the SIA-EP (Social Inclusion Atlas and Ethnographical Profile) Project launched by CDSA in Nepal, and the indexing of social inequalities among the concerned communities. Forty-two marginalized social groups were selected, mainly on the basis of previous research undertaken by the World Bank. They belonged either to the *dalits* (former untouchable castes), small endangered *adivasi janajati* groups (except Tamang), and what in India are called OBCs (Other Backward Classes). The scope covers the Madhesh (Tarai) and the Hills. Thanks to the decennial censuses that have been carried out since 1990, a large corpus of statistical data on caste and ethnic groups is—at least theoretically—at our disposal.

Sociologically speaking, *dalit* and *adivasi janajati* are local socio-cultural categories that first emerged in India. They have recently been integrated into the Nepali anthropological and political vocabulary. This perhaps explains why they are less used outside the Kathmandu Valley and the country’s main towns, even by persons belonging to the groups concerned. By contrast, the two expressions have been widely acknowledged today by political actors and by researchers. In addition, each of the two categories

(*dalit* and *janajati*) can at present lay claim to their own national organizations in Nepal that are recognized by government authorities. Importantly, the term *dalit* refers to a caste system, while *adivasi janajati* refers to ethnicities and to ethnic social organization. The two words consequently refer to two crucial and distinct components of the Nepali (and Indian) social structure.

*Dalits* and *adivasi janajatis* are among the most marginalized groups (Nep. *simantakrit samuha*) in present-day Nepal. *Dalits*, for instance, are traditionally denied any control over their own means of production and access to land ownership, and are among the poorest in the country. Likewise, the small ethnic groups that figure among the forty-two SIA-EPs listed still remain on the edge of Nepali society. Exclusion affects many fields of life: education, health, standard of living, poverty, participation in public life, and so forth. Of course, some differences must be recognized within these two large categories. The level of exclusion for *dalits*, for instance, is more extreme in the Tarai than in the Hills. The Nepal Federation for Indigenous Nationalities (NEFIN) has further broken down their list of 54 *adivasi janajati* into five categories based on their level of development: advanced, disadvantaged, marginalized, highly marginalized and endangered. This sub-classification implies that not all indigenous groups should be ranked at the same level.

It is important to consider and work with these categories and subgroups. They embody local divisions and rely on verifiable, observable facts. What is more, they engender an extremely strong sense of belonging and attachment. These communities are not only social and cultural constructions based on particular values and models, but they are also experienced and viewed by people as quasi-biological groupings. A person belongs to a particular group through their father, mother and ancestors. A person is a Tamang or *dalit* by birth, not by a personal decision in the course of their life. What is more, these groups outlive their individual members and they have a distinct physical identity. They are in some ways “naturalized”, as conveyed by their generic name in Indic languages—*jat/jati* “birth, natural species,” as well as “caste.”

However, the adoption of such modes of classification in the political sphere and in the government agenda can have perverse effects. The risk consists in formalizing group borders and in

imprisoning individuals within them. As a matter of fact, these categorizations prevent a person from belonging to two different castes or ethnic groups, and can ossify and atomize the population in closed groupings. The underlying assumption is that the Other must remain the Other in order to be granted social and cultural rights. There is a danger in locking people within archaic or imagined boundaries—particularly when these are in fact very fluid—denying them the freedom to revise or to reject their inherited cultural identity. When an individual is recognized as being a member of a particular group, s/he may be castigated or demonized simply for that very same reason, i. e. for being a member of the group. Attributing quotas and differential rights (Nep. *agradhikar*) to individuals who belong to these groups can risk freezing identities in terms of caste and tribe.

In addition, a scheduled and recognized group can easily be converted into an interest group. Such categorization runs the risk of promoting identity politics and of contributing to the ghettoization of separate communities. The exclusive discourse on identity in fact heightens divisions, inter-communal tensions, petitions, subnational conflicts, violence, and mutual distrust to the detriment of shared values and common citizenship. This very rapidly reifies castes and turns into frenetic bio-politics. In India, the politics of quotas have exacerbated caste tension, provoking serious anti-reservation riots and attacks on *harijans* (ex-untouchables) in several cities. In some states, politics is today being driven by the competition for backwardness. The Gujjars of Rajasthan, who have enjoyed the benefits of inclusion among the OBCs, have been agitating for being reclassified as a scheduled tribe to obtain more advantages. Prominent Indian social scientists (i. e. G. S. Ghurye, M. N. Srinivas, A. M. Shah, B. S. Bavaskar) have expressed their opposition to the use of caste for reservations. They have protested against Ambedkar's theories in which caste has to be fostered in order to combat centuries of oppression. Moreover, it is often said that the category of OBC (Other Backward Classes) covers mainly castes and not classes. In Nepal, the problem for the time being is principally with its multiculturalist policy. How is it possible to reconcile the necessary unity of the state with the assertive demands made by such diverse groups, demands which are furthermore in total dissonance with current needs for development? Holistic social inclusion precepts in Nepal and India may therefore engender long-lasting social disorder and

various social pathologies. Aspirations to autonomous homelands and other anachronistic devices may undermine the principles of democracy itself and engender a crisis in citizenship.

## Conclusion

All in all, social inclusion is a composite and highly flexible concept. It describes a wide range of phenomena and processes. It has social and cultural content, as well as an individual and a collective dimension. Moreover, the repertoire of social inclusion has undergone massive changes over time and space. New definitions have periodically been added to the concept. For instance, Nobel Prize winner and Indian economist, Amartya Sen (2000: 6), defines social exclusion as the “deprivation of basic capabilities” rather than merely as low income. In Sen’s view, the two concepts of capability failure and social inclusion must be linked.

On spreading to South Asia and to Nepal, the notion of social inclusion has shifted from a modern liberal episteme to alternative forms of action that bear the mark of holism. In Nepal (and other South Asian countries) social inclusion at present pertains more to the cultural and ideological basis of society, whereas in Europe special emphasis has historically been placed on socio-economic aspects. In India, this policy has been reinforced by affirmative action measures concretely implemented since the beginning of the twentieth century. Whatever the case, there is an overall need to reform society. Yet different philosophical paradigms exist. Significantly, the expression “inclusive democracy” is rarely used in Europe, unlike in South Asia.

Pitfalls obviously exist in such matters. Minority rights may clash with principles of individual liberty, freedom, and social justice. New forms of exclusion and formal inequalities may emerge. More importantly, the cost of achieving a proper acknowledgement of diversity and cultural rights must not exceed state expenditures in matters of health insurance, unemployment benefits, and retirement pensions. Social inclusion will otherwise be a simple masquerade. Nevertheless, actions based on group rights can yield positive results. More importantly, collective alleviation measures in most cases supplement individual rights rather than negate them. Obviously, a balance has to be found between the two trends. The time has come to go beyond the rigid dichotomies of

individualism/holism and to overcome our intellectual dilemma in this area of thought. Social inclusion must be recognized as a means of achieving empowerment of the people and of attaining full citizenship, beyond any individualist premise. In Nepal, multiculturalist policies could help to build the trust and solidarity needed to establish an equitable state. The SIA-EP project currently carried out by sociologists and anthropologists in Nepal will be of great help in this enterprise.

Social inclusion is a component of democracy—a word that most countries throughout the world have currently made claims on, even if its principles (i. e. freedom, equality, separation of powers, fair elections, rule of law, etc. ) are not respected, or only partially. Incidentally, democracy has become a concept that is just as vague as social inclusion. It covers a wide range of things and can take many forms. The term concedes a plurality of pathways and encompasses various experiences in time and space. History teaches us that ancient Greek city-states were called democratic regimes even if a large part of their population (slaves, outsiders, and women) were in fact denied the rights of citizenship. The etymology of the word “democracy” comes from these ancient times: *demos* in Greek means “people” and *kratos*, “power.” In France, the division between “active citizen” and “passive citizen” (only the former were allowed to vote) established during the French Revolution in 1789 persisted in different forms over a long period of time (Schnapper 2006). It was only after World War II that this system was abolished and replaced by direct universal suffrage. Similarly, French women were only granted voting rights in 1944 (it may be noted, only three years before Nepal).

I would like to address one final point that concerns a particular situation that affects Nepal but which is of more general significance. It is rather difficult to discuss matters of inclusion or exclusion in a country like Nepal without raising the discussion to an altogether higher level and addressing transnational issues. Today, more than four million Nepali citizens live outside the country, including those who reside in India. A large number (the majority, no doubt) of these migrants lack any qualifications and are employed in low-paid, unskilled jobs. The Nepali community in Qatar — about 400, 000 to 500, 000 persons— (20% of Qatar’s migrant workforce) belong to this category of migrants, and are known to live in extremely poor physical conditions. Four

hundred deaths within the Nepalis of Qatar alone have reportedly taken place at Qatar's World Cup sites since the bid was won (*The Guardian*, 15 February 2014). The media regularly reports on cases of workers in Gulf countries who are victims of harassment. We must also recall that Nepali migrants abroad have no right to vote and are denied many of the rights of citizens of Nepal.

How can a nation-state like Nepal launch programs of social inclusion and boast about this policy when at the very same time a large part of its population, either out of economic necessity or because people no longer trust their political representatives, flee the country every year to live in miserable conditions, deprived of all fundamental rights, with a dubious legal status? Large mass migration no doubt must be taken into account. Given the different movements brought about by the tidal forces of globalization, and the various responses to it, the construction of a more inclusive state calls for sustained and deep reflection. The crux of my argument is that, without adopting such a global viewpoint, the concept of social inclusion remains far from perfect and indeed ignores numerous forms of segregation.

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