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## **Understanding Social Exclusion and Social Inclusion in the Nepalese Context: Some Preliminary Remarks<sup>1</sup>**

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### **Abstract**

The concepts of social exclusion and its twin, social inclusion, were first popularised in social policy discourse in Europe in response to the crises of the welfare state and then used in other regions, especially in developmental discourses, probably in response to the failure of development paradigms based on poverty reduction. These terms have now become mainstreamed, with even the World Bank, the National Planning Commission of Nepal, and the Social Inclusion Research Fund Secretariat using the terms for different purposes. Yet, as several commentators have pointed out, social exclusion and social inclusion are contested terms, used in a variety of ways and in a variety of contexts, such that questions have even been raised as to whether it is possible to define these terms in a manner acceptable to all.

This paper attempts a preliminary and cursory survey of the literature, mainly articles in journals available to the author (and keeping in mind the fact that not having access to the literature is itself a form of exclusion), on social exclusion and inclusion. It will discuss how these concepts have been understood and used by several authors from different disciplinary fields. Finally, the paper will make some preliminary remarks about how the terms could be understood in the Nepalese context.

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# Understanding Social Exclusion and Social Inclusion in the Nepalese Context: Some Preliminary Remarks

Rajendra Pradhan

## I. Introduction

The terms social inclusion and social exclusion originated in Europe in response to the crises of the welfare state and the fear of social disintegration caused by social and economic crises, but have now gained wide currency worldwide, including in Nepal, especially in the literature on development and social policy and perhaps to some extent in popular discourse.<sup>2</sup> But what do these terms mean? Who are excluded or included and from what and how? What are the processes and mechanisms of exclusion and inclusion? And what are the politics of these terms (Jackson 1999)? Many authors (Silver 1994-6; De Haan n.d., 1998; Sen 2000; Kabeer n.d.; Peace 2001; Jackson 1999; Room 1999) have noted that the term 'social exclusion' is polysemic in that it has many meanings. The term is used to describe a wide range of phenomena and processes related especially to poverty and deprivation, but also to social, cultural and political disadvantages, and in relation to a wide range of categories of excluded people. Social exclusion and inclusion are 'contested concepts', defined from the perspective or framework of different social science paradigms and disciplinary and theoretical perspectives, political ideologies and even national discourses (see especially, Silver 1994-6; de Haan 1998).

It is not surprising then that questions have been raised as to whether these terms, especially social exclusion, add value, as the economists would say, to the concepts of poverty, relative deprivation and disadvantage (Sen 2000; Kabeer n.d., de Haan 1998; Room 1999; Peace 2001; Saith 2001); about the scope or range of social phenomena that these concepts cover; whether the concepts are applicable to the so-called Southern countries (Kabeer n.d.; Saith 2001; Maxwell and de Haan 1998; Bhalla and Lapeyre 1997; Sen 2000)<sup>3</sup>; and about the relations between social exclusion and social inclusion (Jackson 1999; Kabeer n.d.; Sen 2000). Moreover, invoking these terms has moral and political implications: Exclusion is 'bad', inclusion is 'desirable' and we

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<sup>2</sup> It may not be immodest to claim that Social Science Baha was instrumental in bringing the concept of inclusive democracy (*samaveshi loktantra*) into popular discourse in Nepal. The international conference on this theme organised by the Baha in 2003 as well as the summary of the papers it published in Nepali helped popularise this concept. The term exclusion (*asamaveshi*, according to the linguist Prof. Novel Kishore Rai), however, is yet to be part of the popular lexicon.

<sup>3</sup> While many authors raise the issue of the value added by the concept of social exclusion and whether the concepts are relevant for the so-called developing countries, they conclude that social exclusion is an improvement over the older and related concept of poverty, relative deprivation, capabilities, etc. and that it could be used for the South. Saith (2001), however, disagrees, arguing, "Since it is difficult to apply the 'social exclusion' concept to developing countries, in the context of the welfare state and formal employment, attempts to modify and apply it have largely resulted in a repetition and relabelling of poverty studies (broader in scope than monetary poverty) that have already been carried out in developing countries." (See also Jackson 1999). They do not explain why the concept of social exclusion is being used in developing countries.

need to find ways to include the excluded (Loury 1999; Jackson 1999).<sup>4</sup> Given these and other questions, it is perhaps not without cause that some critics such as Else Oyen (1977: 63) remark that researchers "pick up the concept and are now running all over the place arranging seminars and conferences to find a researchable content in an umbrella concept for which there is limited theoretical underpinning" (quoted in Sen 2000:2; see also de Haan n.d.: 25).<sup>5</sup>

Whether the concepts of social exclusion and inclusion have limited theoretical underpinning is open to question. Nevertheless, Oyen's comment cautions us that we need to reflect more on the various meanings, theoretical and methodological underpinnings, and even politics of the terms social inclusion and exclusion in order to conduct better research and, for those so inclined, to suggest better social policies.

Allow me to make the point that, as de Haan (n.d. 28) notes, social exclusion and inclusion are theoretical concepts and thus ways of looking at society; they are "lens through which people look at reality and not reality itself".<sup>6</sup> How we define these concepts and the paradigms we use come with 'theoretical and ideological baggage' (Silver 1994-6; de Haan 1998; see also O'Reilly 2005). Thus my argument is that there is no single way of understanding the concepts of social exclusion and inclusion; how we understand these and other concepts depends on our theoretical and methodological perspectives as also on our political leanings, all of which have consequences not only for our explanations but what we include and exclude, what we emphasize or background, in our studies

In this paper I shall attempt a quick and preliminary discussion of the major approaches to or theoretical perspectives on social exclusion and social inclusion: the three paradigms of social exclusion (Silver); development and social policy perspectives (Sen, de Haan, Kabeer, Room), a feminist and gender perspective (Jackson), a political science perspective (Young); and a multiculturalism perspective (Eller). I shall emphasize the necessity of problematising the concepts of social inclusion and exclusion and the relations between them and raise the question as to whether inclusion is always good and desirable. Issues pertaining to institutions, agency, and different forms of exclusion and inclusion will be touched upon. This is only a limited review of the literature, those available to me, mainly through the internet. There is a lot of the literature that I have not seen, much less read. This paper is an attempt for me to understand the concepts of social exclusion and

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<sup>4</sup> As Loury (1999: 1) comments, "... normative matters are the primary concern of those invoking this concept...Indeed, using the term can be, in itself, a political move – a bid to define the debate in such a way as to privilege more progressive, "inclusive", and socially democratic polity". See also Young (2000) and Jackson (1999:127) who asks: what are the politics of invoking these terms? Silver (1994-6: 572) concludes her article with the statement, " In sum, therefore, just as the idea of exclusion has many meanings, it can also serve a variety of political purposes."

<sup>5</sup> De Haan (n.d. 25, fn. 7) argues that this 'running around' is true for most concepts and that social exclusion does have theoretical underpinning.

<sup>6</sup> It may be worthwhile providing a fuller citation on this topic because this point is often overlooked. De Haan, while discussing the three major paradigms of social exclusion, writes, "This emphasis on paradigms helps to stress that social exclusion is a theoretical concept, a lens through which people look at reality and not reality itself. It does not connote a particular problem such as the 'new poor', an 'underclass', the long-term unemployed, or the marginalised as understood in a Latin American contexts... social exclusion remains a concept, and the discourse emphasises that it is a way of looking at society" (n.d. 28).

inclusion. In this paper I have not discussed the literature on social exclusion and inclusion in Nepal. That will have to wait for another occasion.

## **II. Origin and Development of the Concepts**

There are many competing and sometimes complementary definitions of the concepts of social exclusion and inclusion. The definitions have changed over time and differ according to the theoretical perspective or paradigms used. The concept of social inclusion is comparatively less well defined and theorised.

### **II. 1. Social Exclusion**

It is generally accepted that the term social exclusion originated in France in the early 1970s first to describe various categories of people (the mentally and physically disabled, the aged, abused children, single parents, marginal, asocial persons, 'misfits' and so on comprising 10 percent of the French population) who were excluded from the employment based social security system. The term was continually redefined to encompass new problems and social groups. It was used in the 1980s to refer to various types of social disadvantage related to social problems arising from economic crises and crises of the welfare state – long term unemployment, ghettoisation, growing instability of social bonds including among family members, in neighbourhoods, trade unions, etc. but also of the lack of integration of immigrants, especially Muslims. Exclusion was seen as the result of the rupture of social and symbolic bonds between individuals and society and the failure of the state, reflecting the French emphasis on the organic and solidaristic nature of society (e.g. Durkheim). Social policy was directed towards 'insertion' or integration of the excluded to ensure social cohesion or social solidarity (Silver 1994-6; de Haan 1998). As we shall see, there was also increasing concern with social rights of citizens.

The term gradually spread over Europe and in 1989 the European Commission passed a resolution to fight 'social exclusion' and foster 'integration'. In a short time this term replaced, or at least threatened to displace as the dominant concept, poverty in development and social policy discourse in Europe.<sup>7</sup> The term then, fostered no doubt by international agencies such as ILO, UNDP, World Bank and DFID, spread to Asia, Latin America and Africa, with very different social, economic and political conditions, where it competes for discursive dominance, with the more established terms such as poverty, relative deprivation, social disadvantage and the like.<sup>8</sup> Such is

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<sup>7</sup> The concept of poverty, mainly British in origin, was also rejected due to its connotation with charity (see Silver 1994-6).

<sup>8</sup> While many authors (Kabeer n.d.; de Haan n.d., Bhalla and Lapeyre (1997) and Sen 2000; Maxwell and de Haan 1998) raise the issue of the relation between these two concepts, the one originating in Europe and the other applied to developing countries, they conclude that social exclusion is an improvement over the older and related concept of poverty, relative deprivation, capabilities, etc. Saith (2001), however, disagrees, arguing, " Since it is difficult to apply the 'social exclusion' concept to developing countries, in the context of the welfare state and formal employment, attempts to modify and apply it have largely resulted in a repetition and relabelling of poverty studies (broader in scope than monetary poverty) that have already been carried out in developing countries." (see also Jackson 1999). They do not explain why social exclusion is being used in developing countries.

the power and conceptual dominance or hegemony of these international agencies that other concepts and voices and perhaps even other ways of explaining these concepts get marginalised or even denigrated.

### *Three social exclusion paradigms*

There are significant differences in the way the concept of social exclusion has been defined across Europe, reflecting intellectual and political traditions and national discourses. Hilary Silver (1994-6) discusses three paradigms,<sup>9</sup> **solidarity, specialization and monopoly**, within which the concept of social exclusion is embedded.<sup>10</sup> Each paradigm has a different notion of social integration, explains social exclusion to a different cause, and is based on different political philosophy. They provide explanations for multiple forms of disadvantage – economic, social, political and cultural – and encompass theories of citizenship, racial-ethnic inequalities, poverty and long-term unemployment. These paradigms are only schematic representations of different traditions and in practice these overlap; and analysts are influenced by aspects of different traditions.

In the **solidarity paradigm**, dominant in France, exclusion is defined as the rupture of social bond between the individual (or group) and society that is cultural and moral, rather than economically interested. This interpretation draws on Rousseau and Durkheim, especially the Durkheimian notion of social solidarity and order. The dualistic categories of ordering the world define the poor, unemployed and ethnic minorities as outsiders. The inverse of exclusion is integration, achieved by insertion, which implies in a Durkheimian sense, assimilation into the dominant culture. National solidarity implies political rights and duties.

In the **specialisation paradigm**, exclusion reflects discrimination, that is the drawing of group distinctions that denies individuals full access to or participation in exchange or interaction. This paradigm draws on Anglo-American liberalism tradition, especially those of Locke and the utilitarians, according to which individuals are or should be able to move across boundaries of social differentiation and division of labour. Liberal models of citizenships emphasize the contractual exchange of rights and obligations. Exclusion is often a consequence of unenforced rights and market failure. The focus here is on exclusion of individuals and not groups (methodological individualism).

The **monopoly paradigm**, drawing on the works of Weber, and to some extent Marx and Marshall, views social order as coercive, imposed through hierarchical power relations. It defines exclusion as a consequence of the formation of group monopolies. Powerful groups restrict the access of outsiders to valued resources through social closure. Unlike in the specialisation paradigm, group distinctions and inequality overlap in the monopoly paradigm. Inequality is mitigated by social democratic citizenship, which entails full participation in the community. This paradigm is influential especially in Britain and many North European countries.

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<sup>9</sup> He follows Kuhn (1970: 175) in his usage of the concept of paradigm, "a constellation of beliefs, values, techniques, and so on shared by the members of a given community... [which] specify not only what sorts of entities the universe does contain but also, by implication, those that it does not."

<sup>10</sup> See also de Haan's [1998: 12-13] summary of the three paradigms of social exclusion.

**Table 1 Three paradigms of social exclusion**

	<b>Solidarity</b>	<b>Specialization</b>	<b>Monopoly</b>
Conceptions of integration	Group solidarity/ cultural boundaries	Specialization/ separate spheres/ interdependence	Monopoly/ social closure
Source of integration	Moral integration	Exchange	Citizenship rights
Ideology	Republicanism	Liberalism	Social democracy
Discourse	Exclusion	Discrimination, underclass	New poverty, inequality, underclass
Seminal thinkers	Rousseau, Durkheim	Locke, Madison, utilitarians	Marx, Weber, Marshall

Source: Silver 1994 6:540

### ***Definitions of social exclusion***

Despite their differences, the definitions of social exclusion have characteristics in common, which separate it from other concepts (e.g. poverty). As summarised by de Haan (1998: 12-13), especially from development and social policy perspectives, the characteristics of social exclusion are:

- Social exclusion is defined as *the opposite to social integration*, which reflects the perceived importance of being part of society, being integrated.
- It is a *multi-dimensional* concept. It refers to exclusion (deprivation) in the economic, social and political sphere. It goes beyond the analysis of resource allocation mechanisms, and includes *power relations, agency, culture and social identity*.
- Social exclusion can refer to a state or situation, but it often refers to *processes*, to the mechanisms by which people are excluded. The focus is on the *institutions* that enable and constrain human interaction.

This definition is similar to the one used in the International Institute for Labour Studies (IILS)/UNDP project (Gore and Figueiredo 1997), except that it adds further features such as objective and subjective aspect of social exclusion, individual disadvantage and exclusion as an attribute of (some) societies. Social exclusion is manifested "in recurrent patterns of social relationships in which individuals and groups are denied access to the goods, services, activities, and resources which are generally associated with citizenship" (Gore and Figueiredo 1997:8), cited in Jackson 1999: 127-28). This definition thus includes *social relationships* and *citizenship* as part of the definition of social exclusion.

Some definitions emphasize exclusion from full participation in community or society as an essential element of social exclusion, while others emphasize other elements such as citizenship and social rights. One definition, for example, defines social exclusion as "the process through which individuals or groups are wholly or partially

excluded from **full participation in the society in** which they live" (European Foundation 1995: 4; cited in de Haan and Maxwell 1998: 2).

Another definition, that of a European Commission report, uses T.H. Marshall's notion of social citizenship, emphasising rights: "Here we define social exclusion first and foremost in relation to the social rights of citizens..." (Room et al. 1992:14, cited in Hillary 1994-6:566). This view is elaborated by Bhalla and Lapeyre (1997:415) who comment that

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 society – employment, housing, health care, education and so on. Social exclusion occurs when citizens suffer from disadvantage and are unable to secure these social rights.

It is further argued in another EU document that "complete social exclusion is the final culmination of a series of specific exclusions from basic rights" (de Haan n.d.: 26, fn. 8). Citizens have rights to the products and values of society and to be integrated (or participate fully in the society) (de Haan n.d.: 38).

In a policy paper on social exclusion and conflict, Frances Stewart (2006) quoting Beall & Piron (2004), states that social exclusion consists of "exclusion from social, political and economic institutions resulting from a complex and dynamic set of processes and relationships that prevent individuals or groups from accessing resources, participating in society and asserting their rights" (Beall & Piron 2004, quoted in Stewart 2006:4).

Stewart then lists several key aspects of social exclusion including the fact that it is multidimensional, that exclusion is a process and that agency is involved ("the behaviour of particular agents and institutions leads to the exclusion of certain groups"); that it is a feature of groups rather than individuals (groups are distinguished by their culture, religion, colour, gender, nationality, migration status, caste, and so on); that it is relational in that its definition depends on what is normal in that particular society. Stewart also makes the point, not always made so directly by many authors that "lack of power, or unequal power relations, is at the root of every type of exclusion" (Stewart 2006:4).<sup>11</sup>

For some the more important elements are the multi-dimensional nature of disadvantage, separation and social rupture (or catastrophic discontinuity in relationships with the rest of society as among the 'underclass'). Room (1999: 171), for example, writes that

[T]o use the notion of social exclusion carries the implication that we are speaking of people who are suffering such a degree of multi-dimensional disadvantage, of such duration, and reinforced by such material and cultural degradation of the neighbourhoods in which they live, and their relational links with the wider society are ruptured to a degree which is to some considerable degree irreversible.

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<sup>11</sup> See Jackson's (1999) critique on the issue of power – dispersed power.

Naila Kabeer's definition (n.d.: 9-11) combines emphasis on participation in the life of society with institutional analysis (rules of the game), which defines access to resources and membership of groups and 'recognition' or identity of groups:

Disadvantage results in social exclusion when the various institutional mechanisms through which resources are allocated and value assigned operate in such a way as to systematically deny particular groups of people the resources and recognition which would allow them to participate fully in the life of that society. The analysis of exclusion can therefore be seen as a particular aspect of institutional analysis, one centrally concerned with the dual process of entitlement and disempowerment... Institutions distribute resources, both symbolic and material, so that institutional rules are, among other things, rules about membership and access... Principles of membership, and the forms of access they imply, are also simultaneously principles of exclusion, since they distinguish between those who can enjoy the benefits of belonging, and those who cannot.<sup>12</sup>

### *Kinds and domains of exclusion*

Some authors discuss not just exclusion in general but different types of exclusion. Sen (2000) differentiates between exclusion in terms of *constitutive relevance* (or intrinsic importance) and *instrumental importance* or consequence as two ways in which social exclusion can lead to capability deprivation.<sup>13</sup> For example, being excluded in the sense of not being able to take part in the life of a community can directly impoverish a person's life; it is a loss on its own, in addition to whatever further deprivation it may directly generate (2000: 13). An example of instrumental importance is not having access to using the credit market, which by itself may not be of inherent importance but can, through causal linkages, lead to other deprivations such as income poverty.

Sen (2000: 14-15) also distinguishes between *active and passive exclusion*. Active exclusion is the result of deliberate policy or laws, as for example, when immigrants or refugees are not given political status, resulting many kinds of deprivations and social exclusions. Passive exclusion occurs through social process in which there is no deliberate attempt to exclude, as in the case of poverty that is generated by sluggish economy and not a consequence of any deliberate policy or law.

Individuals and groups can be excluded from many domains or spheres of society – economy, politics, culture and so on, either separately or cumulatively. Exclusions may converge and reinforce each other, leading to extreme disadvantage and exclusion ('hard-core exclusion' (Kabeer n.d.)) as in the case of Dalits, who are disadvantaged economically, politically and culturally. Kabeer (n.d.: 4), drawing on the work of Fraser (1997) makes a distinction between primarily economic and primarily cultural forms of injustice or disadvantage ("which are manifested in the ways in which the dominant social groups invisibilise, seek to impose dominant

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<sup>12</sup> See also Zeitlyn (2004) "Social exclusion occurs when the institutions that allocate resources and assign value operate in ways that systematically deny some groups the resources and recognition that would allow them to participate fully in social life" (quoted in Stewart 2006: 4).

<sup>13</sup> Sen (2000: 4) defines capability deprivation as "poverty seen as the lack of capability to live a minimally decent life". Capability deprivation – to lead a minimally decent life leads to social exclusion (from participating in social life).

values, or routinely devalue and disparage certain categories of people").<sup>14</sup> There is also a hybrid form of injustice which gives rise to 'bivalent collectivities'; that is groups which face both economic and cultural disadvantages, such as the Dalits, ethnic groups, Muslims, and so on.

The main form of exclusion some multiculturalists, particularly in the United States, are concerned with is exclusions from cultural domains such as knowledge and scholarships, arts and politics (Eller). They argue that the Whites define what constitutes knowledge, value and culture in America and thus control knowledge or truth (the stuffs that get written and taught in schools and colleges). America is constructed or portrayed as being the history and culture of the dominant group, European in origin. The rest are "pushed to the periphery, occupying the restricted category of 'other'" (Reagan 1993:71). The contributions of other groups to the history and culture of America are ignored or marginalised. This form of exclusion has received some attention in Nepal, especially by ethnic groups.<sup>15</sup>

Iris Young (2000), a political scientist, argues that the concepts of social exclusion and inclusion lose meaning if they are used to label all problems of social conflict and injustice, as they are done in Europe. She writes,

In Europe, a myriad of problems seems to come under the general umbrella of 'social exclusion', and this language of exclusion seems to be an euphemism for the presence of misfits, particularly immigrants experienced as racially or culturally different, and unemployed youth...[W]hen the problems are racism, cultural intolerance, economic exploitation, they should be so named (Young 2000:13).<sup>16</sup>

These forms of injustice and inequalities (racism, exploitation, etc.) help to account for political exclusion. For Young (2000: 12-14), the main type of exclusion is political exclusion, that is exclusion from basic political rights, from opportunities to participate in discussions and decision-making, and the hegemonic terms of debate with which they have to engage. Some aspects of political exclusion are widely discussed in Nepal.

Young (2000: 53-55) differentiates between external and internal political exclusion. External exclusions are the "many ways that individuals and groups that ought to be included are purposely or inadvertently left out of fora for discussion and decision-making" (ibid: 53-54). Examples of external political exclusion are back-door brokering by the powerful people, in accessibility of the formally public discussion and decision-making processes, and political domination exercised by the

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<sup>14</sup> Kabeer (n.d.: 8- 9) argues that the economically disadvantaged mobilise largely around their interest, demanding redistribution of resources whereas the culturally disadvantaged mobilise around the question of identity, demanding recognition; bivalent collectivities on the other hand demand both redistribution and recognition, right to have different identities.

Peace (2001: 31) similarly discusses the tension between the "politics of identity/politics of recognition" on the basis of which claims are being made by groups whose identity is based on ethnicity, age, gender, sexuality, etc. and the politics of 'redistribution' from the 'haves' to the 'have nots', based on state and church welfare regimes.

<sup>15</sup> See also Onta..... on 'bir' national history.

<sup>16</sup> According to Young (2000), the aim of promotion of inclusion is social cohesion, i.e. to fit the excluded into the dominant norms and institutions along with participation in politics, economic development and welfare benefits.

economically or socially powerful actors. These examples describe how people are kept outside the process of discussion and decision-making.

Internal exclusion concerns ways that "people lack effective opportunity to influence the thinking of others even when they have access to the fora and procedures of decision-making" (Young 2000: 55). This happens when people find that their views in public hearings and discussions are ignored, dismissed or patronised by the powerful. Their claims are not taken seriously and they are not treated equally. Thus though they have 'access' to the forums for discussions and decision-making, they have little 'voice' or ability to influence discourse or decisions.

## **II.2. Social Inclusion**

Let me now discuss the concept of social inclusion, which to my mind has not been as well discussed or theorised as the concept of social exclusion, probably because the two terms are considered obverse of each other, like two sides of a coin.

According to one definition, "Social exclusion is defined as the opposite of social integration, mirroring the perceived importance of being part of society, of being 'included' "(European Foundation (1995:4), cited in de Haan n.d.: 26). This view is also implied in the DFID/World Bank definition of social inclusion.<sup>17</sup> This dualistic or binary logic has been criticized by several authors on various grounds (O'Reilly 2006; Jackson 1999; Hanney 2002). O'Reilly (2006: 84), for example, argues,

The language of inclusion and exclusion implies a binary logic, that one is either included or excluded... [however] people are included or excluded in relation to some variable. The question of inclusion, therefore, is best conceptualised 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.

Hanney (2002) goes further and argues, citing Askonas and Stewart (2000), that social exclusion is not the obverse of exclusion, rather "social inclusion is a distinct project with its own logic" (Haney 2002: 266). Hanney, unfortunately, does not discuss what this logic is and I do not have access to the book edited by Askonas and Stewart, which discuss different theories of inclusion.

Jackson (1999) argues that there can be simultaneous exclusion and inclusion, that is individuals and groups can be excluded in one domain and included in another; for example, "social relations of kinship and marriage include whilst they exclude and affirm, as they deny membership rights" (Jackson 1999:129). One can thus talk about inclusion in the domain of language but exclusion in political and economic domains, e.g. in the case of Parbate Dalits; or exclusion from the dominant language and culture but inclusion in political and economic domains, as in the case of the Newars.

The social exclusion and inclusion literature often does not problematise the conditions or terms of inclusion or participation in social life, assuming that all forms

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<sup>17</sup> The DFID/World Bank report 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" (DFID/WorldBank 2005: 5).

of inclusion is good (Kabeer n.d., Jackson 1999; Sen 2000). However, as is well known, one of the early themes in the early gender and development literature was not so much that women had been excluded from development, but that they had been incorporated into it in adverse terms (Kabeer n.d.: 11). The literature argued that women are not totally absent from paid employment "but they are 'present differently and unequally'... in supervised rather than supervisory tasks, unskilled rather than skilled labour, in 'feminised', often sexualised service work or 'caring' professions (such as nurse) and they also tend to earn less than men (Kabeer n.d. 21, citing Frazer 1989). Similarly, it has been argued that poverty in Latin America is to be seen as resulting not from lack of integration into the world capitalist system but rather from the terms of incorporation of individuals and communities within it (Jackson 1999:128). Thus, as Jackson (1999) argues, inclusion may come at a price.

Similarly, Young (2000:11) points out that there may be grounds for the critics of (political) inclusion to argue that inclusion may presuppose "an already given set of procedures, institutions, and the terms of the public discourse into which those excluded or marginalised are incorporated without change". The critics' fear is that inclusion can be under adverse terms, in that the excluded are included or incorporated on the condition that they accept or at least conform to the hegemonic norms and discourses of the dominant groups. The aim of promoting inclusion in Europe is social cohesion, that is, to fit the excluded groups ('misfits') into the dominant norms and institutions.

Some groups may choose to exclude themselves (self-exclusion) rather than be included in a society or polity whose dominant norms and values they do not accept; they prefer outsider status because it allows them to define their own values and priorities (Kabeer n.d.; Jackson 1999). Those who exclude themselves may be in a better position to challenge the hegemonic construction of the centre into which they are supposed to be integrated. I think it was the Rautes who stated at a conference in Kathmandu that they wanted to continue living their traditional lifestyle in the jungle, thereby refusing to be incorporated into the mainstream Nepali society and polity and also the world capitalist system and globalisation. The idea of autonomy or federation proposed by some ethnic activists can partly be explained as an attempt to define their own values, norms and priorities.

Thus we need to question whether integration or inclusion is always desirable and exclusion or marginalisation is always bad. Jackson (1999), following Anna Tsing (1993) argues that marginalisation is a source of both constraint and creativity and resistance. Marginality may be the grounds to claim resource, as in the case of women irrigators in southern Nepal (Zwarteveen and Neupane 1996), who utilised their identity as exclusion and vulnerability to argue successfully for priority in water supply, to justify 'stealing' of water, to win exemptions from contributing to maintenance of the irrigation system, and so on (Jackson 1999:131-2). Similarly Gillian Hart (1997:113) argues that in the case of women wage-workers in Malaysia, who are excluded from patronage, political parties, and 'official' religious discourse, "exclusion is ... a key element in their capacity to organise collectively" (cited in Jackson 1999:131). Hart suggests that poor women's resistance is based on both their inclusion in labour markets and their exclusion from local politics.

We also need to think about how "inclusions can produce exclusions" (Jackson 1999:135). For example, the socially excluded groups may achieve inclusion on the basis of excluding groups even weaker than themselves – we see this historically when many ethnic groups discriminated against the Dalits, as they continue to do so, and upper caste women discriminate against low caste women. It can also be argued that the hill ethnic groups and Dalits may achieve inclusion into the state structures by excluding the Madhesis, especially those who are neither Dalits nor *advasi/janajatis*.

In sum then, we need to rethink and problematise the relationships between social exclusion and inclusion and move away from a simple binary opposition. To say that the janajatis, Dalits, women and Madhesis are excluded and thus have to be included, without adding further qualifications, may be politically correct and useful for research and project grants, but it does not really help us understand the complexities of the relationships between exclusion and inclusion.

### **III. Processes, institutions, agency, hegemony, compliance and resistance**

Let me now discuss a few related issues concerning processes, institutions, agency, hegemony, compliance and resistance.

Proponents of the social exclusion concept claim that this concept emphasizes processes, institutions and agency. The processes discussed, however, are not so much historical processes of a nation (state), the consequences of developmental projects and globalisation but more often than not, contemporary processes, e.g., the mechanisms or practices used by a dominant group to exclude some groups from access to the market, decision-making and so on. Kabeer (n.d.: 20-25), for example, discusses the practice of exclusion, by a) mobilisation of institutional bias by the dominant group; b) mechanism of social closure, i.e., restricting access to resources and opportunities to a limited circle of eligibles, based on group identity; c) the mechanism of 'unruly practice', that is, not implementing the official law and instead observing unofficial norms or rules, which determine access to resources and opportunities.

Institution is defined by North (1990:3) as formal or informal "rules of the game in a society or... the humanly devised constraints that help shape human action." Institutions are "the framework within which human interaction take place" (ibid: 4). Institutions include 'codes of conduct, norms of behaviour and conventions'. The relations between a particular rule or institution and behaviour are not always clear-cut, especially in situations of legal pluralism (the co-existence and interaction of different legal orders {state law, international law, traditional law, customary law, local law, etc.} which are mutually constitutive). More often than not, the excluded groups are conceptualised as the passive recipients of the effects of processes and institutions, thus underestimating their agency (Jackson 1999:136). Taking agency seriously implies that we have to take into consideration how the actors relate to

institutions – or rather plurality of laws – which could be in terms of dominance and hegemony on the one hand and compliance and resistance<sup>18</sup> on the other.

The power as well as attraction and danger of law broadly defined lie in its ability to create and impose social reality, meanings and values, and eventually to make them appear natural and self-evident and thus uncontested – i.e., as doxa in Bourdieu's (1997) term or hegemony in some interpretations of Gramsci (Lazarus-Black and Hirsh 1994). Social exclusion becomes easier when the excluded, for whatever reason, accept or pretend to accept partially or fully the norms and constructions of reality or meaning imposed by the dominant group. However, as Merry (1994:54) argues, we should think of hegemony not in the singular but in the plural: "Instead of an overarching hegemony, there are hegemonies: parts of law that are fundamental and unquestioned, parts which are becoming challenged, parts which authorizes the dominant culture, parts which offer liberation to the subordinate."

There are further limitations to the hegemonic and doxic aspects of law because just as the exercise of power is always coupled with resistance, as Foucault would argue, so too every dominant legal order co-exist, interact and compete with other legal orders or laws which offer other constructions of reality and meanings. Thus, from a legal pluralism perspective, any institution can never be totally hegemonic or doxic because it is open to contestation by other legal orders, with other constructions of the 'same' institution, even while some aspects of the construction of social reality may be accepted (see Merry 1994). What this points to is the problematic and complex relationships between institutions and behaviour. It should not be assumed to easily that the excluded groups unproblematically comply with the institutions created by the dominant groups.

If we are to take seriously the view that different social groups (and within each group, further sub-divisions) have their own rules and laws and create their own meanings, then it follows that their views or meanings of a particular institution could differ significantly, even if they have similar views of some specific aspects. There is thus a need to study and understand not only the norms, rules, institutions as defined by the dominant group but also by the various disadvantaged or excluded groups, who draw upon their own traditional laws but also increasingly international discourse and laws, such as international human rights of indigeneous groups and women.

We should look at the processes and mechanisms that the dominant groups and the state use to assure compliance with the institutions/rules/norms/laws that they create. If nothing else, for the institutions to be complied with, they have to be 'known', even if it is through 'practice'. To take the example of caste and ethnic groups, historically the spread of the norms of the 'caste system' and Hinduism as laid down in the Muluki Ain was made possible by the combination of state appointed officials, village headmen who also doubled representative of their communities and of the state (as revenue collectors, enforcer of state laws, mobilisers of corvee labour, etc.), and the settlements of Parbates among the ethnic groups. The village heads may also be

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<sup>18</sup> Appadurai (2004: 65-66) discusses the ambivalent attitude of the poor and other socially excluded groups (Dalits, ethnic groups, etc.) to the rules and practices of the dominant groups. "Even when they are not obviously hostile to these norms, they show forms of irony, distance and cynicism about these norms which in terms of ambivalence... The other side is compliance... fairly deep moral attachment to norms and beliefs that directly support their own degradation."

involved in resisting the incursion of Hindu values. Currently Hindu norms and values are reproduced and spread through education and even the mass media, both of which ignore or marginalise groups other than Parbate Brahmin and Chhetris by what is or is not taught in schools and published in the press.

We should also look at the processes of economic, political, cultural and legal globalisation, the spread of international human rights discourses, including rights of indigeneous peoples and women, and of course the development discourses and practices in Nepal. What consequences have these processes had on reducing or even exacerbating different forms of exclusion, or helped or hindered different kinds of inclusion, on favourable or adverse terms, and how have they differed for different groups? It could be argued, for example, that the development paradigms and nation building policies that urged modernisation and homogenisation of cultures helped reproduce, if not worsen, some forms of social exclusion by focusing only on the poor and ignoring disadvantages and exclusions based on identity (see Escobar 1995; Piggs 1992; Pradhan 2004). Furthermore, many development practices make it possible for the local elites to capture the benefits of the projects at the cost of the really disadvantaged.

We also need to look at everyday forms of exclusion and inclusion, and different forms of exclusion and inclusion in our villages; processes, mechanisms and institutions of exclusions may differ according to locality. For example, the Tharus are generally discriminated against and face exclusion in general but in a village in Dang where they are numerically and politically dominant, they control an irrigation canal and discriminate against the Pahadis in the distribution of water for irrigation (Adhiraki and Pradhan 2000).

#### **IV. Summary and Conclusion**

Let me now summarize in point form the main issues in the above discussion on social inclusion and exclusion.

1. There is an explicit or implicit preoccupation with social cohesion and integration and fear of social disintegration due to social exclusion or lack of participation in the life of the community.
2. There is also an explicit or implicit concern with social justice and rights; with the social rights of citizens and the role of the state; there is very little on the role of society, community, etc. In a way, social exclusion/inclusion could be viewed in terms of rights based approach to development.
3. The literature on development and social policy is preoccupied with explaining the relations between the concepts of social exclusion and poverty, relative deprivation and disadvantage; and what value, if any, is added by the concept of social exclusion especially in the context of 'developing' societies.
4. There seems to be a consensus (with some notable exceptions) that the concepts, though European in origin, can be fruitfully applied worldwide, though some modifications may be required to attend to the specifics of particular forms of exclusion and inclusion.
5. The literature emphasizes multidimensional aspects (economic, social, cultural, political) of social exclusion and inclusion and mention that there

- often are multiple exclusions or deprivations that reinforce each other but many authors focus on one or the other aspect or dimension, usually poverty and the economic domain but sometimes political or cultural domains.
6. Social exclusion is usually considered a group not individual phenomenon – based on constructed group categories and identities; discrimination based on social identity of race, religion, culture, nationality, ethnicity, caste, etc.;
  7. Social exclusion and inclusion are based on social relations; therefore the need to study relations between the excluding and the excluded groups.
  8. There is an emphasis on processes, mechanisms and institutions that cause social exclusion and on agency but usually of the excluding group.
  9. There is very little on the agency of the excluded groups – their forms of resistance, negotiation, compliance, etc. and on the different forms of dominance and hegemony with and against which they struggle.
  10. Most of the authors do not problematise the relations between social exclusion and inclusion, accepting the binary or dualistic formulation of the two terms, assumed to be the obverse of each other.
  11. They also assume that social exclusion is always 'bad' and inclusion 'good', ignoring the conditions or terms of inclusion and the positive aspects of marginalisation and outsider status.
  12. There is not much literature on the historical processes and the effects of globalisation (global economy, global cultures, international human rights laws, international agencies and non-governmental organisations, etc.) on social inclusion and exclusion.
  13. There is a dearth of discussion on whether and how development processes themselves may exacerbate social disadvantages and exclusion.

Nepal is characterised by massive poverty, immense cultural, linguistic, religious diversity, with no single ethnic or caste group numerically in the majority, centuries of political, economic, religious and cultural dominance by one small group, subject to a flood of development aid, and with only nascent democracy. It is thus very different economically, politically, socially, culturally and legally than Europe where the concepts of social exclusion and inclusion originated in response to specifically European problems. Although there may never be consensus on the definitions and theoretical and methodological perspectives and paradigms we should use, nevertheless it will be agreed that there is a need to modify and broaden the concepts to make them more useful for understanding and explaining social exclusion and inclusion in Nepal. How we do so depends on our disciplinary backgrounds, our theoretical and methodological preferences, our politics and our social identity.

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