

RJPSSS

**RESEARCH JOURNAL OF PHILOSOPHY
& SOCIAL SCIENCES**

A Peer Reviewed International Journal

STRATEGIC INCLUSION OF AN EXCLUDED TRIBAL COMMUNITY: A CASE STUDY

*Parveen A Shaikh**

*Research Scholar, Dept. of Social Work,
Karnataka State Women's University, Bijapur,
E-mail:paru218@gmail.com*

*Dr. S.A. Kazi***

*Professor & Chairman, Dept. of Social Work,
Karnataka State Women' University Bijapur,
E-mail:sakazi@gmail.com*

Abstract:

The concept of social exclusion has not originated in the recent past. It is a practiced theory in our country and even worldwide. The concept has affected many communities and many lives indeed. The author would like to find out the impacts of social exclusion in the first part and the strategies followed in overcoming the social exclusion barriers with a case study of a tribal community known as 'Siddi' through the organization-'Siddi Jana Vikas Sangha' which has initiated a process of transformation of their own community. The case study is about the organization crafted around community leadership, participation and ownership for holistic integrated community development and preservation of uniqueness and compositeness of the identity.

Key words: Social exclusion, Siddi, tribal, community leadership, participation

Introduction:

The issue of socio-economic exclusion of marginalized and vulnerable groups. The socio-economic and political exclusion of these deprived groups has been a subject matter of intense debate among the academics, social scientists and at the policy level too. A flourishing body of literature is available to describe about social exclusion and inclusion. But the reality is much harsh than what we here in these debates. Despite several studies done and the policy level discussions, transformation was not seen their plight. The focus of the present study is on the self reliance o the community after a deep realization that the external hands can not improve them.

In the following paper a case study of a tribal community is been highlighted where the educated youths started mobilizing their community and work towards the inclusion. Mr. Mohan Siddi one of the founder of the organization "Siddi Janavikasa Sangha" framed certain strategies with his

fellows which aimed at the empowerment of the Siddis without being dependent on either the Government initiatives or any other organizations.

Concept of social exclusion:

According to Prakash Louis Exclusion is the denial of control over natural resources; the denial of opportunities for healthcare, education, housing; the denial of the right to participation in social, economic, political and cultural life; the denial of human rights and human dignity. Because it is an institutionalized and socially/religiously sanctioned attempt to exclude, segregate or cast out a segment of the population, it is that much more difficult to change. Social exclusion and discrimination refer to the process and outcome of keeping social groups outside power centers and resources. Identity-formation, on the one hand, refers to the process and the effect of articulating this social alienation and on the other hand to the reformulation of one's social characteristics and consequently self-determination. The deprivation of socially excluded communities, the issues of ethnicity, discrimination, social exclusion, human rights and situation and the growing isolation from public life. Moreover, being excluded from social associations can lead to other deprivations as well, thereby further limiting our living opportunities poverty alleviation have gained academic discussion and discourse. The understanding of these issues and their linkages to the social, human, institutional and economic dimensions involved in the process of economic development, are important for effective policy paradigms. Socio-economic exclusion as a concept underpins a multidimensional approach to poverty by defining it as relative deprivation. If people are lacking in or are deprived of resources to achieve access to these conditions of life and so fulfilling membership of society they may be supposed to be in poverty. While unemployment does not in itself symbolize exclusion, it bears a relationship to exclusion in the sense that there is a route of exclusion associated with the increasing length of the unemployment period, the limited personal capabilities of the unemployed, which hamper integration, the loss of family support, which can help a person to face the unemployment situation and the growing isolation from public life. Moreover, being excluded from social associations can lead to other deprivations as well, thereby further limiting our living opportunities.

The deep rooted caste system only debars the members to access the right to be the full member of the society; but it also nullifies even the human rights of some of the castes. As far as India is concerned there are a number of groups of people who are being deprived to get their full membership in the society. We can take the example of dalits, tribal, minorities, women and children etc. These groups are discriminated in the name of caste, race, ethnicity, religion, gender, language etc. This continued for ages in the society and continued in the post independent Indian society as well. Under the leadership of Dr. B.R. Ambedkar certain measures were taken while adopting the constitution of independent India to mitigate the menace of caste system and thus social exclusion. But still it continued, social groups like tribal, minorities and women are still excluded from the ambit of mainstream society on multiple groups says Abdul Kalam Azad.

Prakash Louis states that Social exclusion is a discriminatory practice. In the course of human development, exclusion has taken the form of segregating a group of people from the social, political, economic, cultural, educational and religious domains of societal life. But we need to stress that social exclusion does not limit itself to segregation and deprivation. Social seclusion and isolation provide a base for a sense of superiority and inferiority among members of the same society or culture. It also culminates in a system of domination and subjugation. All these processes ultimately lead to oppression and exploitation. He also conceptualizes exclusion in a framework:

- Exclusion is the denial of ownership, access and control over resources.
- Exclusion is the denial of rights over one's labor and rights over one's reproductive resources.
- Exclusion is the denial of opportunities for education, healthcare, housing, public amenities, recreational facilities and spaces, basic needs, etc.
- Exclusion is the denial of social interaction and denial of access to social spaces.
- Exclusion is the denial of the right to representation and participation in the social, economic, political and cultural aspects of society and polity.
- Exclusion is the deprivation of the right to mobility, right to practice one's religion and the right to organize and mobilize.
- Exclusion is the denial of human dignity.
- Exclusion is the denial of constitutional and human rights.

Naila Kabeer defines exclusion as “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, once centrally concerned with the dual processes of entitlement and disentanglement.

Minorities such as ethnic and immigration groups have often been subject to exclusion through labor market discrimination, residential and employment segregation policies, business ownership regulations, restrictions on political participation, access to public services and more. (Mark Gradstein, Maurice Schiff 2005).

Exclusion is a multidimensional process covering social, economic, cultural and political domains. Exclusion is linked to the recognition of social identities, resource allocations and power relations. Marshall Wolfe talks about various kinds of social exclusion – exclusion from livelihood, exclusion from social services, welfare and security networks, exclusion from political choice, exclusion from popular organization and solidarity, and exclusion from understanding of what is happening (Wolf, 1995: 81-101).

Summary of the organization

Siddi Jana Vikas Sanga (SJVS) is a new organization, still evolving, led by young leaders of the Siddi community representing all three religions, with an exclusive mandate of multi-sectoral development of Siddi tribal community of Karnataka and particularly of North Kannada district, where the more than 90% of the Siddi community is concentrated. Community participation and

ownership are the keyword as far as its vision, mandate and activities are concerned. SJVS has programs on drop out children; English speaking training; facilitation of admissions in vocational and professional courses; access to forest agriculture land under the Forest Rights Act of 2006. SJVS initial activities has led it to plan for its long term future activities such as formation of three tier citizens' committees at fifty two habitations/villages, gram Panchayats and district levels; facilitating access to special and general poverty alleviation and welfare schemes especially nutrition, health, employment and social security schemes; access to public services and advocacy on land rights and other issues.

The experiences of exclusion of its one of the founders, Mohan Siddi, in his childhood have led to have an "All Siddi Community Based Organization".

He recalls that, in around 1996, when he was only 9-10 years old, his father was arrested and put in jail for more than a month for cultivating a small piece of land, purchased by him from a local Brahmin. There was some dispute amongst the local Brahmins, over that land. *"Some non-Siddi, perhaps their community men, have plundered their crops but they named him and plotted a false case on his father for stealing cashew and crops from their land."* He feels that *"this incident has been sharply inscribed in his mind, though he didn't have any understanding of identity and exploitation, but certainly this incident has shaped his strong conviction that unless Siddis have their own collective, they will be deceived and cheated by others."*

Since his childhood he has been witnessing poverty and lack of basic services to his community folks. Very few Siddis like him, have somehow managed to complete their education with the help of Church organizations and institutions but *"most of his community folks are deprived of basic rights such as education and livelihood, which they should have accessed as a citizen of this country."*

"Hardly 10-15% Siddis have land holdings and do agriculture on their own land but rest all are landless laborers in agriculture, construction and brick kilns." Siddis also collect and sell minor forest produce in the local market on a very small scale. Muslim Siddis are largely engaged in construction and brick kiln work. Migration in non-agriculture season is very high. They migrate both within and outside Karnataka, to places like Bangalore, Hubli, Mangalore, and to Maharashtra and Goa. Both men and women go to do casual labor work, but *"unlike other women, when a Muslim family migrates for work, they accompany their men but do not go for work at labor sites."*

Mohan underlines that *"no one has ever worked for the overall development of Siddi Community to bring them in the mainstream. Even today every Siddi family faces acute problems in accessing health and other government services."*

Community Mobilization and Collectivization-

SJVS's main strategy involves community mobilization and its collectivization. Community meetings are regular feature of all of its activities. The idea is to mobilize Siddi community around their day to day problems and to empower and equip them with collective bargaining methods and tools, so that community can assert their identity thorough this platform. SJVS has tried common community symbols for cohesion within all section of the community. SJVS has tried to bring all three sections together on a platform using the popular Siddi festival 'Siddi

Nyas'. It has been so far seen as associated with Hinduism and is being used by Hindu Right wing organizations to Sanskritize and divide Hindu Siddis from rest on ground of religion but this time i.e. 2011, SJVS brought all other communities on one platform during this festival. *"There was some resistance from Muslim community as the sacrifice meat was not halal; they took part in the festival but not in the feast."*

Primary Education:

SJVS has started its activities in the beginning of 2011, with two small surveys on Drop out Siddi children covering 42 Siddi concentrated villages and forest settlements with two prong motive firstly, to identify the drop out children, reasons for drop out and gaps in access to primary education vis a vis Siddi community and secondly to mobilize Siddis from all three religions section. The study found financial incapacity, lack of interest and distance of school as the three main reasons for school drop-out. It had identified around 80 dropout children of 15-18 and helped them to get admission in government as well as in private schools to continue and complete their education. Out of these children more than 50% were Muslims.

Spoken English Program-

It was a two month residential program for Siddi students, who failed in English subject in their exams also including few +2 passed out students. SJVS had identified forty five Siddi students for the program, out of which 3 were Muslims and majority are Hindus and Christians. It was done with the support of Holy Cross Church, Minahalli.

Vocational and Professional Course Admission Facilitation Program-

In its first year, fifty eight +2 pass out youth were identified including around 70% girls under this program for securing admission in vocational and professional courses such as ITI, Nursing, Diplomas and other courses. Out of these youth, 3 were non Siddis from Gaili/Gunti (OBC) community and around 10% Muslims. SJVS has conducted career counseling for them and provided with requisite information about available courses, availability of scholarship, bank loans and NGOs Sponsorship. It had facilitated the application process for admission, scholarship, NGO sponsorship and bank loans. Around 70% of them have secured admission in Government institutions and rest in private institution.

Land Rights, Harassment and Atrocity by Forest Department and Advocacy [In collaboration with Citizen's Committee for Social Justice and Alternative Law Forum (ALF)]-

Activities under this program are three fold: (1) Application for claims under the Forest Rights Act of 2006; (2) Court cases against encroachment and fraudulent dispossession of Siddis from their land by non-Siddis and (3) Advocacy on issues of harassment and atrocity by forest department. So far, around fifty people have been facilitated to claim rights over forest lands over which they have been doing agriculture for long time. With the legal support of ALF, it had helped eligible Siddis in procuring forms, filling and filing claim application, measurement of land and their subsequent follow ups. All of them have got their respective claims of forest land. Further, 5 cases relating land disputes have been pending in the court. Two cases are also filed under SC/ST Prevention of Atrocity Act. As a part of advocacy on the issue of harassment by forest department, it had documented incidents of harassment by forest officials during collection

of minor-forest produce and cultivation on forest land and submitted a petition to the Block Forest Officer.

Story of Benet Siddi-

Benet Siddi, a community leader from of Kutchgoan, Yallapur block SJVS was falsely implicated in a case by the Manager of Syndicate Bank, Ankola Branch. The bank forged a loan in his name without his consent and knowledge. He approached SJVS for help. In the meanwhile, he was arrested and jailed for a week. SJVS with the assistance from Citizen's Committee for Social Justice filed a complaint against Bank Manager to the Syndicate Bank Head Office and State Human Rights Commission. Later he was released by Alternative Law Forum, which gave legal services to secure anticipatory bail from the High Court and subsequently bail from District court. The case is still pending in the District Court.

Concluding remark and future-

Being a new-born, SJVS has created its name and niche within Siddi community and has started crawling on the turf of community development. Its initial activities have been a need based start and pretty much a successful outreach and confidence building strategy. Its effort to bring all sections of the Siddi identity has been started taking shape and has been received very positively by the community. So far, SJVS's role within its own community can be termed as a '*body warming exercise*' for a longer '*marathon*', which is yet to start and how far this '*marathon*' will take the community and organization will be judged from its vision and future plan.

Its plan for future is multi-pronged and community centric. It envisions developing in to community led organization not just in terms of its internal composition but also in external organization. It has a plan to implement its programs on social security, health, education, malnutrition, access to public services and programs and advocacy on land, violence and other issues through community networks. It plans for organizing the community through village committees comprising one Siddi man and one Siddi woman from each settlement / street / habitation, in fifty two target villages. These committees will be the core and further be regrouped in to a three tier structure; starting with village/habitation level, to gram Panchayat level and then to district level.

Further, it will form child-clubs in every village for children from age group of three to eighteen. It will be a place where children will learn human skills along with fun activities and will serve as a hub for all activities related to children.

The organization will facilitate the process of getting caste certificate on its priority along with access to government schemes especially social security schemes, old age pension and other schemes, employment card, NREGS, self employment (special training, loan/subsidy programs), health schemes etc. It also aims to intensify its advocacy on issues of land and housing rights and violence.

SJVS has chosen the path towards a long term sustainability and inclusion of the community. The initiation of the young minds has started to spread its colors which is appreciable. Hope one day Siddi community will empower itself in such a way that they will no more be excluded from their entitlements.

References:

- <http://infochangeindia.org/agenda/social-exclusion/towards-inclusion-and-equity.html>
- <http://abdulkazad.wordpress.com/tag/hindu-social-system/>
- http://www.nehu.ac.in/Journals/JournalJuly_DecArt2111213.pdf
- http://www.internationalseminar.org/XIV_AIS/TS%203/19.%20Maisnam%20Bobo%20Singh.pdf
- http://siteresources.worldbank.org/EDUCATION/Resources/278200-1121703274255/1439264-1288632678541/7520452-1292532951964/Session3_Das_Dec20.pdf
- Dr. Maisnam Bobo Singh “Economic reforms, socio-economic exclusion and inclusion in India: From gender perspective”.
- Prakash Louis “Towards inclusion and equity” <http://infochangeindia.org/agenda/social-exclusion/towards-inclusion-and-equity.html>
- Naila Kabeer(2009) “Social Exclusion, Poverty and Discrimination Towards an Analytical Framework”<http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/j.1759-5436.2000.mp31004009.x/abstract>
- Mark Gradstein, Maurice Schiff
(March 2004) “The Political Economy of Social Exclusion with Implications for Immigration Policy”
Population economics, 2006, 19 (2), 327-344
http://www.iza.org/en/webcontent/publications/papers/viewAbstract?dp_id=1087