



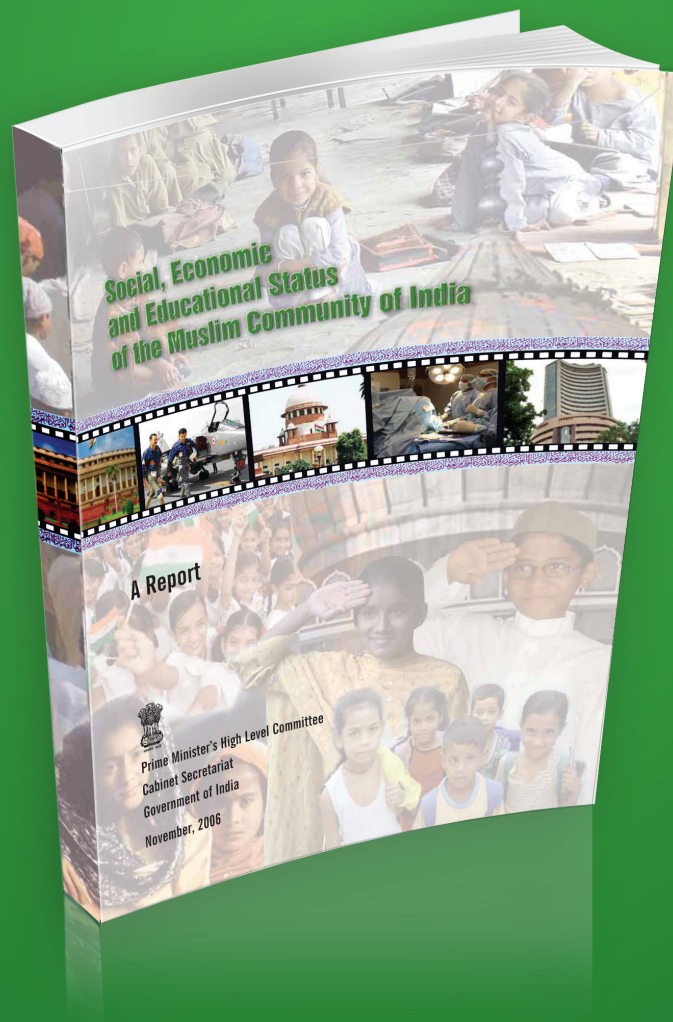
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INCLUSIVE DEVELOPMENT PARADIGM IN INDIA

A post-Sachar perspective



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Dr. Shariff was a recipient of the Rockefeller Foundation International Family Fellowship to undertake research at Economic Growth Centre of Yale University, USA during 1991-2. He has a PhD (1986) from Australian National University, Canberra, Australia and M.A degree from Bangalore University, India. He has over 30 years of consistent record of academic research in the field of human development, inclusive growth, poverty and inequity, development economics, labor and social security, social sector budgetary analysis, micro-impact of economic reforms, food policy and nutrition. He has executed large scale representative sample surveys on behalf of Indian Planning Commission and the United Nations System in India. He has authored/edited over a dozen books published mostly from the Oxford University press. he is the author of 'India: Human Development Report, 1999, first such report for India, New Delhi: Oxford University Press, pp.i-xiii and 1-370. Has published over 50 articles in refereed journals of international repute. Dr. Shariff is a member of several academic and policy committees.

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INCLUSIVE DEVELOPMENT PARADIGM IN INDIA

A post-Sachar perspective

Abstract

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This paper takes a stock of public policy initiatives and performance of the national government with reference to the recommendations made by the prime minister's high level committee (Sachar Committee, 2006) on the social, economic and educational conditions of Muslim community in India. The discussion uses a general development frame within which this study is undertaken, enunciates the constitutional and legal framework and reviews most recent selected empirical data drawn from government sources. During past five years, since the Sachar report was made public, neither the national nor any major state government have made efforts to evaluate the pro-poor and pro-minority policies; although they have made a number of policy statements and formulated targeted programs. This paper, therefore, is an attempt to fill this gap; yet a thorough and independent research study must be sponsored by the national government sooner than later.

This research suggests that the Muslim community which was suffering from a slow but steady decline in most of the human and developmental parameters including education continues to do so and in a few situations a clear declining trend continues confirming exclusionary practices in the program access.

INCLUSIVE DEVELOPMENT PARADIGM IN INDIA

A post-Sachar perspective

1. Introduction:

It is more than 5 years that Sachar Committee report was submitted to the Prime Minister of India and subsequently to the Parliament¹; which highlighted overall deprivation of the Muslim community in practically all indicators and variables that were studied and analyzed. Further, in a few dimensions the committee found that relative to other socio-religious communities the conditions of Muslims were in fact deteriorating; for example in access to education especially at levels above metric and other higher levels, conditions of poverty and consumption, child labour, formal sector employment, access to developmental credit and publically provided social and economic infrastructure. The presence of social and developmental infrastructure was the least in areas where the Muslim community lived suggesting an inherent bias in public provisioning of social and welfare oriented services.

The Sachar report did achieve a feat of sorts, as it has been extensively audited by the intelligentsia and general public alike; and it triggered public debates and media attention. Having accepted the report in toto, the national government made a number of announcements that favored targeted exclusive policies and programs; the noteworthy are - the revamped PM's 15 point and the minority concentration district programs. Further, based on the Committee's recommendation, the ministry of minority affairs established two expert groups to study (a) scope and format of the Equal Opportunity Commission and (b) to develop a methodology to estimate the Diversity Index, and both groups submitted respective reports by early 2008. A number of state governments and parastatal and semi-government institutors such as the reserve bank of India, the planning commission, and a few civil society organizations took initiatives to address the issue of exclusion of the minorities from the mainstream programs. Even the prime minister of India, Dr. Manmohan Singh made a public statement that the Minorities in India in fact have the first claim over the government sponsored welfare and development programs; and this created counteracting statements from some opposition parties as well.

¹ The Prime Minister's high level committee to study the social-economic and education condition of the Muslim community' was established on 9th March 2005 and a report, now popularly known as 'Sachar Committee report' was presented to Dr. Manmohan Singh, the Prime Minister of India on 17th September, 2006.

India is a highly diverse economy and society in transition; differentials in the social and economic outcomes are but expected. Assurances of accessibility to programs that promote literacy, education and skills, health and longevity, food consumption and nutrition, employment, housing, development credit and markets are made by the governments and substantial resources are also allocated; yet access and use of these services are uneven and often with unacceptably large differentials. Such differentials in India have occurred due to systemic failures on the part of the social structure and power play of the majoritism of the democratic polity and inherent biases within the bureaucratic structures both at the national and state levels. Note that the state functionaries and program implementators do not reflect the diversity that prevails in the society and in the local geographic area subjected to specified policies and programs. Note that the modern day technology aided solutions can help overcome such biases, bring fairness and transparency in program implementation.

The Sachar Committee is a record of 'evidenced based policy research' and for the first time, highlighted empirically the existence of large differentiation according to socio-religious categories; also pointed to the drifting exclusionary effects with respect to the Muslim community. As recent research suggests, the Muslim exclusion seems concurrently happening², while the SCs and STs are able to catch-up on a sustained basis mostly due to assured institutional and financial support provided for implementing affirmative policies and constitutionally guaranteed reservation benefits. Funds are assured through the financial sub-plan prepared both at the national and state levels so as to implement programs favouring the SCs and the STs. Further while the SCs/STs have assured access to public employment, political participation through electoral system, third tier governance and civil society participation; these are the areas where the religious minorities, especially the Muslims are found to be excluded and there is no institutional, financial or even programmatic support from the public system so as to address their deprivation.

One of the logical arguments in this regard is that while differentiation in outcome measures are but expected; it is essential to ensure equal opportunity (ability) of access and utilization to publically provided services so as to enhance diversity of participation within the programs. Equity is a concurrent objective, which has to be ensured as development takes place, and has to be achieved in a time bound manner. Therefore, intuitional provisions to address the deprivation of the minorities especially the Muslims are the need of the hour. The Sachar committee in its recommendations proposed establishing an 'Equal Opportunity Commission (EOC)' so that opportunity of access and use is ensured, and enable a 'level playing field' to all socio-religious communities.

² Notwithstanding a recent article 'Has growth been socially inclusive during 1993-4 – 2009-10', by Sukhdev Thorat and Amaresh Duby, published as a special article in Economic and Political Weekly, March 10, 2012. This article estimates declines in poverty rates over the reference years and shows that the largest decline has occurred among the Muslim Community. However, the poverty head count estimates and the approached itself is mired with serious methodological controversies and this is counter to the modern conceptual innovations interms of human development and millennium development goals. Further the data bases for the year 2009-10 NSSO survey is criticized for a number of defects and inaccuracies and the government of India has ordered an immediate resurvey and these data are yet to be publically available. This paper has used socio-religious categories which are confusing and far from the clarity that was brought to the literature by the Sachar committee report. For example, it is simplistic and also counterproductive to compare the Muslims with the whole of the Hindu community which constitute about 85 of India's population. The diversity within the Hindus and also Muslims must be used in social categorization and also that comparable size SRCs are created for meaningful analysis and debates.

Note that the EOC should be an institutional provision open to all communities and all citizens of India, and those who are most deprived will obviously be covered as a matter of routine. Affirmative action programs with a backing of the constitutional provisions as enshrined in Article 14, 15 and 16 of the Indian Constitution on ground of social and economic backwardness has also become necessary to hasten the process of equity and participation.

Even after five years that the Sachar committee report is in public sphere and under scrutiny, little if at all, information exists as to whether the public efforts during this period have yielded results. It important to state that thus far no credible and methodologically sound study has taken placed or sponsored by government to evaluate and assess any new initiatives³. The main philosophy of the Sachar report was to enable minorities including the Muslims find their place in accordance to their share in population (eligible groups) in the nation's flagship programs and policies aimed to enhance, education and employment; and improve income earning opportunities including access to credit, markets and other poverty alleviation programs. But a few initiatives that the national government has initiated do not adhere to this philosophy; rather programs based on identity and myopic understanding such as the 'madras modernization', 'minority reservation' and 'minority concentration districts' are put in place. Such an approach with an apparent feeling of providing immediate benefit to the minorities would in fact hurt the development and mainstreaming of the Muslims rather than benefiting them in the long run. This happens because such policies will have little if at all priority in the bureaucratic scheme of things and often not subjected to monitoring and evaluation of programs; besides creating a wedge between communities and promote competitive segmenting of policies and programs.

Recently, the UPA government at the center announced a reservation of 4.5% within the 27% OBC quota which is already in existence - 'a quota within quota'. The timing of this announcement also appeared politically motivated; yet a closer analysis highlights its irrelevance in promoting the welfare of the minorities let alone the Muslims. There is nothing new in this announcement although the policy favors a quota within quota for minorities, but the Muslims are less likely to increase their presence in the government employment mostly due to sharper competition with candidates belonging to Christians and Sikhs who are relatively advantaged. Further the quota system would be of little help in augmenting access to public or government employment since in actuality such employment is drying out both in terms of new recruits or replacement appointment. Have criticized this policy the bright side is the fact that for the first time after the Independence such an announcement has been made in the name of the minorities which has a strong

³ It would be appropriate in this context to state that the ministry of minority affairs in the year 2009-10, sponsored a study to review the 'monitoring of the implementation of various schemes of the ministry of minority affairs', and assigned it to the National Productivity Council. According to a NPC document 'this is a national level organization under the Ministry of Commerce and Industry, Government of India, providing training, consultancy and undertaking research in the area of productivity. One fails to understand as to why the MMA assigned this highly technical task of monitoring its schemes to an institution which is not mandated to do such tasks nor it has appropriate technical skill-sets to accomplish such tasks. Monitoring and assessments of social welfare and developmental programs require research techniques which fall in the domain of development economics, sociology and survey research and it cannot be done by scientific institutions which evaluate and measure industrial productivity. Further, the most recent 'human development report -2011' has been authored by Institute for Applied Manpower Research, which is an extended wing of the National Planning Commission. Although IAMR is known for collecting and collating statistics relating to industrial employment, even this institution has no record of having undertaken program review of major centrally sponsored schemes addressing the issue of inclusiveness.

appeal among them, but its implementation will be difficult due to lack of accurate information and data, and also that it is the 'Talluka' level revenue officer who has to issue such certificates which are often denied or difficult to secure.

The most important policy to ensure mainstreaming of the Muslims community to the national governance can occur only if their participation is enhanced in the 'local self-governmental institutions' such as the panchayats and nagar-palikhhas. Since the Muslims will be less able to get elected to such institutions due to politics of caste/community based electoral practices, there must be a policy to co-opt a certain number or percentage of the respective committee members to belong to communities such as the minorities especially the Muslims and other special groups. Further, the Muslims must get their share in all the normal, regular, mainstream program of both the national and state governments; a situation in which the Muslims should be 'standing shoulder-to shoulder along with other communities in the same queue' so to speak, rather than crating a secondary mechanism which is more likely to fail not only due to lack of interest but also due to 'majority-minority' politics that India is very well known for.

Recent Other Evidence: In the recent months there are a few other empirical and analytical studies which highlight worsening conditions and associated deprivation of the Muslims in India. For example, a recent report namely, 'Promises to Keep: Investigating Government's Response to Sachar Committee Recommendations', brought out by the Center for Equity Studies, New Delhi. This study analysis budgetary allocations and expenditures at the level of all India and a few selected states and finds that the government programs favouring the Muslim community are ill conceived and suffer from gross miss-targeting. The funds and services aimed to be delivered to the Muslim households and living areas are in fact being diverted to other areas where Muslim presence is low or non-existence. Another study by the Social Equity Watch namely the 'National Infrastructure Equity Audit' undertook survey of 12 village level social and developmental infrastructure such as the presence of school, anganwadi, health center, PDS shop, road, drinking water facility and so on and found that the presence of such assets and infrastructure was much less in the villages and living area with concentration of the SCs, the STs and the Minorities.

The parliamentary standing committee on 'social justice and employment' has also stated that the ministry of minority affairs was not addressing the root of the problems highlighted in the Sachar Committee report. It also suggested that the government should bring a law to ensure time-bound implementation of the Sachar committee recommendations. It is only situational information to report that even the wickileaks has made a reference to the relative backwardness of the Muslim community and that they deserve a special attention and equal opportunity to access their share of resources from the mainstream policies and program of the democratic and secular India. However it is essential to understand as to what is the place for Muslims in the developmental paradigm of India in the early 21st century.

2. Development Orientation and Inclusiveness:

To understand the need to inclusive development especially the issue of mainstreaming of the Muslims in India must be understood from a development frame of India in the modern context. The paradigm of economic and social development in India has evolved forward from the socialistic pattern to the one of openness and private-public partnership. Ideologically socialistic performance of the government soon after the Independence ensured that private corporate and other vested interest could not appropriate national resources such that the masses could have been adversely affected. Although the trigger happy economic evangelists did abuse the older economic system, what should be recognized at the time of the Independence, fresh with the influence of Gandhian thought and preaching, there could not have been any other choice to socialistic thought, which promoted a sense of equality although the private ownership was suppressed. Government's control over resources did accord a sense of safety and that they are not overexploited or looted. The Nehurivian concerns therefore during the first few decades after Independence appear not only relevant but necessary. At a philosophical plain such a social and economic ideological frame provided an illusionary feeling of inclusiveness, and the minorities and marginalized believed that newly formulated democratic structure would protect their identity and interests. The safeguards and special provisions enshrined in the Indian Constitution added further to a psychological equilibrium that minorities intended to achieve soon after the trauma and turbulence that preceded and succeeded the Independence. During this phase of governance and development, marginalized groups especially the minorities had little knowledge as to the relative position they occupied in the complex web of diversity amongst the population which was explicit in terms of the caste, ethnicity and religion in India. Especially, the Muslims were in a shock and adopted a defensive stand, and considered it safe to be quiet and limited to sustaining and maintaining their immediate families and economic assets. The overall governance and bureaucratic structure was heavily represented with highly educated upper caste Hindus and the welfare schemes and poverty alleviation programs were in the league of pilot projects or at the most in the genre of relief programs. It is now a recorded history, however, that socialistic pattern of economic policy did not facilitate fast pace of economic growth, rather it was characteristic of rigid state control and bureaucratic overbearing.

A reminiscence, of the process of development in India during the eighties, invokes a considerable amount of satisfaction that India indeed has gone through a transformation from the highhanded license raj to opening up towards promoting private initiatives to exploit resources, in a way at the right time, although such a change was forced upon due to the technocratic and purely fiscal prudence. The recognition and promotion of the private initiative in development as a policy response to fast growth was commendable. The current state of mixed economy with a clear bent over to the privatization of resources and sectors of the economy is a game changing process. Therefore, it is timely and essential to find out what kind of inclusive space has been carried forward or what new opportunities have become available to the Indian minorities and those in the periphery of the social and economic domain in the present 'new-deal Indian economic policies?

It is necessary to ponder upon as whether lopsided development and growth can occur; should the government continue to absolve the role of the 'trustee' of the national and natural resources, while the private sector engulfed with the forces of free economy and competition (often export lead) penetrates to such economic domains that were thus far insulated from exploitation, mostly due to lack of demand and also due to lack of investments which governments could not bring. Therefore, the economic processes which are private but in principle endorsed by the public systems which also claim to be the so called 'inclusive' can damage the very fabric of nation hood and nation building. The economy and markets must therefore operate and indeed promote the concepts of nationhood and national integration, while making profits by exploiting local natural and human resources and adding value to the GDP.

The caste system and religious discrimination are dominant of the causes for communities with specified identities to be poor and continue to remain poor even after 63 years of the Independence and democratically guided governance. In a pluralistic and diverse society that India is, it is important, therefore, to find out as to how different groups of people such as those identified based on caste, ethnic origin (tribes), religion, occupation, place of residence (rural- urban), remote, hilly and forested areas and so on are able to overcome deprivation. Important also is to know as what role the social system and culture has either to promote or inhibit communities overcome inequality and what proactive initiatives are needed from the government systems.

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Another issue which has relevance to equity emanates from regional differentials. Thus the communities which are excluded from the mainstream are found concentrated in states and regions which are less developed. There is a sort of double whammy faced by deprived groups and further the depth of deprivation and exploitation emerges from other factors such as occupational and work related exploitation, child labour and gender bias. Therefore to understand mechanism to address deprivations amongst the SCs/ STs and Muslims it is essential to lay bare all such dimensions which are a type of whirlpool or a sort of trap from which those affected have to be rescued and rehabilitated not only on the basis of empathy but with the aim of empowering whole communities so that they make their rightful claim of equal citizens of India.

The social backwardness has the inbuilt disadvantage inhibiting access to equal opportunities. Social backward groups face problems in access to natural resources as well as the resources created by the public at large. Since the senior positions of administration are dominated by the upper caste, those in the lower levels of the caste



ladder have serious educational and skill-set advantage. The dalits, tribal communities and Muslims face disadvantage in their day-to-day living.

Understanding these issues in the framework of 'rights- based-entitlement approach' and the desired national objective of 'inclusive growth', will lay bare knowledge that helps in precise and targeted policy responses. There are a number of qualitative dimensions which create hurdles and barriers for inclusive growth which needs to be factored in, such as the continuing practice of untouchability, discrimination, physical threat to life and property and even bureaucratic bias.

3. Inclusive Provisions of the Indian Constitution

The Indian Constitution lists exhaustive Acts and provisions which define the citizenship, the institutions both political and otherwise and set parameters within which the inclusive policies have to be framed and implemented. It would be appropriate in this chapter to review the inclusive constitutional and legal structures that help overcome deprivation and bias from India's social system and governance structure.

The Indian democracy is an opportunity for inclusive development in India, only if one understands the provisions and expanse of such opportunities. There is a debate developing as to whether public programs such as school education, scholarships, health care delivery, access to micro-credit and so can be targeted to beneficiaries based on religion; some consider this 'unconstitutional' and argue that it amounts to discriminating on the basis of religion. A close analysis of the constitutional provisions suggests that there is nothing in the constitution which bars naming religious communities and groups as target beneficiaries. The religious identity is listed on par with race, caste, sex and place of origin all in the same line and these other traits are liberally being used to identify beneficiaries. For example, in case of caste - the SCs and STs-specific programs galore; in case of sex, women based policies are formulated and even regional deprivation are addressed to reach out to citizens identified through place of birth/residence.

Right in the preamble of the Indian Constitution, there is a resolve to secure to all citizens..... 'equality of status and of opportunity'. This resolve directs the government through policies to take proactive role to ensure equal opportunity. The concepts of equality, equal access and equal opportunity are further elaborated in Article 14 (right to equality), Article 15 (access to education) and Article 16 (public employment); that '... State shall not discriminate.... on grounds only of religion, race, caste, sex, place of birth ...'.

The clause (4) of Article 15, states 'Nothing shall prevent the State from making any special provision for the advancement of any socially and educationally backward classes of citizens or for the Schedule Castes and the Scheduled Tribes'. Interestingly, the mention of 'socially and economically backward classes' (SEBC) in fact precedes that of the SCs and the STs. Clause (5) especially directs the State to make special provision by law for the advancement of the 'socially and educationally backward classes' through admission to educational institutions including private, aided or unaided institutions excepting the minority education institutions as in clause (1) of article 30.

Article 16 provides for equal opportunity and government employment, and directs not to discriminate on the grounds of religion, race, etc.; in the same breath clause (4) provides for making provisions for the reservation of appointments in favour of 'any backward class' in the opinion of the State, is not adequately represented in the services under the State. Note that the constitution itself has not identified who is a 'backward class', rather it assigns a responsibility to the State to identify 'group backwardness'.

How to identify backwardness of the ‘socially and educationally backward class’? All the explanations relating to Article 14, 15 & 16 emphasize that the group classifications should not be arbitrary and that it is compatible with the ‘objective of classification’ and that the pre-existing inequality should not be ignored. As per the constitutional provisions, any group of citizens (no arbitrarily formulated), includes those groups listed in the constitution itself, namely – religion, race, caste, sex, descent, and place of birth/ residence should form the basis for backwardness. Further, relative backwardness can be assessed based on other traits such as occupation, work place, age, language and so on which are not arbitrary in nature.

In the context and spirit of the constitutional provisions, in fact government accumulates information and generates data separately for the SCs and STs; for example, to measure the levels of literacy, access to higher education, share in State employment and so on. Similarly, strong empirical evidence has become available about the presence of large and multi-dimensional gender discrimination and regional disparities are estimated based on information on ‘place of birth/origin/residence.

While empirical assessments according to ‘caste’, ‘sex’ and ‘place of birth/origin/residence’ are common; one fails to understand as to why an assessment based on ‘religion’ is not feasible. In fact the public discourses and policy discussions consider religious comparisons in the levels of achievements in development indicators ‘unconstitutional’; which in the author’s opinion is due to lack of understanding of the spirit and intentions of the Indian constitution. Also note that religion in India is a dominant social identity next only to sex and caste and therefore it cannot be singularly sidelined or ignored.

An empirical truth is that religious identity lends itself to double whammy in India. Studies show that relative disparities become unacceptably large due to compounding effects of sex, age and regional discrimination getting interacted with the one based on religion, thus making for example, Muslim women (children) living in less developed states the most excluded of all types of socio-religious groups.

Empirical evidence is key to developmental knowledge. It is reassuring to note, that modern empirical and econometric methodologies help in accurately estimating and identifying key characteristics of backwardness. Indeed both caste and religion stands out as dominant social identities of backwardness along with occupational (source of household income), residential and regional identities.

In fact empirical analysis of developmental and process indicators (literacy, higher level education, formal employment, access to banking and credit, and political participation just to name a few) according to religious communities excluding the Hindus, confirm that only Muslims are found below the line of average while all other religious groups have place above the average situation. If total population is divided in to SCs/STs and other Hindus and compared with dominant religious groups, one finds that the levels for the Muslims in most of the measures are closer to and in some situation lower than the SCs/STs (more in the following sections). If we give credence to the initial conditions as recommended by the constitution itself, it is disturbing

to note that the conditions of Muslims relative to even the SCs/STs have worsened over the years. The rate of growth is least in case of Muslims; on selected indicators even negative growth is found leading to a decline in the absolute levels. Such evidence is strong to suggest that the public policies and programs of the national and state governments are less accessible to Muslims to the extent that they can be labeled as discriminatory. A similar situation seems to exist in case of the Christian community in a number of states and amongst the neo-Buddhists.⁴

⁴ It is difficult to empirically separate out the Christians and neo-Buddhists due to small population presence at the all India level and also at the level of many States.

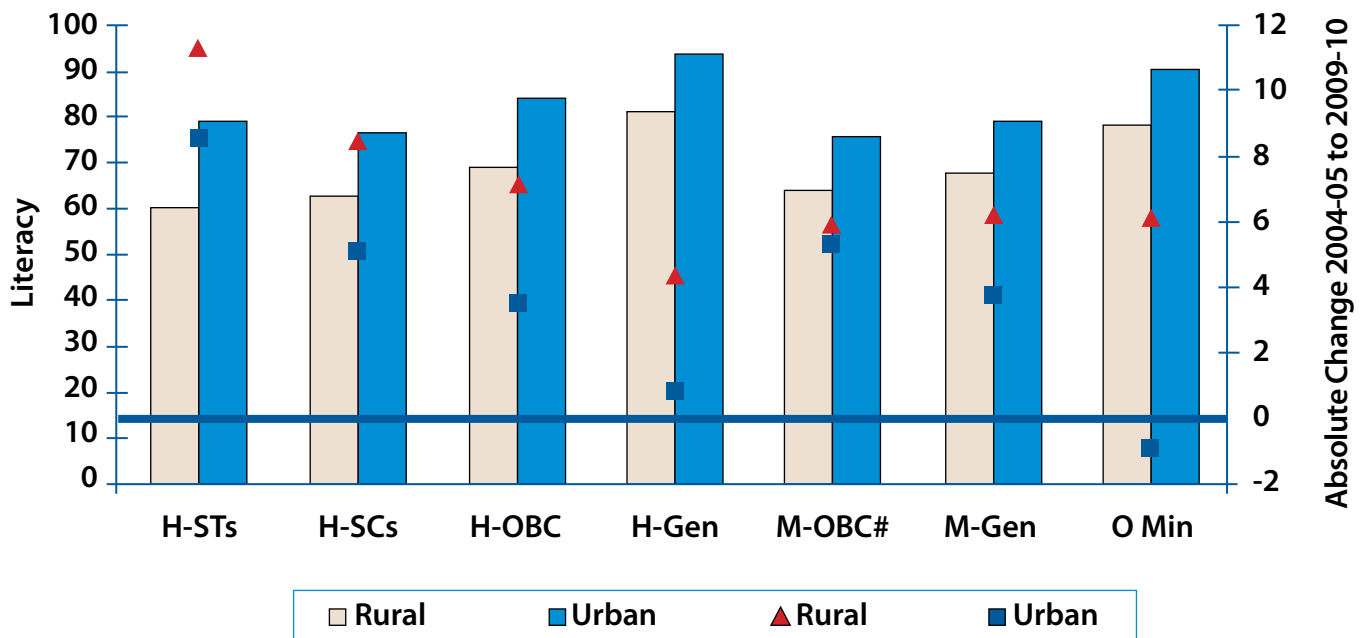
4. Public Programs (1): A Case of Diversity in Education

Literacy and Education are the essential human development parameters and public policies are striving to make India a literate society and also improve the quality and quantity of higher/scientific levels of education. Practically all citizens wish to ensure that their children not only get educated but also get good quality modern education which yields higher rate of returns, monetarily and in terms of non-market gains. The National Sample Survey conducted regularly by the Central government is a good source of information on literacy and education, and I present the measures of achievement at different levels of education and absolute change in these levels during a five year period, namely 2004-5 and 2009-10 (refer Figures 1, 2, and 3). Note that the educational achievement levels are presented separately for the rural and urban areas and according to socio-religious categories (SRCs).

Literacy levels are considerably high in urban areas and this advantage is uniformly similar for all SRCs. Overall the upper caste Hindus and other minorities living in urban areas have highest levels of literacy of over 90%; and rural literacy among these groups is about 80%. However, the levels of literacy amongst the SCs, STs, Muslim OBCs and Muslim-general category have similar levels of literacy both in urban and rural areas, but at much lower levels compared to the other two groups.

Yet an interesting scenario emerges if one analysis the absolute change or improvement in literacy between the two data periods, 2004-5 and 2009-10. It is reassuring to note that the improvements in literacy have been considerably higher in rural areas among all communities excepting the Muslim OBCs. Partly, higher rural literacy improvement is due to the base effect that is the levels of urban literacy are already higher, relatively speaking. Note that literacy level improvement amongst the STs both in rural and urban areas has been the highest (a 12 %ge point improvement in rural and about 8 %ge points in urban areas). The next group recording improvements in literacy in rural areas are the SCs, Hindu OBCs, other Minorities and both categories of Muslims in that order. Overall levels, of improvements for Hindu General category is low and this is due to the base effect of high levels of literacy already achieved in the previous period. Note that relatively speaking Muslims are urban dwellers and improvement in urban literacy amongst the Muslim-general group has been low; and overall the improvements in literacy levels for both types of Muslim groups has to catch up with the levels recorded at least in case of the SCs and the STs.

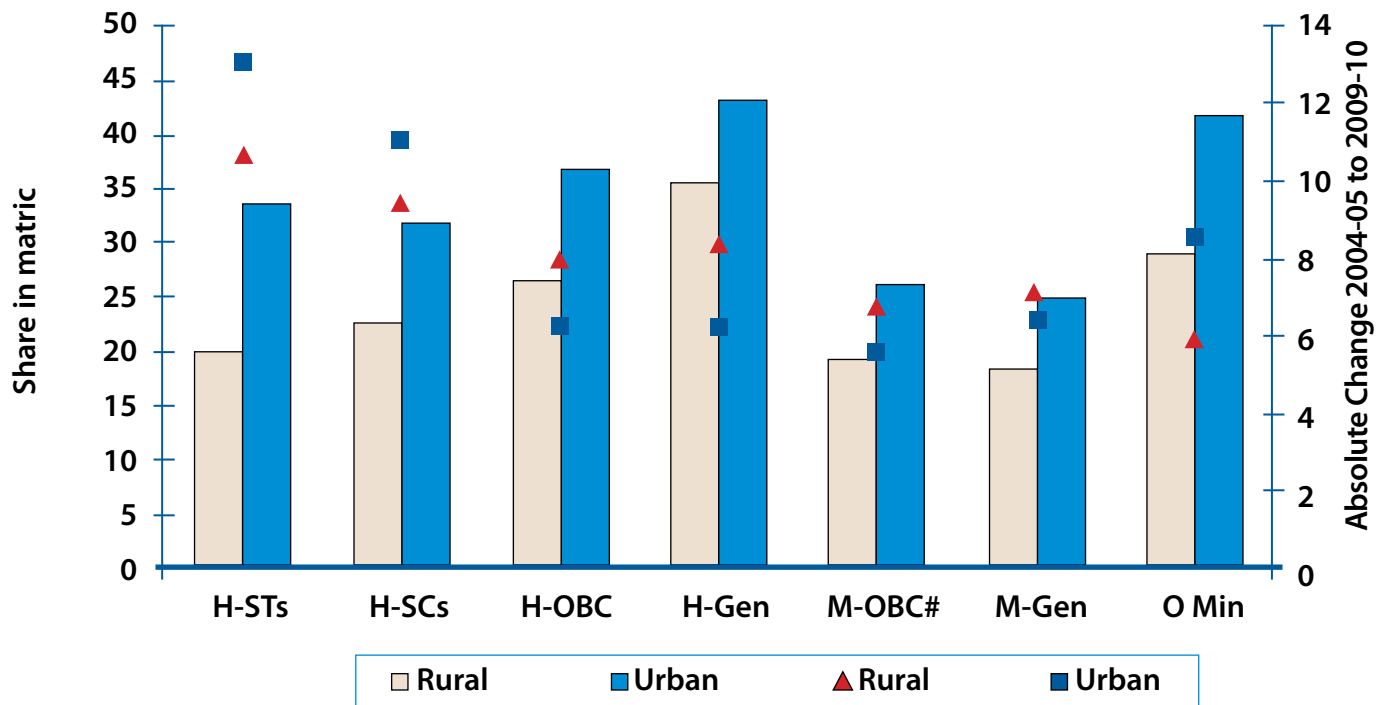
Figure 1: All India Literacy Rate by Socio-Religious Groups; 2009-10



Source: Estimates of Abusaleh Shariff and Amit Sharma from 66th round (Employment and Unemployment Survey in India-2009-10), NSSO.

Matriculation level of Education: Matric level education entails that a child has successfully completed 10 years of schooling, and this level is used as a bench mark to assess both the quantity and quality of education. By this level of education, the youth do get ready for entering the labour force and they are also expected to have acquired technical and scientific knowledge so as that they demand a relatively better and higher wage in the labour market. For example, a truck driver having a matriculation level education definitely earns a higher wage compared to another who has lower level of education.

Figure 2 presents achievements at matric level of education for rural and urban areas and by SRCs. Keeping the base level as well as pace of improvement in mind, it can be said, that the levels of matriculates both in rural and urban areas are the highest amongst the Hindu-general and other minorities. The levels both in rural and urban areas amongst the Muslims are estimated to be the lowest, in fact much lower than the SCs and STs in urban areas and also lower in rural areas.

Figure 2: All India Shares in Matric by Socio-Religious Groups; 2009-10


Source: Estimates of Abusaleh Shariff and Amit Sharma from 66th round (Employment and Unemployment Survey in India-2009-10), NSSO.

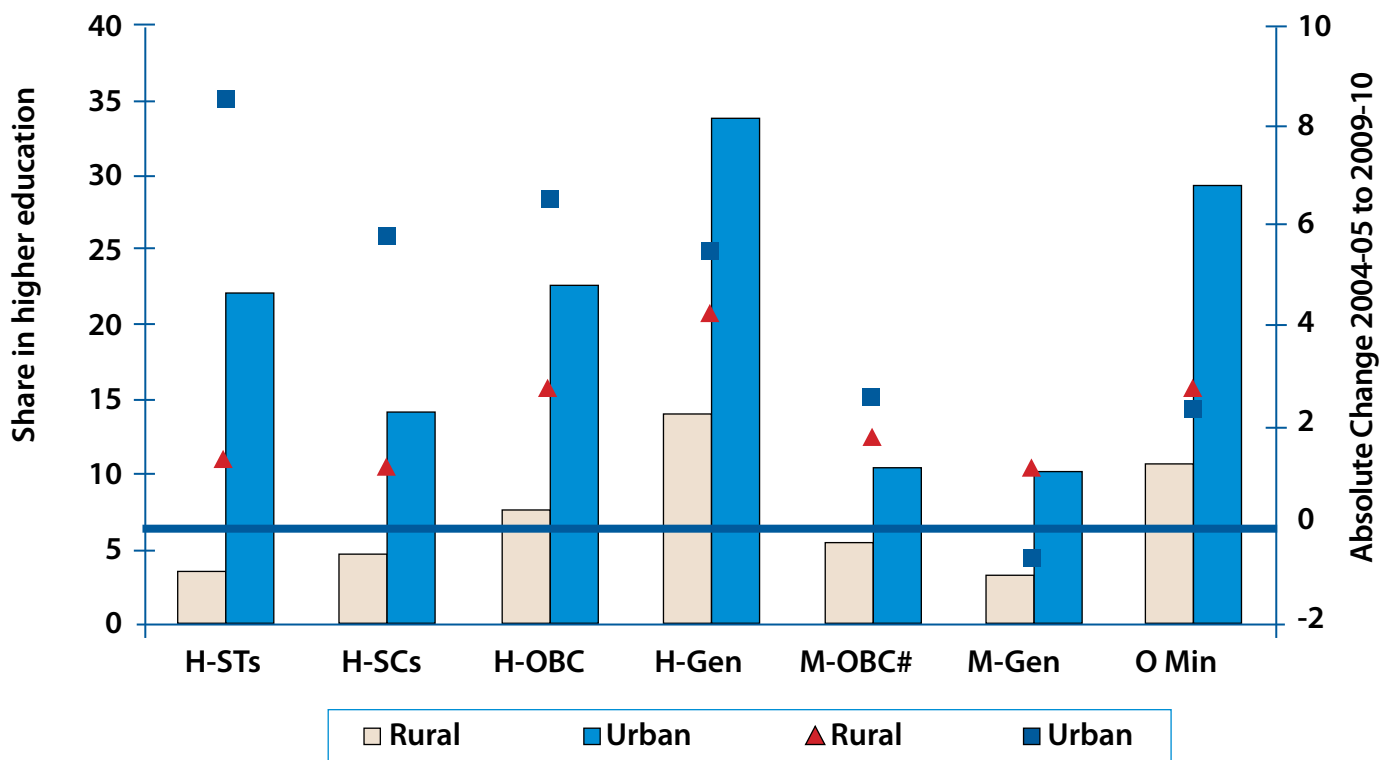
An exploration of the absolute change during the five year period – 2004-5 to 2009-10 suggests that the improvements at matric levels of education is the least amongst the both categories of Muslims (almost uniform levels) and considerably lower than improvements amongst the SCs and STs. For example, while both the rural and urban levels for the STs and the SCs are higher than the Muslims, the improvements have also been as much as 13% and 11% respectively in urban and 10% and 9 % respectively in rural areas; compared with only about 5% to 7% improvements in rural and urban areas for both types of the Muslim communities.

Higher Levels of Education (graduates and above) : Higher levels of education are desired and cherished by all citizens and also that the rate of returns are much larger in a globalizing and growing Indian economy. All the sectors of the economy which are showing vibrancy and recording double digit growth are able to perform through the support of two most important inputs, namely higher levels of human (educated) resource, and higher adaptation and assimilation of technology.

Absolute levels and improvements in higher levels of education are presented in Figure 3. One notices a situation similar to that at the level of matric. A comparison of the levels of achievements amongst the SRCs suggest a highly skewed distribution in favour of Hindu-general, other minorities, the STs and the OBCs all in urban

areas in that order. The Muslims whose proportion in urban areas is relatively higher; have shown the least levels of achievements at the higher levels of education and so have they recorded smallest level of improvement (about 2%ge points in case of OBC-Muslims), but the situation is much worse amongst the general category of Muslims who have registered about 1.5%ge point net decline over the five year period of data comparison. Note that the rate of improved for the STs, Hindu-OBCs, Hindu-General and the SCs all in urban areas have recoded large improvements ranging from 5%ge to 9 %ge points and therefore the gap between the Muslim community and all others is increasing by the day. And the disturbing fact is there is a net decline instead of improvement in case of the Muslim-general category.

Figure 3: All India, Share in Higher Level Education 2009-10 by SRCs



Source: Estimates of Abusaleh Shariff and Amit Sharma from 66th round (Employment and Unemployment Survey in India-2009-10), NSSO.

It is now clear, while the literacy level and amount of improvements were modest for Muslims compared to other communities; at the level of the materic (10 years of schooling) the situation of Muslims drops both in terms of levels and improvements to very low levels, giving an impression of purposeful policy dis-advantage towards Muslims community. This trend of exclusion of Muslims gets further aggravated at the higher levels of literacy where one notices even a net decline instead of improvement in case of the general-Muslim category, and hardly an improvement even in case of the OBC-Muslims.

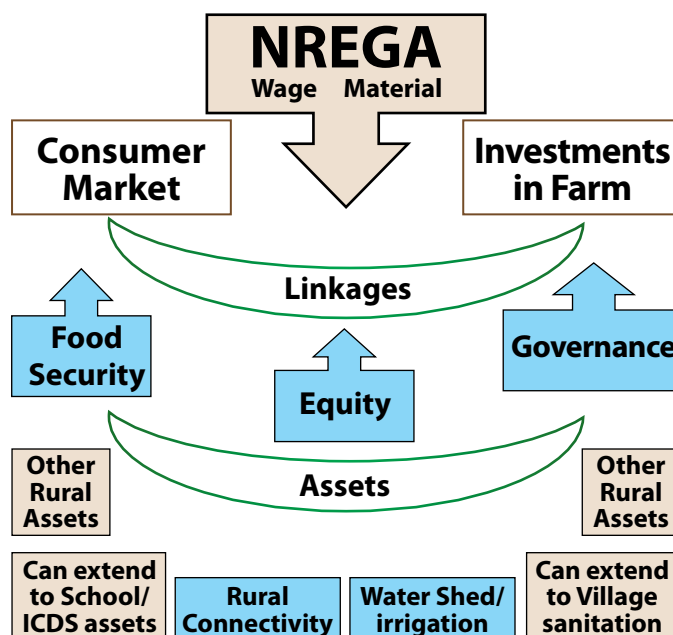


It is therefore essential to invoke the constitutional provisions enshrined in Article 15 which directs the governments to create equal opportunity and equity in access to all levels of education even if it requires reservation.

5. Public Programs (2): India's Flagship Program-MG-NREGS

Mahatma Gandhi-National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (MG- NREGS)⁵ is a recent important flagship program of the United Progressive Alliance-II national government, launched in 2005 and it found priority policy attention in the 11th five year plan (2007-12) under a broader objective of 'Bharat Nirman'⁶ aiming for resurgence of rural India. It is a mass public works program, based on positive experiences of reducing human distress beginning early 1970s in rural Maharashtra (See Dreze and Sen 1989, Dev et al 2004). The civil society and activists working for welfare of the poor provided much needed persistence which is normally needed to influence a policy. India's public works program is unique, being largest in size⁷, intended to cover long periods, disburse huge funds and be dynamically responsive to climatic and rainfall conditions and above all open to any one intending to work at wage rates often lower than prevailing casual wages in local areas⁸. Since program is designed to self-target the needy, besides chronic poverty manifest for example in food inadequacy, it also intends to mitigate idiosyncratic risks and shocks faced by households, such as disability or death of earning member. The 'right to work' has been one of the 'directive principles' in the Constitution of India, which was formalized through enactment of the National rural employment guarantee Act (2005)⁹. Although India has been experimenting with large universal programs, such as the public distribution system, integrated child development services and a plethora of employment

NREGA benefits and Linkages



⁵ Note that MG-NREGA, NREGS, NREGA are used interchangeably to mean the NREG-Act supported scheme or program.

⁶ Roughly translates to 'rural India reconstruction'

⁷ The universalization of NREGA is recent (2008) and a policy response to the demands made by a newly appointed general secretary of the Congress, the party in power.

⁸ We will discuss latter in this paper large variations in NREGA wage rate often much higher than local casual wage.

⁹ This act replaced the National Food for Work Program, introduced in 140 districts in November 2004, the Jawahar Gram Samridhi Yojana (JGSY) and the Employment Assurance Scheme (EAS). NREGA documents and operational guidelines are available from the Ministry of Rural Development's website (<http://nrega.nic.in/>).

programs, the NREGA is radical as it guarantees 100 days of wage work on demand, failing which the claimants can legally demand cash compensation. The Act promotes seeking paid employment at volition in manual rural works, at least by one member from a desiring household. The scope for self-selection of those who indeed require imminent income support for livelihood is an innovation, which should result in high degree of automatically targeting the deprived; thus potential for poverty reduction. This scheme can attract attention of otherwise unemployed or underemployed work force because of immediate income (cash) transfer opportunities, which is an inbuilt short-term relief objective. Indian policy has recognized the fact that such Keynesian style expenditures on public works can be important normally, even in the absence of price or income shocks. This will smoothen and sustain seasonal fluctuations in labor demand and, therefore, wage rates in rural areas where rainfall patterns and insufficient irrigation preclude year-round crop cultivation¹⁰. The Act also aims at ‘generation of productive assets, protecting the environment, empowering rural women, reducing rural-urban migration and fostering social equity, among others.’ NREGA if implemented with due earnest has potential not only for reducing vulnerability and relieving chronic income deprivation and improve rural livelihood security but also for construction of durable assets and markets in rural areas (refer to Figure 1).

Work guarantee is a ‘universal’ entitlement in the Scheme, and any adult citizen is entitled to apply and seek employment. One hundred days of guaranteed employment at the minimum wage for those who live on margins of subsistence can be extremely helpful. The overriding expectation of the Act on the whole is to change power equations in rural areas so as to foster a more equitable social order without encountering conflict of interest between the haves and have-nots. From the perspective of the labor force, Act favours strengthening the bargaining power of unorganized workers in the hope to sustain entitlements, such as minimum wages and social security. It is considered a unique opportunity for unorganised workers to organise themselves thus leading to a new labour movement across India. The Act envisages free entry and exit into the scheme, but has made it mandatory to follow a ‘two-step’ procedure. First, households intending to work on NREGA have to ‘register’ and show expression of interest with the gram sabha/panchayat; followed by a second step to make a written application for actual work. Registration is required to be done once in every five years, but applications for work have to be submitted each time work is required; yet such procedures are rarely followed, rather panchayats make fictitious entries in NREGA records.

A number of policy makers, academics and rural development experts consider this scheme an opportunity to build bridge between rural-agricultural development and welfare of households. The expectation is improved land productivity due to scheme’s work focus on land and water based activities¹¹. Another expectation is the scope that scheme creates to bring balance in rural-urban mismatch in infrastructural and institutional development by creating synergies with other programs such as those relating to education, health,

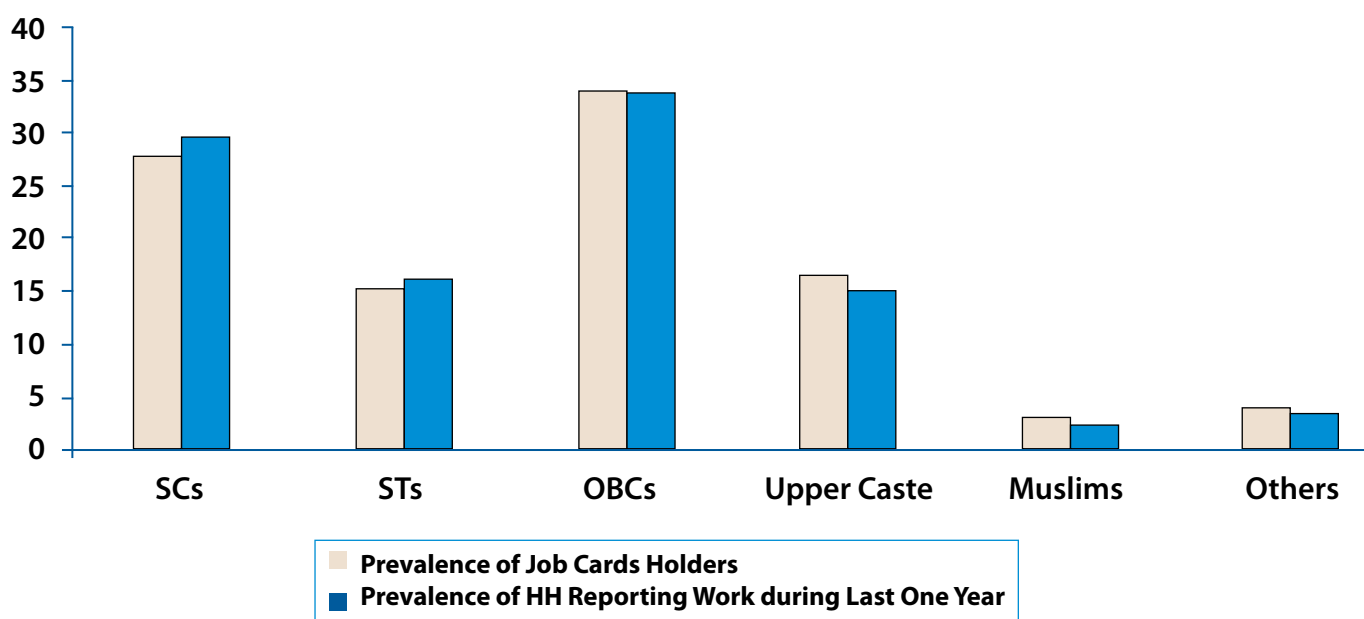
10 An assessment of food-for-work programs of the erstwhile years in India (Barrett, et. al, 2004) has arrived at similar conclusions.

11 Seven of the eight NREGA activities are water / land based, such as flood control, water conservation, drought proofing, minor irrigation, maintaining traditional water bodies and land development.

potable water and sanitation, afforestation and similar public good producing programs. Since, implementation of the Act would lead to enhanced money supply at local level, there is an expectation that rural markets will evolve and accelerate rural growth, effect lasting reduction in incidence and depth of rural poverty. Improvements in child and adult nutrition, which can further enhance school attendance and better school performance, can also happen in certain regions and communities.

Now that the Act is over five years in operation, there is a need to find out as to its reach and coverage especially in the context of social structure. Although there is no specific monitoring and evaluation study of the NREGA itself, the NSSO annual data bases provide a unique opportunity to review the NREGA program. The 66th round NSSO survey data has enabled a review of this program and data on the distribution of job card holders and workers who secured some employment during the previous year from the date of survey are presented in Figure 4. It is clear that the Muslims are hardly present in this program. Only 3 per cent of all job card holders are found to be the Muslim households and much less about 2 per one hundred works are reported to be Muslims. These percentages at the all India level should be closer to about 13-14 per cent on the basis of their share in population; but since rural Muslims have higher levels of poverty and also they are more likely to be land less, their actual participation should be much higher that even 15-16 %.

Figure 4: National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme Beneficiaries, All India 2009-10



Source: Estimates of Abusaleh Shariff and Veerpal Kaur from 66th round (Employment and Unemployment Survey in India-2009-10), of the NSSO, Government of India.

6. Road Ahead for Minorities / Muslims in India

It is essential to emphasize the fact that the minorities such as the Christians and the Muslims maintain aspirations and seek opportunities for development similar to any other community in India. Yet an empirical review suggests minorities especially the Muslims lagging practically in all spheres of development including education, employment, income and assets and so on. There are some efforts from both the centre and state governments to overcome such deprivation across India, but a quick review of outcomes suggest little improvements. There is a need for durable changes, firstly a recognition that deprivation amongst the minorities exists due to systemic causes which can be set right only through broad based public policy initiatives, not entirely through special purpose vehicles such as the minority/Muslim/Christian oriented programs; rather assisting them to strive to access their share within the mainstream such as the regular ministries, departments and programs of government of India and many major states.

India through the 73rd and 74th constitutional amendment has made a strong socio-political statement of its arrival as a matured democracy, championing multi-layer decentralized governance, sharing substantial powers and national pool of resources with the States. Further, the enduring canons of governance and economic development are grounded in principals of socialism, inclusiveness and secularism and fully conscious of regional imbalance given a large expanse of the Indian nation. India probably is a rare example of pluralism, with multi-dimensional cultural and social groupings, language, race, region and not the least religion; in short rich in diversity.

Like other main communities of India, the deprived minority and social groups should be able to pursue social, economic and educational aspirations within the frame and support of government provided infrastructure, opportunities and political awakening. Thus one expect 'diversity' - the diversity natural to our population should get reflected in the public spheres such as in educational institutions, public and organized sector employment, political system and governance structures at all levels. Yet, in spite of the fact that practically all social, educational and economic spheres of living are governed, regulated and implemented by the States; one would find substantial (often unacceptable level) differences between varied social groups and across states. Such differentials are prominent in spite of special constitutional provisions bestowed upon the minorities since the Independence; as discussed above.

Over 230 million citizens, about 20% of all Indians are categorized as minorities and they reside across all parts of India. Muslims are the largest (80%) of all identified minorities and about 14% followed by Christians about 3% of the country's population. Minorities reside in substantial numbers and proportions in states such as Assam, West Bengal, Kerala, UP and Bihar, Gujarat, Maharashtra and in the seven sister states of the North-east. In terms of the welfare of the minorities, there are examples and best practices found within India. Consider the states of Kerala, Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh and Tamil Nadu, all have devised policies favoring Muslims at two levels. (a) Along with all others, the Muslims have relatively better access

to quality mass education (both elementary and higher level) and employment; and (b) given the history of relative deprivation of the Muslims the state policy have extended the benefit of reservations in a certain measure of fractional-proportions linked to their size and share in population. Such quotas are enabling the Muslim girls and boys to catch up with their peers amongst the Hindus and Christians, both in education and employment. Similar provisions will enable Muslims to participate even in the political spaces; and Andhra Pradesh has made a beginning by promoting a system of 'co-option' or 'nomination' system to the *Mandals* (sub-taluka), *Zila Parishads* and Municipalities/Naga *Panchayats* (Andhra Pradesh-*Panchayat* Act 2006).

But a number of states especially in the northern part of India, and at the level of the nation not such beneficial policies have yet been formulated, excepting in the guise of *Mandal* Commission, where the quota system is not well articulated and the benefits to minorities and Muslims are minimal. Maintaining diversity in public spheres is essential. When this does not happen naturally, it has to be made to happen through government intervention. Legislation can be one way; and the mechanism is to remind the government and the institutions that ensuring diversity is their responsibility; the state should have done it in the first place. Diversity can be assured in India by offering incentives/credits to government departments, institutions, universities, *panchayats*, public sector undertakings and so on.

Another mechanism is to provide institutional access to all deprived citizens (including religious minorities) and to ensure 'Equity' in public sphere. In spite of a plethora of public institutions in existence, systemic discrimination or bias seems to have occurred in case of the minorities and therefore establishing an 'Equal Opportunity Commission' will go a long way both to ensure diversity as a key state objective, and it can also function as an institution to enforce redressal.

The national government has made some efforts during the past 3-4 years to address various aspects of Muslim deprivation; especially after the Sachar Committee report was presented to the national government. Broadly under the revised 15-point programme, a special investment program in about 100 minority (includes substantial Christian and Muslim populations) concentration districts (MCD); exclusive scholarships are announced for the first time to cover minorities both in elementary and higher levels of education. The RBI is consistently sending memos to the public sector banks to increase funding to the applicants from the minorities and so on. However, a review of all the above programs suggest, that the MCD program has not even made presence in many states such as West Bengal, Assam, Bihar, Jharkhand and Gujarat. The overall utilization is less than 20% of the total funds earmarked to this program since inception. Similarly the scholarship program although very popular is able to cover only a fraction of total applicants; and it appears that the public sector banks have not even taken a note of the repeated requests make by the RBI which is a matter of utmost concern.

7. Concluding Remarks:

Empirical evidence is essential to developmental knowledge. It is reassuring that modern empirical and econometric methodologies accurately estimate and identify characteristics of backwardness. Caste and religion stands out as dominant social identities of backwardness along with occupation (source of household income), residential and regional identities. Empirical analysis of process indicators (literacy, higher level education, formal employment, access to banking and credit, political participation etc.) according to religious communities excluding the Hindus confirm Muslim placement below the line of average. If the SCs/STs are singled out and compared with religious groups, one finds Muslims in most of the measures about the same or even lower. With adjustments for initial conditions, the conditions of Muslims relative to the SCs/STs have worsened over years. Such evidence suggests that policies and programs of the national and state governments are less accessible to Muslims, to the extent that they can be labeled as discriminatory.

Applying the standards set by the Indian constitution one can argue existence of systemic bias based on religion. The only way to eliminate such bias is to ensure equal opportunity and access to program which generate benefits proportional to the size of the population. Naming programs specific to the deprived community even if has to be done by caste and religious identity must be the public choice. It is clear, that there is no catch 22 situation as often made out to be and it is not even 'unconstitutional'. Since the Indian constitution grants the State the responsibility of identifying the 'backward communities', it is bounden duty of national and State governments that the caste and religious communities facing exclusion especially the Muslims, are brought into the fold of mainstream policies and programs as recommended by the Sachar committee report. Note that Article 25 while setting the parameters of the right to freedom of religion has named selected religions to bring a certain degree of clarity as to what constitute the Hindus; and this Article does not preclude naming Muslims and Christians (two large religious communities) in public documents and legal enactments.

Two pronged policies for growth and national interest are suggested, (a) an inclusive economic penetration and (b) a social framework which promotes equity and participation. In this connection it is useful to lay out the following propositions which will promote inclusive development in India.

Integration internally not outwardly: It is common to find that in the name of national integration one finds mass movements of people from mainstream areas in India to the periphery. This can happen in organized manner such as through government employment, movement of security forces to peripheral states; or this can happen due to market forces where both people and products penetrate into the peripheral regions such as hill areas, north eastern states and so on. There is a need for a new development orientation, which must ensure that the people and products from the periphery find a place in the mainland public, private and market spaces. This approach will not only bring progress in the deprived peripheral areas but also a high degree of national integration.

Identify and cherish cultural values: Another strong mechanism through which national integration can take place and new exotic markets can evolve is by identifying (cataloging) and promoting through recognition and appreciation social values, customs and practices from amongst the deprived and peripheral geographic areas and communities beneficial to the national economy. Such an approach may even be necessary to address a number of Millennium Development Goals such as child bearing and rearing practices, gender relations (for example widow remarriage, woman's inheritance and ownership rights and so on) and mechanisms of poverty alleviation.

Promotion of Multiple Language Education: It is essential that along with the national and regional languages, mother tongue and international languages such as English are promoted through formal schooling. Currently there is hardly any importance given to provide primary education in mother tongue. But since, access to English language is not uniformly provided in government promoted schools; the private schooling has begun to take advantage but at a high cost as such education is often of poor quality. This anomaly in medium of instructions must be eliminated on an urgent basis. Arguments such as children will be burdened with too many languages are not adequate enough; to deny primary education in mother tongue and also English (other foreign languages) education.

Translation of literature in a new language: Another strategy which will bind the nation together and promote inclusiveness is to undertake massive efforts, to translate major compendiums of socio-cultural, historical and literary value into to multiple languages. This should not be from only one or two languages, rather from all other languages (including peripheral) to mainstream languages. Care must be taken that such translation should not be only from the religious texts, rather those which highlight the life style and pluralistic ethos of India. This will be an excellent way to promote mutual respect to pluralistic value systems which prevail in India.

The larger malice of exclusion has to be fought unitedly by all 'regular-line departments' and Ministries at the national and State levels. It also needs collaboration and partnership with civil society and private institutional structures. How will a separate Ministry ensure the implementation of more than 300 programs that aim to alleviate poverty and improve human development which will promote inclusiveness of the excluded, whether they be Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes or Muslims?

In the absence of any time-line, program-specific implementative strategy and clarity with respect to monitoring tools and mechanisms, no results will be forthcoming. It is important to mention that a flat policy of earmarking 15 per cent of budgetary allocations to favour the minorities is not implementable. Rather, the service delivery procedures must use population shares at the "program specified operational levels" such as the district, taluka and block levels so as to ensure maximum coverage and provide a sense of equity. The early euphoria and expectations are dying out. The UPA -1 took many initiatives to dissect and diagnose the problem, and UPA -2 must ensure that inclusive policies are actually implemented before the people at large become disappointed.

Appendix: Specific Recommendations

In the following are specific highlights so that the government and policy makers initiate measures to address the lacuna and strengthen enabling environment for inclusive participation in development of India. The following initiatives should be part of the 12th plan mandate of promoting inclusive development, especially of those who are historically and socially on the fringes of the India's development policy, such as the Muslims.

1. Estimate share of flows to minority beneficiary in major flagship programs. Specify data and information for each of the minorities separately, for example for Muslims, Christians, Sikhs, Buddhist and Zoroastrians. A good example to be emulated by the planning commission comes from the Reserve Bank of India, which collects similar data on access to banks through accounts and estimating amounts outstanding (reflecting the extent of integration into the credit and development program of RBI) according to all religious categories in India. Similar data on access to banks through accounts and estimating amounts outstanding (reflecting the extent of integration into the credit and development program of RBI) according to all religious categories in India.
2. Measure Diversity in public Spaces-including institutions of higher learning such as universities, IIMs, IITs, AIIMS and so on. Put up a mechanism for separately for each state.
3. Most alarming is that the Overall shares of Muslims in matric and higher education has improved the least compared with all socio-religious categories between 2004-5 and 2009-10. This has happened along with the lowest base level for Muslims compared with other communities. In fact in urban areas where relatively larger percentage of Muslims lives, the share in higher education has in fact declined during this period.
4. Review improvement in diversity in public employment across all states, on an annual basis. Estimate diversity indices for each state.
5. Establish a credible Data Bank which share processed data for easy use by the people at large. Currently only raw data are loaded on NSSO 'website data bank' which is not easy to use by the concerned stakeholders.
6. The 'Assessment and Monitoring Agency' under the Planning Commission must contain technical experts in data management and analytical methods; and academics along with civil society. The revamped AMA has no representation from independent technical and academic communities which must be set right.
7. The government is backtracking the establishment of an equal opportunity commission (EOC). All major democracies, especially the developed ones have instituted the EOC with great results and high level of people's satisfaction.

8. The government must also make policy statements as to how the ongoing Caste Census will benefit or will it adversely affect the welfare and affirmative action policies for Muslims and other minorities.
9. On the lines of the Andhra Pradesh (2006), amend the panchayati raj act so as to make it mandatory that at least two minorities (including Muslims) are co-opted in the panchayats and municipalities across India (refer Sachar report, page 188).
10. Sponsor research studies to evaluate the Minority Concentrated District Program of the MMA. There has been no effort to invite academic institutions to undertake this activity. The civil society alone is not well equipped to undertake this very difficult task.
11. Urgent attention is drawn to undertake Assessment and Monitoring in the following areas: Enrolments and School Continuation: Special Tabulations from the Census data for district level estimates of literacy and school enrolments by religion and rural urban residence. Introduce Computer education in all elementary schools. Human Resources Ministry GOI has not written a single word on as to how and what policies were initiated so as to improve the school enrolment of the Minority/Muslims community in India. On higher education, the MHRD has not a single word as to how it intends to improve access; through what kind of affirmative action's or through the OBC reservations or otherwise.
12. Undertake Occupation Based programs: In collaboration with Ministries dealing with: Micro, Small & Medium Enterprises (MSME); Employment and Labour | Minimum Wage Act | Child and bonded labour. SIDBI organizes programs for skill development under the MSME Act. List of business and occupations which deserves immediate attention: Zari, Beedi, Muri, Leather, Garments, Brick kiln, Recycling, Chemicals, Lower mechanical, Foundry and lath machines, Blacksmith and Iron works, Sericulture and Silk extraction, Handicrafts, Wood work and Carpentry. (more such business can be identified using the NSSO 3 digit occupation and 4 digit enterprise codes).
13. Banking & Credit: Access to bank credit and mass micro-credit programs – RBI. Analyse data compiled by the “State Level Banker’s Committee” for each states of India. These data a compiled according to religion every year and the convener of this committee who generally is the lead bank in a state would maintain these data. The Priority Sector Advances available to be assigned to minorities is Rs. 128382 crores for the year 2010-11. This is 13% of all PSA and the PSA itself is benchmarked to be about 40% of all annual bank credit. The lending to the minorities is mandated to be proportional to their share in population of the region/state/district. Overall at the all India level the proportion is set to be 15%. Thus this source of credit is a growing pool of bank finance available to the minorities under the 15 point program of the GOI. Banks are also mandated to organize entrepreneurial development programs as well. But currently these data are not made public and not analysed to find out the extent of access of bank credit to religious minorities to be 15%. Thus this source of credit is a growing pool of bank finance available to the minorities under the 15 point program of the GOI. Banks are also mandated to organize



entrepreneurial development programs as well. But currently these data are not made public and not analysed to find out the extent of access of bank credit to religious minorities.

14. Community Based Polytechnics: Community Polytechnic Scheme is run by the Ministry of Human Resource Development, Government of India. This is wing attached to the regular polytechnics under direct central assistance scheme. Hardly any review has been done as to how this program is benefiting the masses. This scheme has huge potential to skill development and re-skilling layoff-labour.

About US-India Policy Institute (USIPI)

“Business Plan for Social Change”

VISION

The USIPI envisions that citizens of India and the United States and the world at large are economically, educationally, politically and culturally engaged and have equal access to freedom, justice and opportunity without any prejudice.

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India and the US are the World's largest and oldest democracies. This special relationship is based on common commitment to equality, freedom, rights and equal access to resources and developmental opportunities. USIPI is committed to materializing this mission:

- Generate facts for effective public policy.
- Articulate policy vision for economic development, diversity, equal opportunity and inclusiveness.
- Provide forum for debate and discourse on strengthening democracy, secular institutions and minority rights in India and the US.
- Strive to stimulate a deep US and India relationship committed to sustainable development.

RESEARCH AND ACTIVITIES

- Conduct research and publish papers on sustainable development, democracy, diversity and equal opportunity.
- Identify issues confronting the nations and suggest policy reform.
- Prepare Status Reports on issues of Development, Democracy and Diversity especially the inter-relationships between them.
- Review of post-Sachar Committee inclusive policies on a regular basis.
- Diversity Index - prepare methodologies for indexing universities, States and business corporations.
- Research and Policy relating to elimination of bonded child Labor.
- Gender empowerment and family polices.
- Strive for establishment of equal opportunity commission leading to creation of ministries at federal and state levels.
- Articulate and study discriminatory practices in access to education, employment, banking and housing.
- Exchange programs and engaging civil society through dialog.
- Write speeches and policy brief for leaders on sustainable development, democracy and diversity.
- Generate new opportunity for dialogue and engagement with Government and other policy making bodies such as the Planning Commission, Reserve Bank of India and Federations of Industry and commerce.

OBJECTIVES

Research:

Undertake research in the area of economic development, product and labor markets, social development, diversity, equal opportunity, rule of law and justice. Design and execute empirical, evidenced based research and analysis and publish books, monographs and journal articles. Publish 'policy notes' on key issues relevant for India, South Asia and the United States.

Policy Reform:

Identify specific sectors of the economy, society and polity where policy reforms are necessary. Be watchful of all the major policy announcements of the government of India and state governments and assess their impact on the lives and living conditions of the deprived communities including the minorities. Prioritize policy issues that promote inclusiveness, equal opportunity and diversity in public and private spheres in India.

Services:

The USIPI will provide the following services to all interested in India and the USA.

- Provide access to Indian economic research
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- Facilitate participation in India economic policy forums.
- Host debates and policy discussions for academics from the United States, India and other countries with interest in India and USIPI focus areas.
- Organize lectures by experts within the US and visiting dignitaries such as the academics, policy makers, diplomats, negotiators, corporate and government officials, legal experts, religious personalities and civil society representatives.

Exchange and Civil Society Interaction:

Encourage and provide opportunities for research exchanges between scholars from the United States and India in areas that contribute to USIPI's mission and activities. Interact with Indian civil society organizations to provide technical assistance to support programs that promote inclusive development across India, including both independent projects and projects undertaken in collaboration with government departments and agencies.

Priority Research and Policy Studies

- Monitor and evaluate all programs of major ministries and departments of the government of India that impact diversity and inclusiveness.
- Advocate multinational corporations and governmental sector to ensure diversity in the workplace. Compile and explain existing diversity programs and corporate ethical practices in compliance with government orders and policies in the trade associated US investments in India.
- Engage and influence international funding agencies to incorporate inclusive policies and develop strategies to support and empower marginalized and economically disadvantaged groups within India.
- Advocate for the establishment of Equal Opportunity Commission/s (EOC) at the national and state levels.
- Advocate for the establishment of National Data Bank/s (NDB) at the national and state levels

CURRENT RESEARCH PROJECTS

1. Relevance of the US-EEOC in the formation of Equal Opportunity Commission in India
2. Corporate Investments Promoting Diversity in India
3. Lessons from the US Diversity Programs in Elementary and High Schools
4. How inclusive are the post-Sachar development and welfare policies in India?
5. 'Diversity and Development in India'
6. Assessing the Curse of Child Labour on Schooling and Higher Level Education
7. Mechanism of Inter-generation Transfers in India and the Role of Women
8. Bridging Cultures: The 'Ordinary-Extraordinary' Citizens' Contribution to Nation Building
9. Poverty and Human Development Impact of (internal) Migration
10. Distress and Vulnerability according to Socio-Religious Categories



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