



## Action for Inclusion Newsletter

June, 2010



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### Editorial

A warm welcome to this first issue of the Action for Inclusion Newsletter of our Action for Inclusion Division. The first edition of the newsletter is a compilation of relevant news items, extracts and findings from studies, steps taken by the Government, and the existing inequalities and exclusion. You can help us make this newsletter interesting and informative by sending your inputs in terms of field case studies, information/update on inclusive action, existing inequalities and exclusion and much more. We welcome your feedback and suggestions. Please email us at [khilesh@askindia.org](mailto:khilesh@askindia.org).

For the e-version of this newsletter, please log on to: [www.askindia.org](http://www.askindia.org).

**Khilesh Chaturvedi.**

**Photo credits: Bindiya Rawat - ASK**

## Action for Inclusion Division

Action for Inclusion (AI) Division, the youngest division at ASK has emerged in response to current Indian scenario of lopsided development, leading to ever increasing gap and disparities. AI division dedicates itself to working towards ensuring that the "Development in the country (Government and private sector policies, plans and their implementation) is more inclusive and favorable towards the excluded, marginalized groups, providing them better share of the resources and developmental opportunities and working towards the narrowing of the gap in the social and economic well being".

Social exclusion issues in India are gaining more relevance by the day. This is primarily because while India as a country is growing at a decent growth rate, not all sections of society have been able to take advantage of this growth. A large majority of people are yet to enjoy the benefits of this development and still remain excluded.

Social exclusion has got at its centre the idea that some individuals are outside the society in one way or the other. It describes a process by which certain people or groups are discriminated on some economic, political and cultural ground. Social exclusion as an idea talks less about the victims, and more on the processes that causes exclusion.

**Social inclusion is a concept, which talks about correcting the distortions left behind by social exclusion.**

The "Action for Inclusion" will include:

- Studying the trends of the developmental plans, policies & laws and the implications on the status of the marginalized in the country and disseminating these trends and information to wide variety of stakeholders
- Making interventions on pilot basis with identified groups and sections, which are marginalized, together with NGOs at the grassroots
- Assisting NGOs in sharpening the focus within their organization and programs on excluded groups.
- Engaging with Youth in Urban locations, and sensitizing them towards changes in perspectives and action in favor of those excluded

## IN FOCUS

### Study on Exclusion and Inclusion in Keonjhar, Orissa: Key Findings

Together with the five NGOs of Keonjhar in their respective areas, the ASK as per of its Action for Inclusion (AI) Project carried out a rapid exclusion and inclusion study. As a result, the context of Odisha and Keonjhar, particularly the status of the Tribals and the aspects of Exclusion have been well understood. This has been supported by ongoing secondary data collection. The study was conducted together with the NGOs and became a tool also to sensitize the five NGOs on the issues of exclusion and possible areas to work on inclusion. The NGOs very well recognize these issues and that their current work is not addressing these issues of exclusion and are keen on making interventions.

Before undertaking the study, a scan tool was developed to make an Exclusion and Inclusion assessment from socio-cultural, economic and political perspective and also from the point of access to services and development, rights and justice.

The tool was then applied at the communities associated with NGOs, looking at the conditions of the community, the interventions of the NGOs and that of the government and private sector.



### The major highlights of the study were as given below

#### Economic Exclusion

- Tribal communities, and also most of other poor communities in rural areas, are dependent on agriculture, collection of NTFP and daily wage labor for their incomes
- Agriculture is totally rain dependent and periodic droughts make the situation precarious
- Tribals have absolutely no participation in or benefit from the growing industrial growth of Keonjhar (Mining, Steel, Transportation, allied industry, service sector)
- The major reason is the lack of education. Quality of Government education is extremely poor. Very few students study beyond High School and are not eligible for even Industrial Training Institute (Exclusion from education and development) to gain entry level skilled workers' employment in formal sector. This is despite a Government order from the state Government order of the Odisha Government making it compulsory to employ local people in 60% unskilled workers jobs, 30% skilled persons jobs up to the level of supervisors and 10 % executive level jobs.

- On the contrary, the collection of NTFP and other forest produce has been affected by increasing mining activity. Mining activity which is leading to major health hazards in the area.
- Migration for casual labor is both inter and intra district. Several cases have been noted wherein the contractors have taken adolescent boys and girls for work which can well be a route to trafficking.
- The Tribal boys and girls do have aspirations to start a business or be employed in formal sectors of employment but they are not qualified. The very few who are, cannot afford to complete a professional course
- NREGA, the flagship scheme of the government of India is by and large a non starter - many people do not have the necessary job cards. Those who have them, do not get the requisite number of days of employment. The ones who got employment have signed on papers as having received more work than they have actually got (which means someone signed off the money on their behalf). Then there are others who have not received payments for work that was done almost one year ago.
- One of the schemes that perhaps works well currently is the state government scheme of Antyodaya as part of Public Distribution System which provide 35 Kg rice @ INR 2 per Kg. There is also a provision of free distribution of 10 Kg of rice for the most marginalized families. However, a Supreme Court appointed committee recently found that the Public Distribution system is most widely infected with corruption across most states in India.
- Another process working, though agonizingly slow, is that of Land titles being gained by Tribals living in forest areas in keeping with the provisions of Forest Rights Act

### **Action for Inclusion to move beyond Rights based approach**

- The Rights Based approach, where in communities and NGOs are fighting for entitlements, while very useful and necessary, is only leading to minimum guarantees, such as in the case of NREGA (that is if it works well) and Public Distribution System. When working well, these will lead to only survival or barely hanging on by the excluded groups. But this will definitely not ensure inclusion in the economic growth of the poor in the economic mainstream. Therefore they will remain in the same condition or become worse in terms of increasing disparities, as other communities continue to grow and develop. This was a major point of realization among the NGOs.

### **Exclusion from Government services**

- As mentioned earlier NREGA does not work well. Community has average or poor rating for other government programs also such as health facilities, water, sanitation, electricity supply.
- The health facilities are far away, made worse with poor communication. Having to bribe the health personnel (Doctors, nurses, attendants, cleaning staff) is common. Otherwise, the patient is not discharged from the hospital.
- Villagers in a meeting explained how they have to spend INR 2000 for a Child birth, totally negating the grant of INR 1400 from Janani Suraksha Scheme (To encourage Institutional deliveries). Obviously no one is interested in the Institutional Delivery being promoted by the government.

### **Exclusion from Governance**

- The people have no influence in the Local Governance or the performance of Government.
- They never get any information on deadlines of pending works, information on budgets or expenditures in the Panchayats.
- They also do not have the knowledge, skills and the bargaining capacity to seek answers from Panchayats or other Government functionaries

### **Exclusion within the excluded community**

- Child participation seems to be an alien concept. The Children have no influence in matters that affect them, even though they have clear views on what is lacking in their village or school. So they are totally excluded from decision making processes.
- There is clear gender discrimination in the society in terms of their empowerment (access and control framework)
- Widows are majorly excluded. They are mostly not included in the SHGs. They also have no access to land entitlements which are owned and controlled by their extended families. Their children in several cases end up dropping from their school to support family for work. The widowed women are also seen as bad omen and are not included in certain festivals.

### **The other two most excluded groups are the Elderly and Persons with Disabilities.**

- There are absolutely no services for them. The community is also not sensitive to their special needs.
- The amounts of pension and allowances for Widows, Disability and Old age are only INR 200 per month which is very meager. And Government goes by a per village quota so not all who are eligible get these pensions and allowances

## IN FOCUS

### The Legacy of Social Exclusion - A Correspondence Study of Job Discrimination in India Sukhadeo Thorat, Paul Attewell, Economic and Political Weekly

Beginning in October 2005 and continuing till recently, Professor Sukhadeo Thorat and Paul Attewell carried out a correspondence study of Job discrimination in India. The findings were published in Economic and Political Weekly under the title of their article, "The Legacy of Social Exclusion". As part of the study, Prof. Thorat and Paul Attewell collected advertisements announcing job openings from several national and regional English language newspapers, including the Times of India (New Delhi and Mumbai editions), the Hindustan Times, The Hindu (Mumbai, Delhi and Chennai editions), the Deccan Herald (Bangalore) and the Deccan Chronicle (Hyderabad). From these, advertisements for openings in private sector firms were selected. They deliberately excluded public enterprises from this study. They also avoided advertisements for positions that were highly liberalized or that required many years of on-the-job experience. Their aim was to select jobs that a university graduate might be eligible for within the first few years after graduation: entry-level or near entry-level positions.



For each advertised job, the matched applications differed only in terms of the name of each male applicant. No explicit mention of caste or religious background was made in any application. However, in each matched set, one application was for a person who had a stereotypically high caste Hindu family name. A second was for a job applicant with an identifiably Muslim name. A third applicant had a distinctively dalit (low caste) name.

The type of discrimination being assessed was whether some kinds of college-educated applicants are disproportionately successful, and others disproportionately unsuccessful, at this earliest stage in seeking employment.

This field experiment study of job applications observed a statistically significant pattern by which, on average, college-educated lower-caste and Muslim job applicants fare less well than equivalently-qualified applicants with high caste names, when applying by mail for employment in the modern private-enterprise sector. These were all highly-educated and appropriately qualified applicants attempting to enter the modern private sector, yet even in this sector, caste and religion proved influential in determining ones job chances. These discriminatory outcomes occurred at the very first stage of the process that Indian university graduates go through to apply for a job.

## News & Views

### 'Tribals worst victim of industrialisation'

Express News Service, 19 March, 2008

BHUBANESWAR: Planning and Coordination Minister Duryodhan Majhi was candid enough to admit that benefits of the developmental programmes have not percolated down to the poor much to the embarrassment of the Government. In an innocent but frank admission, the Minister on Tuesday said in the Assembly that progress of the State has become a misery for the tribals. Replying to the demand discussion on Planning and Coordination Department, he said 'Rajyara Paragati Adivasinka Durgati' much to the amusement of the Opposition. The Minister said that liberalization on may have brought progress to the State but tribals are the worst sufferers. Majority of the displaced families in the process of liberalization on are tribals. As they do not possess required qualifications they do not find job in the industries which displaced them. Whatever compensation they get for displacement is wasted in liquor consumption and they remain as poor as ever. They are migrating to neighbouring states in search of livelihood, the Minister said. Even as the Government is committed to increase irrigation potential, tribals are least benefitted out of it. On the other hand, more tribals are displaced by irrigation projects.



## **Orissa in Transition - From Fiscal Turnaround to Rapid and Inclusive Growth - Forthcoming World Bank Study (<http://go.worldbank.org/6X7HVI1XE0>)**

From being the poorest state of India in the mid 1990s, Orissa has become a state on the move. The state's economy has shifted gear and is on a higher growth trajectory. Gross state domestic product (GSDP) has grown at 8.5 percent on average during the Tenth Plan period (2002-07), compared to 5.5 percent during the previous plan (1997-2002) and even slower in the past.

Public investments in infrastructure have begun to rise, and private industrial investment is booming. The finances of the state have improved remarkably, creating fiscal space for expanding public investments.

### **A great deal still remains to be done**

Second poorest state in the country: Despite recent progress, however, Orissa is still the second poorest state in the country with one of the lowest levels of urbanization. Over 45 percent of its people live in poverty with the scheduled tribes (STs) - who make up a sizeable 22 percent of the state's population - lagging far behind the rest of the population. Most STs live in tiny villages or remote habitations in the hills where their geographical isolation underlies much of their poverty. Rural electrification is among the lowest in the country; some 18,000 villages and 5 million households have yet to get electricity. Learning levels in schools are low, and the burden of ill health too high.

Education: While school enrollment has risen, learning levels remain very low. While the state government has launched bold measures to improve teacher accountability, strong educational fundamentals from the earliest years, supplemented by some public and mostly private efforts in training and skill development are needed.

**Health:** Despite dramatic improvements in overall infant mortality rates in the past 5-10 years, the predominantly tribal districts lag behind. They have the poorest immunization rates and least access to antenatal care. While the state government's health sector plan for 2005 envisages a decentralized and participatory approach to service delivery, innovative and flexible approaches will be required to reach geographically isolated villages. Importantly, systems of accountability will need to be strengthened before budget allocations to education, healthcare, and anti-poverty programs are increased.

## **Odisha government to help tribals get land rights**

### **Kalinga Times Correspondent**

Bhubaneswar, June 24: Taking note of the growing agitation by tribals in Koraput and other parts of the state, Odisha government has announced that it would extend legal assistance to the tribals to get land rights.

The government said on Tuesday that measures will be taken to release tribal land that were in possession of non-tribals and return the same to the tribals. The government will register cases on behalf of the tribals who were unable to fight cases to get back their land. Legal assistance would also be provided to the tribals in this regard.

The government further said that the newly-established Tehsil offices will be made fully functional and vacant posts in Tehsil and Revenue Inspector offices will be filled up. In order to resolve land disputes in tribal-dominated regions, senior Odisha Administrative Services will be posted as Officer of Special Duty to hear such cases. The government further said that about 20,000 tribal families living in forest land had been identified to be given pata under the provisions of the Odisha Scheduled Tribe and Traditional Dwellers Act, 2006.

Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik has ordered for regular review of the progress in the with regard to the the Chief Minister had told the state Assembly last week that a detailed action plan would be put in place in order to address the land related issues of the tribals in Narayanpatna area where the tribals had been agitating for land rights.

## **Orissa HC allows forest rights to tribals**

### **Friday, August 14, 2009**

Cuttack: The State Government's bid to stop Maoists from wooing tribals got a boost when the High Court on Wednesday allowed it to distribute forest rights and forestlands to the traditional dwellers of forests. Subject to certain conditions, the High Court vacated an interim stay imposed by it about a year ago on implementation of the Scheduled Tribes and Other Traditional Forest Dwellers (Recognition of Forest Rights) Act, 2006. "With the vacation of the stay, the State Government can now go ahead with its proposal to distribute record of rights (Pattas) to the forest dwellers which would go a long way in tackling the Naxal menace in the State," said Advocate General Ashok Mohanty.

## **Amartaya backs right to food law**

**Sutapa Deb, Sunday August 9, 2009, New Delhi**

At a press conference in the Capital on Saturday, Nobel Laureate Amartaya Sen said a right to food law was imperative as the number of people in the country who were undernourished was horrendously large. National Family Health Surveys surveys have shown that nearly 30 per cent children are born with low birth weight, every second child is malnourished.

Economist Jean Dreze said the right to food law could be an opportunity to expand and consolidate food entitlements for the people to include out of school children, migrant workers, the elderly and the disabled. Jean Dreze, along with Harsh Mander, Biraj Patnaik and other Right to Food campaigners, is working on a freelance draft of the Right to Food Act, which will be presented to the Government. Their draft stresses on social assistance for the vulnerable and child nutrition programmes.

## **Financial Express**

**Orissa to reserve 90% jobs in MoU projects for locals**

**State Bureau Posted: Wednesday, Oct 22, 2008 at 2344 hrs IST**

**Updated: Wednesday, Oct 22, 2008 at 2344 hrs IST**

Bhubaneswar, Oct 21 : The Orissa government will force investors to provide at least 90% of the jobs in their projects to the locals.

It has taken a decision to direct investors to reserve 90% of the skilled and unskilled jobs for the locals. If required, the government will effect amendments in the memorandums of understanding signed for steel, aluminium and other projects in the state. The district collectors will be told to ensure that the project promoters are implementing the decision, government sources said.

The government, meanwhile, has asked the MoU companies putting up mega projects in the state to give a detailed report about the opportunity the mother industry will create for ancillary and downstream industries. So far, Posco India, Jindal Stainless Ltd, and Arati Steel have given their reports about ancillary and downstream industries. The MoU companies have sourced Rs 37 crore worth of materials from industries in the state for their project work by March 2008.

The state government on its own has identified that there is a scope for about 90 such industries to come up in Kalinganagar Industrial Complex near Dubri and 40 in Jharsuguda industrial area. The government is proposing to develop Kalinganagar as a major hub for steel, while Sambalpur-Jharsuguda and Dhenkanal-Angul for steel, aluminium and power. Paradip would be developed as a petro-chemical and steel hub. Balasore will become a plastic hub, while Choudwar one for auto components. Port-related industries would come up at Dhamra port, being developed jointly by L&T and Tata Steel.

To encourage micro, small & medium enterprises to invest in the ancillary and downstream industries, the state government has already prepared the draft for a separate policy. The policy is expected to be announced by this year-end.

PM has spoken, now time to act

## **New Indian Express, Saturday, November 7, 2009, Edit Page**

The day Prime Minister Manmohan Singh made a welcome departure from his oft-repeated law-and-order perspective on Left extremist movements his new line was both borne out and roundly contradicted. At a chief ministers' conference on implementing the Forest Rights Act and other tribal issues, Singh made a strong pitch for tribal development. He said that economic development in forest and mineral-rich areas inhabited by tribal people was not touching their lives and that this was unacceptable. He said growth had to be inclusive and the lot of the tribals had to improve. The absence of such a model of growth was encouraging a cult of violence. Singh also pointed out that state governments were not sensitive to issues relating to tribal population. Only one chief minister - Orissa's Naveen Patnaik - attended the meeting. Those of other states with significant tribal population and concomitant Naxal movements didn't - in the roster were Andhra Pradesh's K Rosaiah, Bengal's Buddhadeb Bhattacharjee, Bihar's Nitish Kumar, Chhattisgarh's Raman Singh and MP's Shivraj Singh Chauhan. Jharkhand does not have a CM.

## **Financial Express**

**Ministry for automatic inclusion of Muslims in BPL list**

**J P Yadav**

**Posted: Tuesday, Jan 19, 2010 at 2054 hrs IST, Updated: Tuesday, Jan 19, 2010 at 2054 hrs IST**

**New Delhi:** In a move that could stir the political pot, the rural development ministry under Congress leader CP Joshi has given a proposal on 'automatic inclusion' of Muslims in the below-poverty line (BPL) list of families along with Scheduled Castes (SCs) and Scheduled Tribes (Sts). Aware of the political sensitivities involved, the ministry plans to replace the word 'Muslim' with 'minority' to pre-empt opposition-especially from BJP-ruled states who are likely to protest the move.

Inaugurating a conference of social editors, rural development minister CP Joshi said that to simplify the process of identification of BPL families, his department has broadly decided on automatic 'inclusion' and 'exclusion'. It has been proposed, he said, that SCs, STs and minorities will be automatically included in the BPL list and then the well-off families would be excluded on basis of Income Tax returns, land etc.

Joshi justified the proposal of automatic inclusion stating that "SCs, STs and minorities together form less than 37% of the population" - less than the BPL population pegged by the SC Saxena and Suresh Tendulkar Committee reports released recently. He, however, said that his ministry was waiting for the NSSO survey to decide the mode to be adopted for the new BPL survey.

By proposing of automatic inclusion of Muslims under the 'minority' head, Joshi has gone beyond what the Saxena Committee report - it was appointed by the rural development ministry - recommended on the methodology to be adopted for a BPL survey. While it said that weightage should be given to certain social groups, including Muslims, during the survey, it did not favour automatic inclusion. According to the Saxena report, SCs/STs would get three points and Most Backward Castes (MBC) two points. The Saxena report said that Muslims and OBCs be given one point each.

Automatic inclusion of Muslims in the BPL list could be the first major attempt by the Congress-led UPA government to woo the vote bank that roughly constitutes 18% of the country's population. The proposal could be significant given that Uttar Pradesh and Bihar go to state polls in 2012 and 2010 respectively, states where the Congress is desperately trying to get a foothold.

Inclusion and exclusion from the BPL list is a big issue in the rural hinterland, particularly in the Hindi heartland, since benefits of most Central and state-sponsored welfare schemes like Indira Awas Yojna, old age pension are decided on the basis of the list.

### **Salary of below Rs 6000 a month is set to be new definition of urban poor**

**Smita Aggarwal, Indian Express, Feb 24, 2010 at 0327 hrs New Delhi:**

The government is likely to raise the income threshold to define the economically weaker section (EWS) to about Rs 6,000 a month from the current Rs 3,300 a month. This will increase EWS numbers by almost 40 per cent.

The EWS population benefits from government housing schemes and gets softer interest rates on housing loans from state-owned banks. The move to hike the threshold is based on an internal report the Housing and Urban Poverty Alleviation Ministry undertook to review the income criteria of the EWS and Lower Income Group (LIG) households in urban India. The review has revealed that income levels of these two groups have more or less doubled in the last five years.

According to the report, for those under the LIG category, income levels will touch almost Rs 14,000 a month from Rs 3,301-Rs 7,300 at present. This will swell their numbers by about 20-25%. The new EWS and LIG income levels are based on the monthly per capita expenditure of an average Indian as per the National Sample Survey Organisation's (NSSO) 55th round in 2004-05. It is estimated that of a total urban population of 286 million, almost 81 million account for urban poor. EWS and LIG households together loosely constitute the urban poor.

"The current definition of EWS and LIG was outdated. It had artificially depressed demand in urban areas. The new definition will enable the government to identify beneficiaries for its social sector schemes," said a senior ministry official.

### **Improved schooling together with cash transfers in Brazil explain the Decline in Brazil's Inequality?**

Degol Hailu, International Policy Centre for Inclusive Growth (IPC-IG) and Sergei Suarez Dillon Soares, Institute for Applied Economic Research (IPEA) in their One pager, No. 89, July 2009, published by the International Policy Centre for Inclusive Growth (IPC - IG), (Bureau for Development Policy, UNDP) present the following analysis on what led to decline in Brazil's inequality.

The economics profession has long debated whether there is a trade-off between growth and equity. Countries that pursued inequality-reducing strategies have been warned that growth will be affected, and hence that poverty increases. The harbingers of doom advocated a growth-focused strategy. Their assumption was that the income of the poor rises in direct proportion to economic growth. The truth is more like this: economies with more equal income distribution are likely to achieve higher rates of poverty reduction than very unequal countries. In this One Pager we consider if this is the case in Brazil. Inequality in Brazil, as measured by the Gini coefficient, fell from 0.59 in 2001 to 0.53 in 2007. Much remains unknown about why inequality has fallen, but two sets of known causes stand out. The first consists of improvements in education. In the early and mid 1990s, for example, the workforce gained more equal access to education. This is because of universal admission to primary schooling and lower repetition rates. In conjunction with other demographic trends, such as a decline in family size and improvements in family dependency ratios, access to education helped reduce inequality. We estimate that the impact of improved access to education on primary income distribution was 0.2 Gini points per year from 1995 onwards.

The second set of factors that reduce inequality are direct cash transfers from the state to families and individuals. These transfers improve secondary income distribution. For instance, a rise in the minimum wage leads to an increase in various transfers, such as the lowest level of the contributory pension system, partially contributory rural pensions, and non-contributory income substitution for those who are unable to work and who live in poor families. At the same time, conditional cash transfers, such as Bolsa Família, deliver substantial amounts directly to the poorest families. Together, these changes lead to reductions in

inequality of another 0.2 Gini points per year. These two well-documented causes of inequality reduction explain about two-thirds of the fall in the Gini coefficient since 2001 (see Veras et al., 2006). For the remaining third the evidence is somewhat unclear, but we can plainly see knock-on effects of better income distribution. As the figure shows, the income of the bottom six deciles in Brazil has been rising since 2001, while the income of the top four deciles has risen only since 2004. For the period 2001-2007, the bottom six deciles, which account for only 18 per cent of income, accounted for 40 per cent of total income growth.

### **Increasing casualization of labor**

Growth rate of wages, including casual work-the bottom layer of workers- declined during 1994-2005 compared to the previous decade net. Growth of employment from 1999-2000 to 2004-05 has been largely informal, increasing the vulnerability of workers from this sector - National Commission for Enterprises in the un-organized Sector

### **Drawing a line**

The Indian Express, Dec 10, 2009 at 0213 hrs

Till recently, we were told that the number of poor people in India in the financial year 2004-05 was 30.17 crore, or 27.5 per cent of the population. Now we are told that the number was actually 37.2 per cent, a jump of 10 per cent of the population. And, incredibly, that is actually good news.

Why? Because the jump comes not from a revision of the previous figure, not from news that 10 per cent more of the population suffered from unspeakable levels of poverty than we had known till now, but from a redefinition of what it means to be poor. And the nature of that redefinition of the poverty line demarcates also an old conception of India from the new. A committee headed by economist Suresh Tendulkar critically examined the old "Dandekar-Rath" poverty-line formula, drawn up in 1971. That formula looked exclusively at the calorie content of an Indian's diet; and, if it was lower than 2250 calories per person per day (an arbitrary figure), placed that person below the poverty line. Remember: this was before the green revolution, well before liberalization. The committee recommended scrapping the focus on calorie intake alone; it should be replaced, according to the report, by a cost-of-living index that took into account other expenditure.

This is a long-overdue recognition that India's poor are no longer seen as just more mouths to feed. As in any growing economy, the aspirations and demands of India's poor are increasing, as are the opportunities open to them. It reflects, too, India's growing aspirations: throughout history, as any society prospers, the standards it has set for an "acceptable" level of poverty in its midst have altered. And, finally, it drives home an important point about India's rural areas. For too long left-leaning economists have relied on an anomalous fact: as liberalization's gains have filtered through to India's villages, calorie intake there has fallen. From this they have made the fallacious argument that India's development hurts its rural poor. In actual fact, of course, the rural-urban divide is blurring, and people who once worked for hours in the fields now do more sedentary work - and consequently eat less. Updating the definition helps skewer that malicious fallacy. For all these reasons, this is an idea we should welcome.

### **Publications of Interest**

- Overcoming Inequality, Why Governance matters, Education for All Global Monitoring report, 2009, Oxford University Press and UNESCO
- Dimensions of Social Exclusion: Ethnographic Explorations - Editor: K.M. Ziyauddin and Eswarappa Kasi, Nov 2009, Cambridge Publishing South Asia

*"Like Slavery and Apartheid, Poverty is not natural. It is Man-made and it can be overcome and eradicated by the actions of HumanBeings"*

**Nelson Mandela, 2005**



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