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## **Socio-economic problems of marginalized sections of the society: Governmental approach in India**

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### **Abstract**

The problem of marginalization of people in a society is not new, in the present era; it has acquired a place of much significance, especially in the context of globalization, adoption of new concepts of social development, and emergence of new conditions of sustenance of social injustice, and exclusion. Marginalization is the common issue of all the societies in the world. In every society, there is marginality in many forms. The concept of marginality is generally used to analyze socio-economic, political, and cultural spheres. Their problems can be related to homelessness, unemployment, poor access to social, health, and poor living conditions.

This research paper mainly focuses on the socio-economic problems of marginalized sections of the society in India. In order to solve their problems, the marginalized sections of the society are making serious attempts to achieve the much needed empowerment. This study will be helpful for the government authorities and policy makers to understand the problem in the right perspective. Finding of the study shows Government generates are introduced in the form of projects, loans and grants, technical and financial assistance, providing pensions, and disability benefits for betterment their socio-economic life.

**Keywords:** marginalized groups, empowerment, socio-economic problems, poverty unemployment and inequality

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### **Introduction**

The constitution of India distinguishes publicly marginalized sections of the society on the basis of the caste they belong to. On the basis of caste, Scheduled Castes (SC), Scheduled Tribes (ST), other Backward Classes (OBCs) and the religious minorities. Women are also considered to be in the marginalized section of society in numerous fields, especially in the field of education.

The marginalized sections of the society are continuously engaged in the endeavour which is required on their part to attain empowerment. Empowerment refers to the execution of capabilities in the individuals or groups to continue effectively in leading to their wellbeing. Conceptually, empowerment is a process that helps individuals to acquire management, direction and organization of their own lives through promotion of knowledge, education, awareness, and putting into practice the order to acquire larger control.

Empowerment is also regarded as the development amounting to personal, interpersonal or political power so that the individuals, families and communities can undertake certain practices to progress their conditions<sup>[1]</sup>. The Majority of people, SC's/ST's backward classes, socio-economically backward sections of the society, women and physically disabled lag behind and stay out of educational institutions. Distance education provides them with the original opportunities for attaining education; to understand the operations of the concept 'education' for all.' India initiated its open and distance learning system during the early 1980s. The schemes that have been initiated are provision of micro-finance, setting up of self-employment income generation projects, loans and grants, etc. (Kapur. 2018, New Delhi).

The term 'marginality' is an experience that affects millions of people across the world. People who are marginalized have relatively little control over their lives, and the resources

available to them. This outcome in making them handicapped is a debilitating contribution to society. A vicious circle is set up whereby their lack of positive and supportive relationships means that they are prevented from participating in local life, which in turn leads to further isolation. This has an enormous influence on the development of these individuals as normal human beings, as well as on society at large. As the objective development is to build an enabling environment for people to enjoy a productive, healthy and comfortable and dignified life, it is essential to address the issue of marginalization. Marginalization deprives a large majority of people throughout the world from participating in the development of the country. It is an extremely difficult problem to solve and there are unfortunately, many factors that cause marginalization. Marginalization is multi-dimensional process that denies opportunities and outcomes to those 'living on the margins', while enhancing the opportunities and outcomes for those who are 'at the centre'. The EFA Global Monitoring Report 2010: Reaching the marginalized, defines marginalization as "a form of acute and persistent disadvantage rooted in underlying social inequalities."<sup>[2]</sup> (Alam, 2018, Peer Reviewed Journal, p. 553-554.) This crucial problem needs to be addressed first at the policy level. This project deals with the problems related with the groups suffering from marginalization and the ways to reduce it. These people are marginalized, from a group or community for their protection and integration and are known as 'marginalized groups'. This limits their opportunities and means for survival. This has a major impact on development of human beings, as well as on society at large. As the objective of development is to build an enabling environment for people to enjoy a productive, healthy, and creative life, it is important to address the issue of marginalization. Peter Leonard defines marginality as, "... being outside the mainstream of productive activity and social

reproductive activity.” (Alam, 2018, Peer Reviewed Journal, p. 553). This paper discusses the issues of marginalization and social inclusion and their particular relevance for the wellbeing of individuals and groups in India. Specific attention is paid to the relation between marginalization and access to health services. Marginalization and social exclusion of individuals and groups are a reality in virtually every society and in every period of human history. In the second part of the 20th century- driven by human rights aspects and social research, national governments, transnational bodies and institutions (UN/EU) paid more and more attention to the improvement of the situation of those, who are excluded. Civil society, and self-organizations, social researchers and NGO’s played a prominent role in addressing the issue of social exclusion and in advocating sustainable changes. In the area of marginalization, many different aspects and issues have to be addressed, such as discrimination, racism, poverty, globalization, immigration, social welfare, health and human rights. Also the list of potentially or actually marginalized and excluded individuals, groups and populations is extensive: ethnic minorities, immigrants, disabled persons, isolated older persons, ex-prisoners, drug users, people living with HIV/AIDS, psychiatric patients, sex workers, homeless people and marginalized youth. These people and groups face common social, economic and individual problems [3]. Vulnerable groups like migrants and ethnic minorities, homeless people, drug addicts, sex workers, youth with risk behavior, isolated older people or people with disabilities face higher risks of social exclusion and marginalization. Their problems can be related to homelessness, unemployment, poor access to social and health services, low health status and poor living conditions. The concept of marginality is generally used to analyze socioeconomic, political, and cultural spheres, where disadvantaged people struggle to gain access to resources and full participation in social life. In other words, marginalized people might be socially, economically, politically and legally ignored, excluded or neglected and therefore vulnerable to livelihood change [4]. It implies that marginalization is a slippery and multilayered concept. Marginalization may manifest itself in forms varying from genocide/ethnic-cleansing and other xenophobic acts/activities at one end of the spectrum, to more basic economic and social hardships at the unitary (individual/family) level. Marginalization is a multilayered concept, sometimes; whole societies may be marginalized at national or global levels, while classes and communities may be marginalized from the dominant social order at the local level. Thus, marginalization is a complex, ‘shifting phenomenon linked to social status’ [5]. Several government policies focusing on the upliftment of these marginalized communities and efforts being made are to improve the social, economic and political inequalities amongst the scheduled caste, scheduled tribes and the other backward classes and disadvantages groups. In spite of the policy of positive discrimination put in place for a long time, the conditions of the majority of the scheduled caste people have by and large remained the same. The study attempts to understand the socio-economic problems and living conditions of Muslim communities with an emphasis on the livelihood and status of women living in slums located in the old city of Hyderabad. Various significant initiatives such as the creation of Ministry of Minority Affairs (MOMA) in 2006 and the relaunching of the

Prime Minister’s 15-Point programme with an emphasis on educational opportunities, employment and economic activities and living conditions. However, the findings of this study still identified several institutional incapacities in terms of gaps between development needs and policies especially in the context of marginalized and poor communities [6].

In simple, words the term ‘marginalization’ explains the overt actions or tendencies of human societies, where people whom they perceive as undesirable or without useful functions, are excluded, i.e., marginalized. Marginalization has perspectives in sociological, economic, and political debates. (Saksena, D. 2014.) [14] The basic objective of this study is to examine the socio-economic problems due to globalization in Indian society. This concern is not merely academic but is central to the process of emerging development in India.

People who are marginalized have relatively little control over their lives, and the resources available to them. Marginalization deprives a large majority of people across the globe from participating in the development. It is a crucial problem, and there are many factors that create marginalization.

### **Socio-Economic Problems among various Marginalized Groups**

Marginalization is the common issue of all the societies in the world. In every society, there is marginality in many forms. The importance of the social surveys has been growing in the society in contemporary times for obvious reasons. Socio economic problems emerge from time to time in the wake of modernization, thus, bringing the role of state to the core. Addressing these issues through the policy formulation, contributed to an enormous growth of the role of the social surveys, because it is the supportive data collected through a systematic study, which requires for policy formulation in favour of a community/group that is seeking policy in its favour, based on the conditions of socio-economic and educational backwardness it experiences. The Sachar Committee report is one such example which brought out, with the help of the enormous data with an intensive study, the enormous socio-economic backwardness, faced by Muslim in India, on the basis of which there have been the demands articulating for the policy like reservation for the Muslims in educational institutions and employment opportunities [7]. Therefore, one of the basic objectives of this paper is also to examine the changing role of women due to globalization in Indian society. This concern is not merely academic but is central to the process of the emerging development in India.

Most endangered marginalized communities in almost every society can be summarized as below:

#### **a. People with Disabilities**

People with disabilities have had to face, enormous contempt against them due to centuries of biased assumptions, harmful stereotypes, and irrational fears. The stigmatization of disability resulted in the social and economic marginalization of generations with similar disabilities, and, like many other oppressed minorities, this has left people with disabilities in a severe state of impoverishment for centuries. The proportion of the disabled population in India is about 21.9 millions. The percentage of the disabled population to the total population is about 2.13 percent. The disabled face various types of barriers while seeking access to health and various other services.

### b. Women

Under distinct economic conditions, and under the influence of specific historical, cultural, legal and religious factors, marginalization is one of the manifestations of gender inequality. In other words, women may be excluded from certain jobs and occupations, incorporated into certain others. Generally, they are always marginalized in relation to men, in every country and every culture. Women (or, men) don't present a homogeneous category where members have common interests, abilities, or practices. Women belonging to the poorest regions have different levels of marginalization than their better-off counterparts. (Saksena, D. 2014) <sup>[14]</sup>. The role of women in India has been changing and they are now emerging from the past traditions into a new era of freedom and rights. The basic objective of this paper is to examine the changing role of women due to globalization in Indian society. This concern is not merely academic but is central to the process of increasing development in India. There is a need to evaluate the impact of globalization on women in India and also to know the positive and negative impacts of globalization on women in India at present. This paper focuses on the ways in which, directly or indirectly globalization impacts the everyday lives of marginalized sections in the Indian society.

### c. Schedule Castes (*Dalits*)

The caste system is a strictly hierarchical social system based on underlying notions of purity and pollution. The marginalization of *Dalits* influences all spheres of their life, violating in the process basic human rights civil, political, social, economic and cultural. A major proportion of the lower castes and *Dalits* are still dependent on others for their livelihood. *Dalits* do not refer to a particular caste but it suggests a group who is in a state of oppression, social disability and who are helpless and poor. Literacy rates among *Dalits* are very low. They have meagre purchasing power and have poor housing conditions as well as have low access to resources and entitlements. (Saksena, D. 2014). All these factors affect their health status, access to healthcare and results in low quality of life. There are high rates of malnutrition reported among the marginalized groups resulting in mortality, morbidity, and anemia. Access to and utilization of healthcare among the marginalized groups is influenced by their socio-economic status within society.

### d. Scheduled Tribes

The Scheduled Tribes just as the Scheduled Caste face structural discrimination within the Indian society. Unlike the Scheduled Castes, the Scheduled Tribes are a product of the marginalization based on ethnicity. In India, the Scheduled Tribes population is around 84.3 million and members of the STs are regarded to be socially and economically disadvantaged. Their percentages in the population and numbers, however, vary from State to State. Their poor state of existence has resulted in poverty among them, low levels of education, poor health and reduced access to healthcare services. They belong to the poorest strata of the society and have serious health problems. (Saksena, D. 2014).

### e. Children

Poverty has a direct influence on the mortality and morbidity among children. In India, a girl child faces discrimination and differential access to nutritious food and gender-based violence is evident from the falling sex ratio and the use of technologies to

eliminate the girl child. "The manifestations of these violations are varied ranging from child labor, child trafficking, to commercial sexual exploitation and many other forms of violence and abuse" (Saksena, D. 2014) <sup>[14]</sup>. Trafficking of children also remains to be a serious problem in India. While systematic data and information on child protection issues are still not easily available, evidence suggests that children in need of special protection. Often belong to communities suffering from disadvantages and social exclusion such as scheduled castes and tribes, and the poor communities (UNICEF, India).

Marginalization is a broad term when one thinks about it, multiple and numerous images appear such as violence, low levels of poverty, poor health structure, poor educational structure, etc. Marginalization as a process is conceptualized as cumulatively acquired and spatially related phenomena of social, economic cultural and political denials and deprivations, insecurities and uncertainty, hierarchy and domination, which get legitimized and by the functioning of several normative and societal arrangements to relegate several sections of the population at the social margin despite their protests and resistance <sup>[8]</sup>.

Poverty and patriarchy are the two issues which pushes women towards marginalization and exploitation. Situations are more serious in the case of the women in the marginalized communities such as the fishing communities. Human dignity, self-respect, mental and emotional security and the assurance of being valued by others are all immensely important to women's lives, but there is no easy way to quantify them except enhancing their capabilities and this can be possible through the process of development. Development is a universal phenomenon; it is a broad concept which means, freedom of thought and speech, freedom to participate in decision-making, and freedom to work without social bondages (Singharoy, D. K. (2010) <sup>[17]</sup>. Marginalization is referred to wider economic, social, cultural and political arrangements and gets institutionalized as a process through the well-knit socio-cultural and normative arrangements and interactive social processes. It becomes systemic and relational. As a systemic phenomenon, marginalization is integrated and extended to several other subsystems of the society. It is simultaneously cumulative as marginalization in one domain of the society is added to marginalization in other domain. Since marginalization is relational and cumulative. "It is related to the culture of protests of the marginalized against such denial and domination that are shaped within the historically inherited and contemporary social processes". (Singharoy, D. K. (2010), p.49-50) <sup>[17]</sup>

Development means improving the conditions of the poorest. In development, all the modern advances in science, technology, democracy, value, ethics, and social organization fit into the single humanitarian project of producing a far better world.

### Socio-Economic Challenges in a Present Era

Poverty, dependency and feeling of shame are everyday aspects of economic dislocation and social marginalization. The effects of marginalization are extremely widespread. Those who are marginalized suffer from a crisis of identity, and this perhaps leads to rise in social inequality. Deprivation in various aspects of life is the most common result of marginalization. Marginalization deprives the marginalized communities which include poor, underprivileged, etc from many opportunities in life. They face unfair treatment in terms of Employment

opportunities, business opportunities, housing among various others. Such process further moulds into Inequality that creates distinct feelings of being left out or being exploited. Vulnerable, poor and Marginal communities often live without the fundamental freedom of action and choice that many other take for granted. They deficiency of adequate food shelter, education, Health care access and other social and political opportunities that keep them from leading a fulfilling life of their choices. Due to Marginalization these communities face extreme vulnerability to ill health, economic dislocation, and natural disasters. Discrimination and Inequality affects them in their communities<sup>[9]</sup>. Marginalization simply implied as a complex process of relegating specific groups of people to the lower or outer edge of society. It effectively pushes these groups of people to the margin of society economically, politically, culturally and socially following the policy of exclusion. It denies a section of the society equal access to productive resources and avenues for the realization of their productive human potential and opportunities for their full capacity utilization. This pushes the community to poverty, misery, low wage and discrimination and livelihood insecurity. Their upward social mobility is being limited. Politically this process of relegation denies people equal access to the formal power structure and participation in the decision making processes leading to their subordination to and dependence on the economically and politically dominant groups of society. As a result of the economic, political and cultural deprivation a vast chunk of the population has emerged to be socially ignorant, illiterate, uneducated and dependent. Devoid of the basic necessities of life they are relegated to live on the margins of society. Marginalization is the process of according less significance to something or someone moved away from the inner workings of the group. A social phenomenon of excluding a minority, subgroup, or undesirables by ignoring their needs, desires, and expectations<sup>[10]</sup>. There are some barriers, which have to be overcome, some of them listed below:

- a. **Unemployment:** Education has been considered as a prominent aspect and has become widespread amongst the deprived, marginalized and disadvantaged sections of the population as well. When a person has acquired educational and literacy skills, but is unable to obtain a job, then this proves to be a barrier within the course of their empowerment.
- b. **Illiteracy:** There are people among the deprived, marginalized and disadvantaged sections of the population who lack the basic literacy skills, who are not educated; this proves to be a barrier during the course of their empowerment, when a person is illiterate, he becomes deprived and dependent, he faces impediments during the course of self-sustenance and autonomy.
- c. **Inequality:** There are differences in the status and position of marginalized and disadvantaged communities and upper classes, wealthier individuals. Sometimes, because of inequality, gender disparity becomes more evident and may take dangerous proportions. "It is said that women in India, on an average, are paid less than 40% of what men are paid. Both economically and health-wise, women in various countries of the world are openly discriminated against. All such differences based on sex or gender give rise to inequality. It has been stated that in the houses of the upper class individuals, marginalized people are made to sit on the

floor and they have to eat in different utensils, though well educated people communicate with them in an appropriate manner, show courtesy but there are generally widespread disrespect shown to the marginalized when they are spoken to, therefore, it can be stated that inequality proves to be a barrier during the course of empowerment of the marginalized communities".(Kapur, Radhika. 2018.)

- d. **Poverty:** Poverty is another crucial issue and another cause of marginalization and unemployment. There are a lots of people who are poor in this country. So they lack resources for studying that is why they remain backward in and society and remains unemployed. Poverty can effectively be eliminated only when the poor start contributing to the development process in the society. The growth of their active involvement in the growth process of implementation of the programmes is increasingly based on approaches and methods which involve the poor themselves, their involvement in poverty eliminating exercises and economic growth through a process of social mobilization, promoting participatory approaches and institutions for the empowerment of the poor<sup>[11]</sup>.
- e. **Diversity within Minority Groups:** Minorities are not inherently homogenous groups. Many groups may be marginalized within minority communities including women, children, the elderly, persons with disabilities, sex minorities, etc. These communities, experience multiple forms of exclusion and intersecting discrimination. In some cases, discrimination against these groups may be culturally entrenched. The exercise of minority rights is not a justification for the practice of discrimination and the rights of such groups must be respected fully and equally. According to the UN Human Rights Committee, "none of the rights protected under article 27 of the [ICCPR] may be legitimately exercised in a manner or to an extent inconsistent with the other provisions of the [ICCPR]"<sup>[12]</sup>. Women are also commonly discriminated against with respect to ownership and inheritance of property. The Fundamental Human Rights guarantees and non-discrimination are legally binding obligations and do not need instrumental justifications. That said there is a growing body of evidence the Human-rights based approaches and these key guarantees, in specific can lead to more sustainable and inclusive development results. This is to the marginalized communities are Women, people with Disabilities, *Dalits*, Aged people with disabilities, poor, the Downtrodden, etc. (Sharma, Sonali. Poverty, Inequality, and Marginalized Communities).

#### **Initiatives Steps Taken By the Government to Look Into the Problems of Marginalized Sections of the Society: Governmental Approaches in India**

Most South Asian governments have development programmes at times entire ministries, aimed specifically at developing indigenous minorities and incorporating them into the nation states. These programmes ostensibly seek to make these minorities conform to the norms of the ruling majority in the country. As governments often see these groups as hindrances to national progress or a threat to national security, these programmes also serve larger goals of nation building. They state the aim development of groups deemed by government to be in

need of special assistance. Development in this sense refers to raising their standard of living and, more importantly, raising their level of, “civilization” through various social engineering projects <sup>[13]</sup>.

Government efforts to improve socio-economic conditions of the people and human development and promote inclusion and stability are complemented and strengthened with better attention to the situation of minorities and with the participation of minorities in such efforts. The marginalization of religious, ethnic, and linguistic minorities has a significant detrimental impact on poverty reduction, democratic governance, environmental sustainability and conflict prevention. Overcoming the marginalization of minorities has direct benefits for national development processes and the achievement of inclusive growth. Discrimination against minorities is a crucial factor in poverty and inequality; addressing discrimination can make poverty reduction strategies more effective. Knowledge among government actors of the negative effects of discrimination on development and the particularities of cultural and religious traditions of marginalized groups can better equip them to create more flexible, effective and well-informed strategies for poverty reduction <sup>[14]</sup>.

- Educational attainments among minority groups are often lower; curriculum reform that takes account of minority cultures, languages and how they tackle discrimination, contributes towards achieving education for all.
- To achieve the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), major efforts are required to address hard-to-reach groups like the minorities; if these groups are left behind by the MDGs, inequality will increase and inter-communal tensions could rise, undermining the sustainability of MDG achievements. Prevent crisis, strengthen the rule of law and help maintain stability for development.
- Enabling political participation by minority groups can strengthen State cohesion, accountability and help to achieve democratic governance. Fair political representation of minorities can stimulate broad-appeal policies that maximize development potential. Understanding clearly why minorities are marginalized can lead to better solutions for addressing their exclusion and inequality. This can improve the productive capacity of minorities and can increase levels of human development.
- UNDP could help strengthen national development plans by drawing attention to the negative impact of excluding minorities and the benefits of working to include minorities. Minorities are distinct among marginalized groups and can face specific barriers due to their cultural identity or political status. Other marginalized groups like women, children, or people living with HIV may not share such barriers. This requires different strategic responses to eliminate their marginalization.

The International Monetary Fund however, lowered India’s growth forecast by 1.3% points to 4.8% for 2019-20 and stated that India’s growth had slowed sharply. It is self-evident. The nationwide lockdown was imposed in India following novel corona virus, pandemic. In this paper, we have discussed socio-economic problems, health and national healthcare challenges following the lockdown, with focus on population belonging to low socio-economic stratum (SES) <sup>[15]</sup>. Government attempts to

improve sustainable human development and to promote inclusion and stability are complemented and strengthened with better attention to the situation of minorities and with the participation of minorities in such efforts.

Overcoming the marginalization of minorities has direct benefits for national development processes and the achievement of inclusive growth therefore; an economy already affected by slow growth in the previous fiscal year would be severely affected by the lockdown effects as a result of the pandemic. The economic slowdown could aggravate malnutrition. The loss of daily wage earnings or joblessness can make it difficult to buy even basic food items in people belonging to low Socio-Economic Stratum. (SES).

During the current pandemic, the economic downturn has greatly affected people from the lower socio-economic stratum (SES). The distressing media visuals of migrant labourers going to their native places hundreds or thousands of kilometres away from the cities on foot during the lockdown have been critically debated. Remittance of money to the home country, which many migrant Indian workers popularly do, is another way of poverty reduction, economic development and increase in GDP. The economic impact of this pandemic is likely to be more critical for India in the following manner;

- a. increase in poverty i.e. pushing more people below poverty line,
- b. Increasing of socio-economic inequalities that give rise to discrimination which proves very harmful for the society.

Due to the tremendous scale of the problem the government schemes remain vastly inadequate. As an outcome of the lockdown, there is increased possibility of malnutrition among the low SES. “The Food Corporation of India recently allotted 12.96 lakh metric tonnes of food grains under the *Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Anna Yojana* (PMGKAY) as an initiative of Government of India in its fight against the COVID19 Efficacy of this scheme and adequacy of food distribution remains to be seen.” (Gopalan HS, & Misra A. 2020, 30 May). Marginalization is a global issue that influences negatively upon societies across the world. The challenges we face is how to ensure our education systems give every child the quality learning experiences they need to develop and realize their individual potential, to do so in ways that value they are, their language, identity and culture <sup>[16]</sup>.

### Suggestions and Recommendations

- Positive opportunities should be provided by the Government of India for making provision of loans at concessional rates to promote a range of voluntary activities amongst the marginalized, physically and socially backward, disadvantaged and economically deprived sections of the population towards attaining economic self-reliance. The schemes that have been generated are provision of micro-finance, setting up of self-employment income generation projects, loans and grants, assistances, lowered interest rates, pensions, disability benefits but these prove to be highly insufficient.
- Recently, Government of India has passed a bill for the empowerment of women in the society. Now girls have the right to get an equal share along with their brothers in the property of their parents. Girls should be made economically independent. Right to work should be guaranteed to women

so that they are not a burden on their parents. Girls should be well educated.

- There should be all possible efforts to alleviate poverty and to protect weaker sections of the society. Emphasis should be given on socially and economically disadvantaged groups. It also lays emphasis on the expansion of rural employment. Small landholders should help and efforts should make to provide employment to at least one person in a family.
- To take significant initiatives in the interests and for the security of the *Dalits*, other backward classes and the minorities. There should be serious efforts to strengthen employment guarantee schemes both in rural and urban areas, particularly in drought-prone and poverty-ridden areas. Rural infrastructure and other productive capital assets can be generated through large-scale employment programmes.
- The government should take a second look at the New Education Policy and develop major programmes for strengthening the public education system in villages and cities on a much larger scale than today. There is a need to reallocate government resources for education and vocational training.
- Promote more equitable and anti-discriminatory policies, and set norms for policies to decrease horizontal (i.e. between groups) inequalities.
- Controlling discrimination, empowering the marginalize sections of the society and creating more equitable access to and distribution of power can increase productive capacity and strengthen public institutions that will more efficiently regulate markets.
- Instituting participatory urban processes that give a voice in decision-making to poor and marginalized populations.
- Partnering with communities, community-based organizations (CBOs), and non-governmental organizations (NGOs), including advocacy groups, on community-based initiatives.
- Ensuring access to land (including regularization), infrastructure, and urban services.
- Implementing integrated programs for the improvement of the urban environment.
- Alleviating the hardships endured by poor and marginalized populations.
- Initiating special programs to reach vulnerable groups.

### Conclusion

Democratic local governance has enabled them to institutionalize participatory processes, negotiate partnership agreements to counter deprivation or exclusion, develop instruments to target and reach the areas of greatest need, and launch a range of initiatives to foster social inclusion. Though, there has been some improvement in certain spheres and despite some positive changes, the standard of living for the marginalized communities have not improved.

The reasons for the highly alarming rate of poverty and deprivation among the marginalized social groups are to be found in their continuing lack of access to income-earning capital assets (agricultural land and non-land assets), heavy dependence on wage employment, high unemployment rates, lack of education, and several other factors. Therefore, there is a need to focus on

policies to improve the ownership of income-earning capital assets (agriculture land, and non-land assets), employment, human resource and health situation, and prevention of discrimination to ensure fair participation of the marginalized community in the private and the public sectors. There have been disparities amongst sections of the society and regions on the basis of factors such as per capita income, poverty, industrial growth, agricultural growth, literacy and transport and communications; improvements need to be initiated in these areas in order to generate empowerment opportunities for the marginalized communities. The main factors that need to be underscored to bring about empowerment of the marginalized communities are education and literacy, health and family welfare, labor and employment, women and child development, rural development and urban development; advancements in these areas would certainly bring about empowerment of the marginalized groups. The pandemic of COVID19 has necessitated the need for attention to the underserved and marginalized communities holistically, to prevent long-lasting adverse health outcomes. Positive opportunities for the marginalized sections of the society would contribute in the advancement of the country as well as eradication of all kinds of problems such as poverty, illiteracy, inequality and unemployment. While after, marginalized communities are not regarded as an ingredient or part of the society rather they are thought to be unwanted or negligible in the building of society or nation. Thus the need of the day is to, well equip these marginal communities in terms of basic education i.e., awareness. And to ensure fair access and participation in social and economic development in the country is necessary.

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