Inclusive Development and Social Inequality: Challenges in Achieving Viksit Bharat 2047

R. N. Tripathi

Professor, Department of Sociology, Banaras Hindu University, Varanasi, Uttar Pradesh (India) E-mail: <rntripathisociobhu@gmail.com>

Abstract

The vision of Viksit Bharat 2047 aspires to position India as a developed nation by its centenary of independence, but this goal remains contingent upon addressing persistent social inequalities. Despite significant economic growth, disparities rooted in caste, class, gender, region, and digital access continue to obstruct inclusive development. This paper critically examines the challenges of ensuring equitable growth while striving for developmental milestones. Drawing on theoretical perspectives such as Sen's capability approach, Marxist and Weberian analyses of inequality, and intersectionality, it highlights how exclusion manifests across economic, social, political, and cultural domains. The study further evaluates government initiatives-ranging from financial inclusion and skill development to healthcare and digital empowerment-while exposing structural barriers in policy implementation and deep-seated societal hierarchies. It argues that without bridging rural-urban divides, empowering women and marginalized communities, and ensuring digital equity, the aspiration of a truly inclusive Viksit Bharat will remain elusive. The paper concludes by proposing a multi-stakeholder pathway that combines equitable education, participatory governance, and sustainable development, emphasizing that only through inclusive growth can India achieve the transformative vision of development by 2047.

Keywords

Viksit Bharat, Social inequalities, Financial inclusion, Digital empowerment, Participatory governance.

12

Inclusive Development and Social Inequality: Challenges in Achieving Viksit Bharat 2047

1. Introduction

The vision of Viksit Bharat 2047 reflects India's ambition to become a developed nation by its centenary of independence, emphasizing economic prosperity, social justice, environmental sustainability, and democratic governance. This vision requires not merely high economic growth but also equitable distribution of resources and opportunities. The idea of inclusive development thus emerges as the cornerstone for achieving a truly developed India (NITI Aayog, 2023).

India's developmental journey since independence has been marked by significant progress, yet persistent social inequalities continue to challenge its democratic and developmental aspirations. In the initial decades, the Indian state pursued planned development with an emphasis on industrialization and poverty alleviation. However, despite land reforms, affirmative action, and welfare programs, inequalities based on caste, class, gender, and region endured (Deshpande, 2011). The liberalization of the economy in 1991 accelerated GDP growth and integrated India into the global economy, but it also widened income and wealth gaps, exacerbating rural-urban and inter-state disparities (Pal & Ghosh, 2007).

Statistical data illustrates the scale of inequality in contemporary India. According to Oxfam (2023), the richest 1% of Indians own more than 40% of the nation's wealth, while the bottom 50% share just 3%. The Global Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI) 2022 indicates that although India has lifted millions out of poverty, nearly 16.4% of its population remains multidimensionally poor, with higher concentration in rural areas and marginalized communities (UNDP & OPHI, 2022). Gender disparities are also stark, with women's labour force participation rate hovering around 25%-among the lowest globally (World Bank, 2022). Similarly, caste-based inequalities persist, as Dalits and Adivasis face disproportionate levels of poverty, landlessness, and limited access to quality education and healthcare (Thorat & Newman, 2010).

These inequalities are not merely economic but deeply social and cultural. The persistence of caste hierarchies, patriarchal norms, and regional imbalances reinforces exclusion and limits the potential of marginalized groups to fully participate in India's growth story. Moreover, the digital divide is emerging as a new axis of inequality, as access to digital technologies and internet connectivity remains uneven across rural-urban and rich-poor divides (Mehrotra & Parida, 2021). This has serious implications for employment, education, and governance in an increasingly digitalized economy.

Therefore, inclusive development must be conceptualized not only as equitable economic growth but also as the dismantling of structural barriers that perpetuate inequality. The emphasis must be on expanding capabilities, ensuring social justice, and fostering participatory governance, in line with Amartya Sen's (1999) argument that development is the expansion of human freedoms. As the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) emphasize, development cannot be sustainable without inclusivity, equality, and justice (United Nations, 2015).

The rationale for this study, therefore, lies in the recognition that social inequality remains a formidable obstacle to India's developmental trajectory. If these inequities remain unaddressed, the aspiration of Viksit Bharat 2047 will remain incomplete. This paper seeks to explore the conceptual underpinnings of inclusive development, identify the structural and policy-related challenges of inequality in India, and suggest pathways toward building an equitable, inclusive, and sustainable future.

2. Theoretical Framework

The study of inclusive development and social inequality in India draws on a multidimensional theoretical framework combining insights from development economics, sociology, and political theory. Modernization theory (Rostow, 1960) explains India's developmental aspirations toward industrialization and global competitiveness, but it overlooks persistent structural inequalities (Frank, 1966). Marxist perspectives highlight how economic growth without redistribution exacerbates class disparities, particularly in informal and gig economies (Breman, 2013; Marx, 1867/1990), while Weberian analysis emphasizes the role of status, caste, and bureaucratic structures in shaping inequality (Weber, 1946; Jodhka, 2017). Sen's capability approach (1999) shifts the focus from GDP to

human well-being, stressing education, healthcare, and social participation as key to inclusive development. Bourdieu's theory of economic, social, and cultural capital (1986) explains inter-generational reproduction of inequality, and Crenshaw's intersectionality framework (1989) highlights compounded disadvantages faced by groups at the intersection of caste, gender, class, and disability. Finally, the Sustainable Development Goals (United Nations, 2015) provide a normative global framework for socially inclusive, environmentally sustainable, and participatory growth. Together, these perspectives offer a comprehensive lens to analyze the structural, social, and economic dimensions of inequality while guiding policies for achieving Viksit Bharat 2047.

3. Inclusive Development: Concept and Dimensions

Inclusive development is a paradigm that goes beyond conventional notions of economic growth to emphasize equitable opportunities, access to resources, and participation in decision-making for all segments of society. According to the World Bank (2009), inclusive growth is "growth that is broad-based across sectors, and inclusive of a large part of the labour force." Similarly, the United Nations (2015) stresses that development is incomplete if it leaves behind marginalized groups, reinforcing the principle of "leaving no one behind" in the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). For India's Viksit Bharat 2047 vision, inclusivity is thus both a developmental necessity and a moral imperative.

Inclusive development can be understood along several interrelated dimensions:

3·1 Economic Inclusion

Economic inclusion implies providing equal access to productive employment, entrepreneurship, and financial systems. In India, where nearly 80% of the workforce is engaged in the informal sector (ILO, 2018), achieving inclusive growth requires policies that generate quality employment, extend social security, and reduce wage disparities. Schemes like Jan Dhan Yojana have expanded financial inclusion, yet inequalities persist in access to credit, particularly for women, Dalits, and Adivasis (Rangarajan Committee, 2008). For Viksit Bharat 2047, economic inclusion will mean fostering an enabling environment for equitable labour participation, rural development, and technological empowerment.

3·2 Social Inclusion

Social inclusion involves ensuring equitable access to education, healthcare, housing, and basic services. Despite progress in literacy and health indicators, inequalities remain stark. The Annual Status of Education Report (ASER, 2022) highlights wide disparities in learning outcomes between rural and urban schools. Similarly, healthcare remains inaccessible for many marginalized groups despite initiatives like Ayushman Bharat. Social inclusion also requires addressing structural inequalities such as caste-based discrimination, gender bias, and regional backwardness (Deshpande, 2011).

3·3 Political Inclusion

Political inclusion emphasizes participation in governance and decision-making processes. The 73rd and 74th Constitutional Amendments strengthened local self-governance, enabling women and marginalized groups to participate in Panchayati Raj institutions. However, entrenched power hierarchies and limited devolution of resources often restrict their effectiveness (Jayal, 2006). For Viksit Bharat, political inclusion requires deepening democratic institutions, strengthening participatory governance, and ensuring that marginalized voices are not tokenized but genuinely empowered in policy processes.

3·4 Cultural Inclusion

India's social fabric is characterized by linguistic, religious, and cultural diversity. Cultural inclusion entails recognition, respect, and protection of this diversity while combating exclusionary practices. Discrimination against Dalits, Adivasis, and religious minorities persists in many forms, from education to employment and everyday life (Thorat & Newman, 2010). Inclusive development must therefore go beyond material welfare to affirm cultural rights, dignity, and social justice as foundational pillars of a developed India.

3·5 Digital Inclusion

In the age of digital transformation, digital inclusion is critical for bridging inequalities. Access to affordable internet, digital literacy, and online opportunities has become essential for education, employment, and civic engagement. However, the digital divide remains significant, with rural households having only 37% internet penetration compared to 72% in urban areas (IAMAI, 2022). Women

and marginalized communities face additional barriers due to affordability, skills, and social norms (Mehrotra & Parida, 2021). For Viksit Bharat 2047, digital inclusion is indispensable to prevent the deepening of new inequalities in a digital economy.

Inclusive development is thus a holistic framework that integrates economic, social, political, cultural, and digital dimensions. It ensures that growth is not merely measured by GDP but by human well-being, social justice, and democratic participation. For India, this approach is critical to overcoming entrenched inequalities and achieving the transformative vision of Viksit Bharat 2047.

4. Social Inequality in India: Current Challenges

India's trajectory of development has been marked by impressive achievements in economic growth, poverty reduction, and technological innovation, yet its progress has been persistently constrained by deep-rooted social inequalities. These inequalities are multidimensional—spanning caste, class, gender, region, religion, disability, and access to digital resources-and they operate in both visible and invisible forms. Despite constitutional guarantees of equality and extensive policy interventions, disparities continue to structure social and economic life. For the realization of Viksit Bharat 2047, addressing these entrenched inequalities is indispensable, as exclusion undermines not only the distributive justice of growth but also the democratic legitimacy of development. A closer examination of the major dimensions of inequality highlights the scale of the challenge.

Caste-based inequality remains one of the most enduring and complex forms of social exclusion in India. Historically institutionalized through the caste system, it continues to shape access to education, employment, and social mobility. According to the India Human Development Survey (IHDS, 2015), Scheduled Castes (SCs) and Scheduled Tribes (STs) lag behind other groups across nearly all indicators of development, including literacy, income, and health outcomes. For instance, the literacy rate for SCs stands at 66% and for STs at 59%, compared to 80% for upper castes (Census of India, 2011). Economic disparities are equally stark: National Sample Survey (NSSO, 2018) data reveal that the average monthly per capita consumption expenditure for SC households was ₹1,125, and for ST households ₹1,015, significantly lower than the ₹1,587 reported for upper-caste households. Employment patterns also reflect caste

stratification. A disproportionate share of Dalits and Adivasis remain confined to low-wage, unskilled, and precarious jobs, with over 70% employed in the informal sector (ILO, 2018). Landlessness is another marker of exclusion, with only 9% of SC households owning more than two hectares of land compared to 30% of non-SC/ST households (NSSO, 2013). Social discrimination persists despite affirmative action policies, with studies documenting caste-based violence, untouchability practices, and discrimination in education and workplaces (Thorat & Newman, 2010). The persistence of caste-based exclusion highlights that mere economic growth cannot dismantle entrenched social hierarchies without targeted interventions in education, land reforms, and anti-discrimination enforcement.

Gender inequality constitutes another critical barrier to inclusive development. India ranks 127th out of 146 countries in the Global Gender Gap Index 2023 (World Economic Forum, 2023), reflecting disparities in economic participation, political representation, health, and education. Women's labour force participation remains alarmingly low, at around 24% in 2022, compared to a global average of 47% (World Bank, 2022). Even when employed, women are concentrated in informal, low-paying sectors and face a significant gender wage gap of 28% (ILO, 2018). The phenomenon of "time poverty", where women spend a disproportionate amount of time on unpaid domestic and care work, further limits their economic opportunities. Data from the National Sample Survey (2019) indicate that women spend nearly 5 hours per day on unpaid work, compared to just 1 hour for men. Educational attainment for women has improved significantly, with female literacy reaching 70.3% in Census 2011, yet dropout rates remain high among girls in secondary and higher education due to early marriage, household responsibilities, and lack of safety in schools. In terms of political inclusion, women constitute only 14% of Parliament and 10% of state legislatures, though they make up nearly 46% of elected representatives in Panchayati Raj institutions due to mandated reservations (Ministry of Panchayati Raj, 2022). Gender-based violence remains pervasive, with the National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB, 2021) reporting over 428,000 cases of crimes against women, including domestic violence, sexual harassment, and trafficking. These structural and cultural barriers perpetuate gender inequality and undermine the potential contribution of half of India's population to development. For Viksit Bharat, gender equality is not

merely a matter of rights but also an economic imperative, as increasing female workforce participation could add nearly $770 billion to India's GDP by 2025 (McKinsey Global Institute, 2018).

The rural-urban divide is another dimension of inequality that poses a serious challenge to inclusive growth. Nearly 65% of India's population still resides in rural areas, where access to infrastructure, quality education, healthcare, and employment opportunities remains limited (Census of India, 2011). Rural poverty rates remain significantly higher than urban ones: the Global MPI (2022) reported that 21% of rural Indians live in multidimensional poverty compared to just 6% in urban areas. Healthcare access highlights this divide-rural areas account for 70% of India's population but have only 40% of hospital beds and less than 30% of doctors (NITI Aayog, 2021). Education reflects similar gaps, as government schools in rural areas often suffer from inadequate infrastructure, teacher absenteeism, and poor learning outcomes, as documented by the ASER 2022 report. Employment patterns also reveal disparities, with rural workers predominantly engaged in agriculture or informal sectors, while urban areas provide more diversified and higher-paying jobs. Migration from rural to urban areas, driven by lack of opportunities, has led to the growth of slums and informal settlements in cities, where migrants often face insecure housing, lack of social security, and exclusion from urban services (Breman, 2013). Bridging this rural-urban gap requires significant investment in rural infrastructure, education, and livelihood diversification.

Regional disparities across states further deepen inequality. India's federal structure reveals sharp contrasts between developed states like Maharashtra, Gujarat, and Tamil Nadu and relatively backward states such as Bihar, Uttar Pradesh, and Jharkhand. Per capita income in states like Goa and Delhi is more than three times the national average, while states like Bihar report less than half of it (MOSPI, 2022). Human Development Index (HDI) values also vary widely, with Kerala consistently ranking highest due to its achievements in health and education, while states like Jharkhand and Chhattisgarh lag far behind (UNDP India, 2021). Regional inequality is also visible in infrastructure development, industrialization, and digital connectivity. Such disparities foster uneven development, leading to migration pressures, political tensions, and unequal opportunities for citizens depending on their

place of birth. For Viksit Bharat 2047, reducing these regional gaps is critical to creating a balanced and cohesive developmental trajectory.

Digital inequality is emerging as a major challenge in the 21st century. While India is home to the world's second-largest internet user base, with over 800 million users, access remains highly unequal. The Internet and Mobile Association of India (IAMAI, 2022) reported that urban internet penetration stands at 72%, while rural penetration is only 37%. Gender disparities are also evident, as only 33% of women own a smartphone compared to 67% of men (GSMA, 2022). This digital divide has profound implications for education, employment, governance, and access to welfare schemes, particularly in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic when online platforms became essential. Students in rural and marginalized communities faced significant disruptions in learning due to lack of internet access and devices, exacerbating educational inequalities (UNICEF, 2021). In the labour market, digital skills are increasingly a prerequisite, and those excluded from the digital economy risk being further marginalized. Addressing this divide requires expanding affordable digital infrastructure, promoting digital literacy, and ensuring inclusive policies for marginalized groups.

Inequalities faced by marginalized groups such as persons with disabilities (PwDs), religious minorities, and LGBTQ+ communities also demand attention. According to the 2011 Census, India has 26.8 million PwDs, many of whom face barriers in accessing education, employment, and public spaces. The employment rate among PwDs is only 36% compared to 60% for the general population (ILO, 2019). Religious minorities, particularly Muslims, face socio-economic disadvantages, with the Sachar Committee Report (2006) highlighting their low levels of education, employment, and representation in government jobs. More recent data show that only 15% of Muslim households have a graduate or higher-level education, compared to 25% for Hindu upper castes (IHDS, 2015). LGBTQ+ individuals face stigma, discrimination, and lack of legal protection in many areas, limiting their ability to fully participate in society despite recent advances in legal recognition.

These interlocking inequalities are further exacerbated by climate change and environmental vulnerabilities, which disproportionately affect the poor and marginalized. Extreme weather events, such as floods, droughts, and heatwaves, are more devastating for rural

communities dependent on agriculture and for urban poor living in informal settlements. The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC, 2022) notes that India is one of the most climate-vulnerable countries, with millions at risk of livelihood loss and displacement. Climate inequality is thus an emerging dimension that must be integrated into discussions of inclusive development.

5. Policy Measures and Institutional Responses

India's developmental trajectory has been shaped by a series of constitutional commitments, legislative frameworks, and policy initiatives designed to reduce inequality and promote inclusive growth. From the early focus on poverty alleviation in the post-independence era to the contemporary emphasis on sustainable and equitable development under Viksit Bharat 2047, the state has undertaken significant institutional measures to address structural inequalities. Yet, challenges remain in terms of coverage, implementation, and impact. This section reviews key policy measures and institutional responses across major domains- economic, social, political, and digital inclusion.

5·1 Constitutional and Legal Frameworks

The Indian Constitution laid the foundation for inclusive development by enshrining equality as a core value. Fundamental Rights guarantee equality before the law (Article 14), prohibition of discrimination (Articles 15-16), and the abolition of untouchability (Article 17). The Directive Principles of State Policy (Articles 38 and 39) emphasize reducing inequalities in income, status, and opportunities, while promoting social justice. Affirmative action policies, particularly reservations in education, employment, and political representation for Scheduled Castes (SCs), Scheduled Tribes (STs), and Other Backward Classes (OBCs), remain central to India's approach to addressing historical disadvantage (Jaffrelot, 2006).

In addition, landmark legislations such as the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities) Act, 1989, the Right to Education Act, 2009, and the National Food Security Act, 2013 have sought to institutionalize rights-based approaches to inclusive development.

5·2 Poverty Alleviation and Social Protection Schemes

India has implemented a wide range of welfare programs targeting poverty and inequality. The Mahatma Gandhi National

Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA, 2005) provides at least 100 days of wage employment annually to rural households, directly addressing income insecurity. Studies show that MGNREGA has helped reduce distress migration and improve food security (Dreze & Khera, 2017).

Similarly, the Public Distribution System (PDS) and the Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Anna Yojana (PMGKAY) ensured food security for millions during the COVID-19 pandemic. Social protection has also expanded through schemes like the National Social Assistance Programme (NSAP), which provides pensions to the elderly, widows, and persons with disabilities. However, leakages, targeting errors, and underfunding continue to limit their effectiveness (Kapur & Nangia, 2015).

5·3 Education and Skill Development Policies

Education is central to inclusive development. The Right to Education Act (2009) mandated free and compulsory education for children aged 6-14 years. More recently, the National Education Policy (NEP 2020) aims to promote equity and inclusion by ensuring universal access, improving learning outcomes, and integrating vocational training. Special schemes such as Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan and Samagra Shiksha Abhiyan target marginalized communities, particularly Dalits, Adivasis, and girls.

Skill development initiatives like the Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojana (PMKVY) and Skill India Mission seek to equip youth with employable skills, bridging the gap between education and labour markets. However, disparities in quality of education and digital learning access remain critical obstacles, particularly in rural and marginalized communities (Tilak, 2020).

5·4 Health and Social Welfare Initiatives

Health policies have increasingly emphasized universal access and affordability. The Ayushman Bharat - Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana (PM-JAY), launched in 2018, provides health insurance coverage of up to ₹5 lakh per family annually, targeting over 100 million vulnerable households. Public health campaigns such as Swachh Bharat Abhiyan and the National Health Mission have expanded access to sanitation, maternal healthcare, and child immunization.

Nevertheless, inequities persist. NFHS-5 (2019-21) data reveals large gaps in child nutrition, maternal health, and healthcare

utilization between rich and poor households, rural and urban areas, and upper-caste and marginalized communities. For Viksit Bharat 2047, strengthening public health infrastructure, particularly in rural and underserved regions, is critical.

5·5 Political and Governance Reforms

Institutional responses to political inequality have centered on enhancing participation. The 73rd and 74th Constitutional Amendments (1992) created Panchayati Raj institutions and urban local bodies, reserving seats for women, SCs, and STs. These measures have facilitated grassroots democracy and political representation (Jayal, 2006). However, lack of financial devolution, bureaucratic dominance, and entrenched social hierarchies often restrict meaningful empowerment.

E-governance initiatives such as Digital India have attempted to enhance transparency, accountability, and service delivery. Yet, unequal digital access has limited participation for rural and marginalized groups, requiring targeted interventions.

5·6 Digital and Financial Inclusion

Bridging the digital divide is now a key policy priority. The Digital India Programme (2015) seeks to provide universal digital literacy, affordable internet access, and e-governance services. BharatNet, one of the world's largest rural broadband projects, aims to connect over 250,000 gram panchayats with high-speed internet.

On the financial front, the Pradhan Mantri Jan Dhan Yojana (PMJDY) has opened over 500 million bank accounts, significantly enhancing financial inclusion for the poor and marginalized. Coupled with Aadhaar-based direct benefit transfers (DBT), these measures have reduced leakages in welfare schemes. However, barriers such as digital illiteracy, gender gaps, and infrastructural constraints remain (Mehrotra & Parida, 2021).

5·7 Challenges of Policy Implementation

Despite these efforts, significant challenges persist in realizing inclusive development. Leakages in welfare programs, bureaucratic inefficiencies, corruption, and inadequate targeting undermine effectiveness. Structural inequalities such as caste and gender hierarchies often distort program outcomes. Regional imbalances further complicate implementation, with lagging states such as Bihar,

Jharkhand, and Uttar Pradesh struggling to catch up with more developed states like Kerala and Tamil Nadu (Deaton & Drèze, 2002).

Moreover, policies often focus on short-term poverty alleviation rather than long-term structural transformation. Without systemic reforms in land redistribution, labour rights, education quality, and healthcare accessibility, inequalities may persist despite targeted interventions.

India's policy measures and institutional responses demonstrate a strong normative and legislative commitment to inclusive development. Yet, persistent inequalities reveal gaps between policy intent and ground realities. For Viksit Bharat 2047, the challenge lies not in the absence of policies but in strengthening their implementation, addressing structural inequalities, and ensuring that development outcomes genuinely benefit the most marginalized.

6. Conclusion

The vision of Viksit Bharat 2047 embodies India's goal of achieving economic prosperity, social equity, and sustainable development. This paper highlights that persistent inequalities- rooted in caste, class, gender, region, and digital access-continue to limit the benefits of growth for marginalized populations. Addressing these disparities requires more than economic expansion; social, cultural, and institutional factors must be considered through targeted and context-sensitive policies. Achieving inclusive development demands a holistic strategy: strengthening social equity, promoting gender justice, bridging regional and digital divides, formalizing labour markets, expanding skills, and ensuring good governance. Environmental sustainability and climate resilience are equally crucial. By adopting a multidimensional, participatory approach, India can transform structural challenges into opportunities, creating a prosperous, equitable, and resilient society that fulfills the vision of Viksit Bharat 2047.

References

ASER Centre, *Annual Status of Education Report*, ASER, 2022.

Bourdieu, P., "The forms of Capital", J. Richardson (ed.), *Handbook of Theory and Research for the Sociology of Education*, New York: Greenwood, 1986, 241-258.

Breman, J., *At work in the Informal Economy of India: A Perspective from the Bottom Up*, Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2013.

Crenshaw, K., "Demarginalizing the Intersection of Race and Sex", *University of Chicago Legal Forum*, 1989(1), 1989, 139-167.

Census of India, *Population Totals and Literacy Data*, New Delhi: Office of the Registrar General and Census Commissioner, India, Ministry of Home Affairs, 2011.

Deaton, A., & Drèze, J., "Poverty and inequality in India: A re-examination", *Economic and Political Weekly*, 37(36), 2002, 3729-3748.

Deshpande, A., *The Grammar of Caste: Economic Discrimination in Contemporary India*, New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2011.

Dreze, J., & Khera, R., "Recent social security initiatives in India", *World Development*, 98, 2017, 555-572.

Frank, A. G., *The Development of Underdevelopment*, New York: Monthly Review Press, 1966.

GSMA, *The Mobile Gender Gap Report 2022*, Mobile for Development, 20 March, 2025.

IAMAI, *Internet in India Report 2022*, Internet and Mobile Association of India, 2022.

ILO, *India Wage Report: Wage Policies for Decent Work and Inclusive Growth*, International Labour Organization, 2018.

ILO, *Labour Market Outcomes of Persons with Disabilities in India*, International Labour Organization, 2019.

India Human Development Survey (IHDS), *India Human Development Survey*, National Council of Applied Economic Research, 2015.

Jaffrelot, C., *India's Silent Revolution: The Rise of the Lower Castes in North India*, Ranikhet: Permanent Black, 2006.

Jayal, N. G., *Representing India: Ethnic Diversity and the Governance of Public Institutions*, New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006.

Jodhka, S. S., *Caste in Contemporary India*, Routledge, 2017.

Kapur, D., & Nangia, P., "Social protection in India: A welfare state sans public goods?", *India Review*, 14(1), 2015, 1-25.

Marx, K., *Capital: A Critique of Political Economy, Vol. 1 (B. Fowkes, Trans.), Penguin*, 1990 (Original work published 1867).

McKinsey Global Institute, *The Power of Parity: Advancing Women's Equality in India*, McKinsey & Company, 2018.

Mehrotra, S., & Parida, J. K., "Inequality, growth, and development: The Indian Experience", *Journal of Asian Economics*, 74, 2021, 101291.

Ministry of Panchayati Raj, *Annual Report*, New Delhi: Ministry of Panchayati Raj, Govt. of India, 2022.

MOSPI, *State Domestic Product Data*, New Delhi: Ministry of Statistics and Program Implementation, Govt. of India, 2022.

NCRB, *Crime in India Report 2021*, New Delhi: Ministry of Home Affairs, Govt. of India, 2021.

NFHS-5, *National Family Health Survey, 2019-21*, India: Volume I, Mumbai: Mumbai: IIPS, 2021.

NITI Aayog, *State of Health Infrastructure in India*, New Delhi: Ministry of Health & Family Welfare, 2021.

Oxfam India, *Survival of the Richest: The India Story*, New Delhi: Oxfam India, 2023.

Pal, P., & Ghosh, J., "Inequality in India: A Survey of Recent Trends", UN DESA Working Paper No. 45, 2007.

Rangarajan Committee, *Report of the Committee on Financial Inclusion*, New Delhi: Government of India, 2008.

Sen, A., *Development as Freedom*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999.

Thorat, S., & Newman, K. (eds.), *Blocked by Caste: Economic discrimination and Social Exclusion in Modern India*, New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2010.

Tilak, J. B. G., *Education and Development in India: Critical Issues in Public Policy and Development*, Singapore: Palgrave Macmillan, 2020.

UNDP & OPHI, *Global Multidimensional Poverty Index 2022*, United Nations Development Programme, 2022.

UNDP India, *Human Development Indicators by State*, UNDP India, 2021.

United Nations, *Transforming Our World: The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development*, United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs2015.

UNICEF, *The State of the World's Children Report 2021*, United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund, 2021.

WEF, *Global Gender Gap Report, 2023*, Geneva, Switzerland: The World Economic Forum, 2023.

World Bank, *What is Inclusive Growth?*, Washington, DC: World Bank, 2009.

World Bank, *World Development Indicators*, Washington, DC: World Bank, 2022.

World Inequality Lab, *World Inequality Report 2022*, Paris: World Inequality Lab, 2022. ★