13.1 Introduction

Caste system in India has affected the development process by forcing a large section of the society out of various production spheres like economic, social, civil and political spheres. This has not only widen the inequality between caste groups, but also it created a graded inequality. Labour mobility from one caste to another caste group (or Varna) became impossible and it had a long lasting impact on development more severe than the class structure found in Marxian synthesis. As a result the country is left with a strong mass of poor with little production resources as against the rich at another end. The understanding of caste structure, its origin and impact on overall development as well as various social segments were missing due to its embodied features. This began breaking its stronghold after the education became accessible to some of the commoners in British India.

In this context, Dr. B.R. Ambedkar prominently articulated the issue of caste from the rights perspective. As an eminent scholar and architect of Indian Constitution he made a significant contributions not only to the literature on understanding caste as a development inhibitor, but also contributed equally to other spheres such as the economics, political science, foreign policy, religion etc. Ambedkar analysed caste system indepth and examined its economic dimensions. His arguments were theoretical in nature and impacted thinking of not only his generation but also the coming generations. This impact could be traced in the writings of Prof Sukhadeo K. Thorat, and he established another landmark in the analytics of caste as also deprivation. Thorat’s contribution to the literature on caste comes from his analysis of caste discrimination and social exclusion both from theoretically as well as empirical view points.

This study is an attempt to examine the contributions of Prof Thorat through his writings on the issue of caste, particularly focusing on caste discrimination and social exclusion, impact and outcome of caste system for various deprived groups, state policies and remedies on discrimination and for inclusive growth. Significance of this study lies in the fact that Thorat’s contribution in the research on caste issue made a significant impact on the policy formulation in terms of reservations for the deprived castes, particularly in private sector and research grants and other provisions in the higher education for the backward communities (such as SC, ST and OBCs). In
this chapter, we provide a prelude to the analysis undertaken here. In section two, we map the major works of S.K. Thorat and examine the process of his understanding that developed over last thirty years. Further, we discuss major finding of this study following a last comment of the issue coming from this study.

13.2 Process and Development in the Universe of Thorat's Writing and Research

In this section, the major focus is to draw a few connections between Thorat's experience in his childhood and research he carried out during his academic career. It would be appropriate to briefly mention his childhood experiences of caste discrimination in the village setting following a discussion on his research writings and to understand how these writings have influenced due to the childhood caste-discrimination experiences.

Thorat, born in the formerly untouchable community, began experiencing discrimination right from his childhood. In that tender age while in he was in primary school in terms of segregated sitting arrangement, accessing water from the tap, aloof behaviour of the teachers in class-room and school friends as well their parents. The experience of discrimination was not simple a mild feeling, but sometimes he experienced physical assault as well. It is in this atmosphere of discrimination and exclusion, Sukhadeo Thorat completed his primary education. Later he finished his education in distanced village walking every day till the completion of his 7th standard, though facing less discrimination. He took admission in a Christian school and lived in the hostel. Here he had to work in the agricultural field, which impacted his health badly and therefore, he has to stay with his relatives. In due course he completed his high school education and further moved to Aurangabad where he completed his Masters in Economics with first division. Despite coming from a very poor family, his family was quite concerned towards his studies. They worked as riksha puller and agricultural labourers for financing his education till he began his career.

He began his career as a lecture in a collage and latter moved to JNU for M.Phil. and doctoral studies and eventually became Professor in the same university. Research began in Thorat's life after joining JNU in 1978 as a M.Phil. student and latter as a Ph.D. student, and thereafter it became a passion for him. His overall work could be divided into three phases. In the first phase during 1978 to 1988, of his learning in research and formation of theoretical stand and investigation of empirical evidence from the surrounding as well as own experiences. He is trained as a an agriculture economist. As a research scholar he worked on the issue of inter-districts
variations in agricultural productivity and its determinants, and farm size, resource use pattern and productivity level in the context of Maharashtra. All the same, the childhood experiences made him attentive in understanding Ambedkar's work and caste related issue. He wrote a paper on self-experienced prevailing discriminatory treatment (Thorat 1979). The theoretical argument in this paper showed as to how the identity of dalit adult shaped was well appreciated in the academia. He tried to examined the socio-psychological dimensions of stigmatized caste identity based on his own experiences. Apart from this, he worked on various issues such as socio-economic condition and isolation and deprivation among SCs, tribal and nomadic tribes (Thorat 1978a and 1978b).

In the second phase (1989-2000), largely his research work was on agriculture related issues, although he also investigated Ambedkar's economic thought. During this period, he produced over 20 research pieces on the issues related to agriculture, poverty, government spending, urban planning and child labour, while keeping the core on the issues of Ambedkar's thoughts on economics and Hindu social order, impact of new economic policy on employment and scheduled caste, impact of social security in unorganised sector on SCs, etc. (see, Appendix 13.1).

The third phase, post-2001, is more focused on understanding the issues related to dalit and marginalised communities. These included analysis of reservations for deprived castes, caste and discrimination, social exclusion and economic discrimination. In this phase, Thorat found more concrete evidence for putting the genesis of caste discrimination prevailing even in the present liberalisation era. He argued that the caste discrimination exists even in the private sector showing these sectors have biased selection of the employees which goes against dalits and marginalised sections. The empirical investigation of the job discrimination in private sector is found contrasting the neo classical beliefs in economic theory. Actually discrimination resulted in reduced productivity lowered the aggregate efficiency and productivity. Thorat further argues that this could happened due to the existing discriminatory attitudes by the private entrepreneurs, as they are the part of the society. Keeping this in view, he argued for the implementation of reservation policy in the private sector.

**13.3 Major Findings**

Sukhadeo Kisanrao Thorat completed extensive theoretical and empirical research focusing wide ranging issues and largely articulating the ideas by Dr Ambedkar in the context of changing economy and brought forth the economic and social perils of discrimination. About the discrimination he wrote on the issue of social exclusion and economic discrimination bringing out
the critical implications. He developed the concept of caste and untouchability related market and non-market discrimination for studies in rural and urban area. These included both studies on discrimination in labour and other markets in rural area, including discrimination faced in the non-market transactions, such as government and public agencies. Developed the methods to measure market and non-market discrimination. Empirically estimated forms and nature of caste based labour market discrimination in urban area, discrimination in various markets in rural areas and in non-market transactions like food security schemes, mid-day meal scheme and fair price shops. He contributed on consequences of caste based economic discrimination on poverty and human development of discriminated groups. His empirical research work related to the economic situation of derived social groups like former untouchables tribal and nomadic and de-notified tribes, particularly on occupation pattern, ownership of income earning capital assets, including the ownership of business, employment, wages, poverty, education, health situation, and brought out inter-social groups.

Prof Thorat developed deeper insights on dynamic thoughts of Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar on economic development and economic planning. More importantly he did original research on the Dr. Ambedkar views on development of water resources and power in India and his contribution in development of irrigation and power policy in the country. This research is an an original contribution in the sphere of economic history with a focus on the 1940’s. Thorat also contributed on Dr. Ambedkar’s views on the interpretation of institution of caste system and untouchability, on reform of the Hindu Social order and equal opportunity policies in the form of reservation and other measures.

Based on these, the major findings of the thesis are compiled in three sections, viz., theoretical, empirical and other aspects. In these three sections, our attempt is to understand the genesis of Thorat's contribution through his academic writings on caste relation issues.

13.3.1 Theoretical
On the theoretical section we have analyzed the writings of Prof Thorat that are focused some important issues which helps us to understand social exclusion, economic discrimination in market and non-market sphere, indicators of economic and social discrimination, methods of measuring of economic discrimination and the consequences of social exclusion.
Social exclusion is essentially the denial of equal opportunities imposed by certain groups on others which leads to inability of an individual to participate in the basic political, economic and social functioning of a society. Exclusion on the basis of race, color, religion, ethnic background, national or social origin exists in many nations under economic and political system. India is one of them. Indian society is characterized by a high degree of structural inequalities based on the institutions of caste and ethnicity. Thorat provided that crucial insight to understand the existing social exclusion in India. The caste system is based on the principles which involve division of people in social groups (i.e., caste groups), with unequal and hierarchical assignment of economic, and civil rights pre-determined by birth. It is highly exclusionary in nature and the social exclusion between the castes group is ensured through endogamy and social separation. Exclusion is internal to the system and a necessary outcome of its basic features. Every caste suffered from unequal and hierarchical (except those at top of caste hierarchy) assignment of rights is different degree but the untouchable caste located at the bottom of hierarchy suffered most as historically they were denied right to property, business, education and civil, cultural and religious rights, except manual labour and service to castes above them. The untouchables also suffer from residential segregation, and social isolation foe they are consider impure and polluting and not fit for social association by high caste.

Another source of exclusion is linked with ethnic identity, from some groups suffers (like Adivasis). This group suffered from isolation, exclusion, neglect and underdevelopment due to their geographical and cultural isolation and separation. In their case the exclusion can take several forms including denial of right to resources around which they live, intended and intended consequences of policies of government and societal processes.

The practice of caste-based exclusion and discrimination, thus, necessarily involves a failure of access and entitlements, not only, to economic rights, but also to civil, cultural and political rights. The caste, untouchability and ethnicity based exclusion, thus reflects the inability of the individuals and groups like former ‘untouchables’, Adivasis and similar groups to interact freely and productively with others and to take part in full economic, social and political life of a community.

Exclusion and the denial of equal opportunity in the economic spheres would necessarily operate through markets and non-market transactions and exchange. First, exclusion may be practiced in the labour market through denial in hiring for jobs; in the capital market through denial
of access to capital; in the agricultural land market through the denial of sale and purchase of factors inputs; and in the consumer market through the denial of sale and purchase of commodities and consumer goods; second, discrimination can occur through unfavourable inclusion namely through differential treatment in terms and conditions of contract or reflected in discrimination in the price charged and received by discriminated groups. This can be inclusive of the price of factor inputs and consumer goods, price of factors of production such as wage for labour, price of land or rent on land, interest on capital, and rent on residential houses, charges or fees on services such as water and electricity. Discriminated groups can get lower prices for the goods that they sell and could pay higher prices for the goods that they buy, as compared with the market price paid by other groups; third, exclusion and discrimination can occur in terms of access to social needs supplied by the Government or public institutions or by private institutions in education, housing and health, including Common Property Resources (CPRs) like water bodies, grazing land and other lands of common use; fourth a group (particularly, the untouchables) may face exclusion and discrimination from participation in certain categories of jobs because of the notions of purity and pollution of occupations and enactment in so called unclean occupation. The high castes are unlikely to associate with these categories of jobs on account of them being ‘unclean’ or ‘degrading’ and thereby, such jobs are always relegated or associated with the untouchables.

13.3.2 Empirical
In empirical section we have focused the writings of Prof Thorat that helps to understand empirically economic and social condition of marginalized groups in India. In empirical studies we have included the issue of economic situation of Dalits as a group and that includes their access to capital assets, access in private enterprises, their occupational pattern, their employment situation and rural labour condition and poverty problem. Then empirical estimates economic discrimination in market and non-market sphere. After that we analyzed the caste discrimination evident in different parts of India. Here we have also touched on the studies that analyzed the situation of Tribal groups in India. The discussion on policies for economic and educational empowerment comes a little later in this section.

In India untouchability is a distinct social institution that legitimizes and enforces practices of discrimination against people born in a particular caste, and legitimizes practices that are humiliating, exclusionary and exploitative. Although comparable forms of discrimination are found all over the world, untouchability is a mode unique by the fact that its parent institution the caste system is found only in the Indian subcontinent.
Economic discrimination recognized that prevalence of market discrimination of certain social groups creates adverse consequences for economic growth, income distribution and inter-group conflicts. Market discrimination not only leads to income inequalities and high degree of deprivation for discriminated groups in addition to including inter-group conflicts but also affects economic growth. In order to correct the imbalances in access to fixed capital assets, employment and education between sub-groups in their populations, to improve the working of the market for better economic growth, and to reduce inter-group economic inequalities and thereby the potential conflict. India has resorted to various anti-discrimination policies. These policies mainly include reparation (or compensation), fair/equal access policy in the form of affirmative action/reservation, preferential treatment and enactment of equal opportunity act. These policies have been justified and used by the government not only for the consideration of equity but also promoting economic growth and development.

In the situation of market and non-market discrimination, there is necessity of equal access policy in the private sector to provide safeguard against discrimination in the present and compensatory policies to repay for denial of property and education rights in the past. It has to be recognized that the lower castes suffer from discrimination in multiple ways in various markets. Therefore, the reservation policy for private sector should cover all markets namely agricultural land and non-land capital, employment, input and product markets including private housing and educational institutions. It is necessary to enact the Equal Opportunity Act including Employment Opportunity Act so as to provide legal safeguard against discrimination and also to make legal provision for reservation.

Thorat also brought out the frugal control of resources that the scheduled castes and tribes have. This is mainly perpetuated through the social systems of discrimination. The pattern of land ownership highly skewed against SCs. Nearly 70 per cent of SC households either do not own land or have very small landholdings of less than 0.4 ha. A very small proportion (less than 6 per cent) consists of medium and large farmers. The scenario of landownership among SCs, is even grimmer in Bihar, Haryana, Kerala and Punjab, where more than 90 per cent of SC households posses negligible or no land.

In the case of private enterprises we can understand, significant inter-caste disparities in the ownership of private enterprise in rural and urban areas. While the share of the SCs and the STs was much lower than their share in the country’s population, the share of the Higher Castes (HCs)
was much above their population share in the rural areas. In the case of the OBCs their share in private enterprise was fairly close to their share in population. Thus the OBCs and HCs had better access to private enterprise in rural areas. A similar pattern is observed in the urban areas as well.

In the case of occupational pattern, we understand that, the trend towards occupational diversification of the rural workforce across all social groups as observed in 1993-94, 73 per cent of the SC rural workforce in India continued to be employed in the agriculture sector and their dependence on this traditional sector was more prominent than non SC/ST (68 per cent) in 1999-2000. The diversification trend among SCs in particularly sharp in Assam, Haryana, Kerala and Punjab. In Andhra Pradesh, Bihar (including Jharkhand), Madhya Pradesh (including Chhattisgarh), Maharashtra, Tamil Nadu and Uttar Pradesh, where the concentration of the SC population is higher, the decline in SC agricultural workers during 1991-2001 has been lower, ranging between 3-.11 percentage points. Except in Assam, Haryana, Punjab, Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh and Maharashtra, the disparity index of SC versus non SC/ST workers engaged in the agricultural sector remained above 1, indicating higher percentage of the SC workforce than the non SC/ST workforce. In the case of employment we understand that, the SC male employment rates (46.2 per cent rural and 45.8 per cent urban) were lower than the employment rates of non SC/ST males (48 per cent rural and 49.6 per cent urban), but the female employment rate was higher for the former social groups as compared to the latter by about 3 percentage points. In 1999/2000, in Maharashtra, Tamil Nadu and Uttar Pradesh, the SC rural male employment rate was 3-4 percentage points lower than the all India average of 46.2 per cent, while urban male employment was low in Kerala (41.4 per cent), Madhya Pradesh (41.9 per cent), Assam (41.9 percent) and Andhra Pradesh (42.5 per cent). The SC rural female employment rate was very low, at 11-12 per cent in West Bengal, Harayana and Assam. In urban, Assam, Himachal Pradesh, Punjab and Uttar Pradesh too the SC female employment rate was much lower than the national average of 14 per cent.

In the case of wage labor we understand that the incidence of wage labor among rural SC households, was very high. In 1999-2000, the proportion of SC rural laborers to total rural households was 61.42 per cent. From 1974-75 to 1999-2000, the dependence of the SC rural labor households on wage income increased by about 4 percentage points. The percentage of rural labor households was higher than the all India average in Kerala (83.36 per cent), Tamil Nadu (82.22 per cent), Bihar (76.96 percent) and Andhra Pradesh (74.66 per cent)
In the case of poverty, we understand that in 1999-2000, poverty was particularly high and concentrated in a few states such as Bihar, Orissa and Madhya Pradesh, followed by Uttar Pradesh and West Bengal. Above the analysis of the economic characteristics of high and low poverty states revealed that with respect to most of the indicators of rural poverty, the states with high poverty lagged far behind the states with low poverty. The high poverty states were generally characterized by lower access to capital assets such as agricultural land and non farm business, low urbanization, low sectoral diversification, lower deployment and wage rate, lower literacy and educational level, and high proportion of agricultural and rural labor. The analysis further averaged that within the high poverty states, the situation of SC with respect to these indicators was worse as compared to the situation of non SC/ST. The lack of access and deprivation with respect to all relevant indicators was, in fact the main reasons for the persistence of high poverty among SCs in the poverty prone areas.

We found that although there has been a positive change in the ownership of capital assets and access to employment, traditional caste relations have not altogether disappeared. They continue as remnants of the past and affect the access of low castes to various rural markets for buying of land and inputs necessary for production, as also for the sale of various goods as also services. Discriminatory access has obvious consequences on the ownership of capital assets employment and business. The results bring to the fore the linkages between market discrimination and high poverty of the untouchables. We also find that market discrimination is not only in rural area but also it is proceeding in urban area.

We can understand that, the official statistics for the period 1992 to 2001 indicates that a total of about 2,85,871 cases of various crimes were registered countrywide by the SCs, of which 14,030 were registered under the PCR Act and 81,796 under the POA Act. This means that an average of 28,587 cases of caste discrimination and atrocities were registered by the SCs every year during the 1990’s. if we look at the of civil right violation and atrocities, we get to know that on an average (for ten years period 1992-2001) 561 murder, 3262 hurt, 982 rape, 266 kidnapping and abduction, 64 dacoity, 181 robbery, 399 arson, 1,403 caste discrimination and 8,179 case of atrocities were registered by the SCs.

The reported incidence and rate of crime against STs is lower than that against SCs. The total numbers of registered cases during 1999-2001 were about 47000, out of case of crime against SCs, the states of Rajasthan and Madhya Pradesh are the top two states in crime rate against the
The regional pattern of poverty shows that the STs of the central tribal belt are poorer than the STs of the north-eastern states. Except Assam and Tripura, the poverty ratio is in the north-eastern states are very low and in many cases it is lower than the other sections of the society. The tribal poverty is typical of the states of the central and eastern Indian. Within this region, Orissa, Bihar and Madhya Pradesh have highest poverty. Poverty is relatively low in Andhra Pradesh, Rajasthan, Karnataka and Gujarat.

STs have low access to income earning, particularly non-land, assets. The workforce structure shows a high degree of marginalization and engagement in low quality employment. They have high proportion of rural labour households. Their employment greatly lacks in diversification away from the farm sector. The employment-unemployment situation of the STs, by current weekly status, is also not satisfactory. The STs also suffer from low literacy both male and female.

The structural inequalities and exclusionary and discriminatory character of Indian society, Thorat suggested some remedies against this discrimination. Such as non-discriminatory access to agriculture land market, credit market, farmer-factors input market, non-farm business, farm and non-farm wage labour sphere, non-discriminatory access in education, public and private health services, and non-discriminatory access to civic amenities at village level, non-discriminatory equal access in village panchayat.

13.3.3 Other Writings

We find that Thorat also focused in his writings about the state designed remedies against caste and ethnicity based exclusion and discrimination and for empowerment of excluded groups. The safeguards against exclusion and discrimination in the forms of legal measures and affirmative actions cover public employment, public education and legislature and also to other government spheres like public housing and other spheres. However, policy of affirmative action in India is confined to Government sector and vast private sector is excluded from its ambit.

We also find that over time there has been considerable improvement in the share of SC and ST in government employment and educational institutions. The reservation in legislature has also provided a space to SC and ST in executive and decision making process. The impact of
formal reservation policy in government sector and informal affirmative action policy in private sector has led to some improvement in the human development of SC and ST. However as compared to Non –SC/ST section the rate of improvement has been rather slow and as result, despite positive improvement the disparities in attainment in human development between SC/ST and Non -SC/ST continued even today.

The writings of Thorat about the issue of civil society and funding agencies we concluded that, the community-based national civil society organization CRY, mainly aims at providing a comprehensive support to the development efforts by the civil society organizations working for the socially and economically deprived children for ensuring basic rights for them in the spheres of education, health, shelter and fold.

The International-Cum-National Organization- Action-Aid India, in its approach involves not only relieving the poor from the distress as a short-term goal but also addressing the basic causes of poverty and marginalization as a long-term goals.

The Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) is corporate sector organisation. CII is one of the oldest business associations of India. It has wider membership from the national and international business organizations, and works for the growth and progress of the Indian Industry. The major visions of CII: to protect and promote the Indian industry, and to contribute to the human development of the country and create a positive image of the industry and business. Recently, CII has also got into the discussions about the discrimination and ways and methods to deal with the issue.

In the government, the ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment and the ministry of Tribal Affairs are also required to work towards mainstreaming of the disadvantaged and marginalized sections of the society, such as the STs, SCs, OBCs and disabled.

In the study of (EED) there are six NGO’s that are involved in helping the deprived section and the dalits. The PARA, NASA and DBRC are mainly centered on Dalit. REDS follows nearly a Dalit only approach. IICS tried to open up for other groups. MYRADA is issue-based and focuses only on poor irrespective of caste.
The writings of Thorat on the thoughts of Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar brings together the essence of Dr Ambedkar’s thinking and contextualized it for today’s society and the State. It is necessary that we understand, the issues of Ambedkar’s economic ideas, where Thorat provides clear insights into Dr Ambedkar’s thoughts on economic development, planning, role of the state, alternative economic system, and political economy of caste system, planning for the poor and downtrodden, perspective on water and power development, conservation of water resources, multipurpose reservoirs and regional development, labour policy, Hindu social Order and equal opportunity policy, slavery, caste system and untouchability, education and caste system.

The important elements of Dr. Ambedkar’s economic views are his emphasis on active role and participation of the state in economic and social development through the instrument for planning. He favoured the use of this instrument for planned economic development. Within the broader framework of planning, he also emphasized the need for a focus on the poor and the labouring classes in the economic plan. Further, due to discrimination of the depressed castes inside and outside market, he also favoured special planning for them and the policy or reservation for protecting against discrimination and promoting their effective participation in economic and social sphere. Thorat agrees with the basic idea of the primacy of the state but also brings out the essence for policy changes that are required to further the mainstreaming of the Dalits.

Dr. Ambedkar had emphasized industrial development as a solution to the problem of agriculture development. Dr. Ambedkar believed that development of industrial sector is necessary to reduce the surplus labour in agriculture and to create favourable conditions for production. Essentially an idea followed by Sir Arthur Lewis much later than Dr Ambedkar’s writing. Removal of surplus labour in agriculture through industrialization, in his view, will reduce the pressure on land and bring consolidation of holdings and enhancement of farm size. This will also create conditions for generation of surplus and private investment in agriculture.

Dr. Ambedkar recognized and emphasized the need of social reforms of Hindu social and religious order. Ambedkar believed that economic equalization will reduce gravity of social discrimination but due to organization of social and religious life of Hindus around caste system, it may not eliminate economic and social discrimination of Dalit all together. Thus he argued for extensive reforms of Hindu social and religious order and that was not accepted by the orthodoxy.
13.4 Conspectus
Thorat emerged as a first hand observer of the acute discrimination in the caste system of India. He not only observed all the happenings in the society through his formative years but also suffered incinerating discrimination. Such experiences leaves a deep scar on the mind of any participant that generates revolt, but while carrying the heavy load of all those experiences, he developed a razor sharp analytical mind and arguments to bring forth his convictions, Thorat looked at the emergence, impact and policy imperatives to deal with the problem of discrimination. Through his writing, he continuously championed the cause of Dalits and never allowed it to be a political rhetoric but took the debate to solid academic platform with impeccable arguments. His logic is fully grounded in economic and social theory and discusses phenomenology wherever it becomes critical. The theoretical arguments are supported by painstakingly collection and juxtaposition of the data to buttress the arguments immaculately with solid empirical evidence. On the practical platform, he also supported action research through initiating several researchers in this area of research and could establish a strong logical group (through IIDS and also with his personal interventions) that now convincingly confront the tenets of the discriminatory Hindu Social order. A whole line of researches in India and abroad on discrimination both at theoretical as also empirical level hold their emergence directly to his interventions or to his writings. All through his analytical journey, Thorat sought help from the arguments of Dr Ambedkar and brought those arguments in the current context. His interpretations of Dr Ambedkar are absolutely flawless and both traverse the same path of arguments Thorat’s contributions are grounded in economic theory of institutions but also branches into wide ranging branches of social sciences, with a true interdisciplinarily current and concrete social relevance forming its core.
### Appendix 13.1: Development in the Universe of Thorat's Writings and Research

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