

# Spatial Factors of Social Exclusion and Inclusive Development in Manipur

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## Abstract

*The present study is an attempt of analytical research on inclusive development and social exclusion of tribal in North-East India with special reference to the state of Manipur. It situates deprivation and exclusion of tribal in both regional and national context. The paper emphasises on the aspects of provisioning and accessibility of tribal communities to different facets of development programmes. Recognising the multiple dimensions of deprivation and vulnerability of the minority groups in contemporary India, this research focuses on the region-specific constraints impeding the process of inclusive growth and development in order to understand the dynamics of exclusive inclusion of the minority tribal communities in Manipur partly as a consequence of spatial disadvantage.*

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## INTRODUCTION

Research on the challenges of inclusive development in contemporary India is important because so little has been done so far in the context of North-East Region (NER), though many scholars have already attempted to address the issue in some other contexts. Inclusive development

particularly holds relevance in NER because, for long, the region has witnessed a series of separatist and identity movements partly as a result of prolonged neglect which have perpetuated the process of exclusion in the region. Manipur is a typical example of such manifestations of discontent and unrest in its tribal

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areas emanating from social exclusion and systematic exploitation. And the impact of the Tribal Sub-Plan (TSP) is far from satisfactory as it failed to implement in larger interest of the tribal communities given the existing socio-economic and political conditions of the state.

It is evident from literature that the North-Eastern states are lagging behind other parts of the country mainly on account of their peripheral locations, along with large-scale intra-regional, socio-cultural and natural diversities. Thus, it is ironic that these have failed to find adequate importance in the by and large unitary model of development that has been followed by India since Independence under various plans. Yet, apart from that, higher concentration of tribal population in the region has also contributed in perpetuating the process of social exclusion in the region.

In this background, the main objective of the present study focuses on identifying the region-specific constraints impeding the inclusive development process and also map out the spatial character of the overall regional development, which would help one comprehend the factors contributing to process of exclusion and deprivation in a better manner. Furthermore, despite tall talk of an integrated approach in tribal development post independence, socio-economic conditions of the tribal communities have not made any significant headway. On the

contrary, the benefits of economic growth have been seriously affected by adverse redistribution, and in consequence such development attempts have given way to social and economic inequality, further widening the already existing tribal - non tribal gap, and also between the advantaged and disadvantaged among tribal's, which also leads to internal dissension and subsequently impacting the whole development discourse. Here in the paper, the terms 'tribal' and 'Scheduled Tribes' are interchangeably used referring to the same category of people.

#### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

The concept of inclusiveness/inclusion or exclusion has gained more prominence in the country in recent past and it certainly holds relevance in tribal society as well, as many studies already revealed that a sizeable tribal population has not been 'included' in and is, therefore, not benefited from growth process. One may also infer from the following section that social and physical exclusions are the major causes of the continued economic backwardness, insurgency and social tension in the North-East region.

Exclusion is defined as the state or the process of being excluded from the socialisation processes in general and development in particular. There are different processes working dynamically to cause social exclusion. It is understood from the literature that the tribals are marginalised,

neglected and excluded from the development process in the country.

The concept of 'social exclusion' has gained importance in recent years among the intellectuals, social scientists, politicians, policy makers, writers, activists and the public at large. The term has become "so evocative, ambiguous, multi-dimensional and elastic that it can be defined in many different ways" (Silver, 1994). There is no universal definition of 'social exclusion' which is "indicative of the fact that the process of 'social exclusion' is dynamic social reality" (Butola, 2010). Hence, the concept of social exclusion can cover a wide range of dimensions – social, political, cultural, and economic (Sen, 2000; Percy-Smith, 2000; Silver, 1995). The definition of the term differs from person to person and from country to country. Its usage mainly depends on the cultural context but its treatment relies on the paradigm that informs it. This sort of flexibility enables it to be employed in different ways.

The European Union Foundation defines social exclusion "as a process through which individuals or groups are wholly or partially excluded from full participation in the society in which they live" (Bombongan, 2008).

The term 'social exclusion' was originally coined by Rene Lenoir, the then Secretaries d'Etat a l' Action Social in the Gaullist Chirac government, who published *Les Exclus: Un Francais sur dix*, in 1974. He estimated that the "excluded" made

up one-tenth of the French population constituting: mentally and physically handicapped, suicidal people, aged invalids, abused children, substance abusers, delinquents, single parents, multi-problem households, marginal, asocial persons, and other social "misfits" (Silver, 1994). They represented the socially disadvantaged groups, not protected by social insurance initiated by the French government. However, it is noteworthy that social exclusion in this context was not equated with poverty. It rather referred to a process of social disintegration, in the sense of the rupture of a social bond between the individual and society (Gore, 1995). Some argue that it was not about the socio-economic arrangement in society but about certain characteristics and behaviour possessed by certain "marginal" groups making them "maladjusted" to French society (Bombongan, 2008).

Though the French meaning of the term was not properly understood by many yet the concept gained popularity in other countries as well, particularly in academic and policy decisions. For instance, the European Union (EU) was a significant player in the dissemination of the concept. Marked significance was the altering of terminology from 'poverty' to 'social exclusion' in the EU anti-poverty programmes. Social exclusion also became central to British policies and debates which led to the evolution of inter-departmental Social Exclusion Unit under the New Labour

government in 1997. Gradually, the concept became well-known worldwide, both in developed and developing countries alike, as Munck (2005) also considers social exclusion as a powerful and essential indicator to capture the various experiences of polarisation, segregation between the rich and the poor, and the growing inequality between developing and developed countries.

Among the other persons who have contributed in theorizing the concept of social exclusion, Hilary Silver is a prominent one. She propounded three paradigms related to social exclusion, which are called as solidarity, specialisation and monopoly paradigms – solidarity (exclusion as a resultant of the breakdown of social bond between the individual and society), specialisation (referring to exclusion resulting from specialisation of tasks, social differentiation and division of labour) and monopoly (implies the existence of hierarchical power relations in social order) (Silver 1995; Haan 1999; Bombongan 2008).

Besides, Levitas (1998) also identified three contrasting views that have had an impact on government policy namely, distributive, social integration and moralistic view. Distributive perspective regards low income as the main cause of exclusion and the benefit transfer as the only solution, whereas social integration emphasises the problem of unemployment as the main hurdle in the process inclusion. On the other

hand, moralistic view focuses on cultural factor which lays emphasis on greater participation.

Bombongan (2008) also provides a general overview of the concept of social exclusion. He reconstructs the specific historical conditions in which the concept gained importance. Percy-Smith (2000) discusses a facet of social exclusion which can be termed 'political exclusion'. In her opinion, this aspect of exclusion is the disempowerment of socially excluded groups and individuals which results in their claims to have their social and economic needs not being voiced, not being heard or not being acted upon.

Butola (2011) attempts to analyse some of the antinomies of social exclusion at various levels and critically evaluates the relevance and justification of the concept at conceptual and level of social practice. He suggests that it should be a conceptual tool for changing the world and emerge as an important concept of social analysis. Haan (1998) and Sen (2000) discuss the concept of social exclusion and its application. Sen tries to critically examine the idea of social exclusion, particularly in the context of deprivation and poverty. He places social exclusion within the broader perspective of poverty as capability deprivation. Social exclusion can, thus, be constitutively a part of capability deprivation as well as instrumentally a cause of diverse capability failures.

Striding for inclusion, Suryanarayana (2008) makes an

attempt to define the concept of inclusive growth and aims to develop measures of inclusion. He proposes to define inclusion/exclusion for an outcome scenario on broad-based growth from three different perspectives, viz. production, income and consumption distribution. By 'inclusive growth', he states that the growth process is such that it has benefited even those sections that are deprived of both physical and human asset endowments and hence, generally belong to the bottom rungs of income distribution and are incapable of participating/ benefiting from the growth process. Thus, the definition of the concept presupposes the identification of the set of deprived that cannot and hence, does not i) participate effectively in the production process, ii) benefit from it in terms of income generated; and iii) experience welfare improvements as measured by consumption. He finds out that the growth process in the country bypassed the majority and was not inclusive in the past and thus created a void between rich and poor, rural and urban.

Likewise, Dev (2008) also argues for more inclusive growth in India for reduction in deprivation and regional disparities and for sustainable economic growth. He treats 'inclusive growth' as synonymous with 'equitable development'. Inclusive development is nothing but the process of including all sections of society in development process in a just and fair manner. On the other

hand, Thorat and Kumar (2009) bring together original documents, memorandums and writings of B.R. Ambedkar to highlight his contribution to the development of exclusion and inclusive policies in the country. A comprehensive introduction on both the historical context and the present controversy regarding reservation is discussed in their book.

Thus from the brief literature review, one can understand the significance and relevance of inclusive development in India, especially in the context of North-East states as the region is witnessing a longstanding problem of ethnic mobilisation and marginalisation. In this regard, Butola (2002) rightly points out in his study that in the development discourses in social science research in NER, the British imperialism continues to prevail in every discourse and is all done in the name of development. Singh (2005) puts the blame on coordination failure for divergent development gap specifically between the hills and the valley.

### **MARGINALISATION AND ETHNIC MOBILISATION**

The whole process of ethnic mobilisation, which began in the region during colonial time, got intensified with the process of state building which strengthened the scope for ethnic identity movement. As a consequence, ethnic tension has become more prominent today than ever before; one knows that once

fuelled, clashes between ethnic groups or with the state forces culminate in turbulent environment undermining development aspirations of the people.

Over and above that, in order to understand the issue of insurgency in North-East India it is necessary to trace its root cause and analyse the tale of the rebel groups. Unfortunately, NER is home to over 50 ethnic rebel groups, out of which a few are demanding total secession from Indian union, some striving for ethnic identities and homelands and some regulating the insurgency as an industry, with no distinct political ideologies, but just for making quick money. This way, the struggling ethnicities of the region continued to challenge the nation building process despite concerted efforts made by successive Indian governments for several decades to bring solution to it, rather there is every possibility that their approach has further aggravated the situation or crisis.

The role of ethnic assertion and associated insurgency problem on development discourse in Manipur is deep and massive. More holistically, ethnicity has far reaching implications not only on social and economic aspects, but also in dimensions of urbanisation, household amenities, infrastructural facilities, human resource development, etc. Many studies reveal a large-scale intra-regional disparity in the level of development which is compounded by the problem of insurgency, inefficient governance, political ill-will, ethnic

tensions and other security issues. Furthermore, in the absence of safe environment that is conducive for development activities coupled with well-equipped infrastructure and strong resource base, including human capital, the scope for significant progress in development level in the region is unlikely to take place in near future.

Many studies on ethnic group mobilisation conclude that under a dominant ethnic group, other ethnic minorities become minorities without any claim in the national initiatives unless they could assert themselves politically. (Behera and Sahu) Justifying on this statement, one is convinced that achieving an equitable development in a pluralistic society like India is a daunting task. Experiences also suggest that the achievement of equality has been a cumbersome and slow process. One of the main factors affecting this drawback may be attributed to lack of an egalitarian sensibility in social order coupled with poor sense of social justice. Government schemes to help the poor also failed. This sums up that there are enormous challenges that come in the way of inclusive development in India.

#### **ANALYSIS OF SOCIAL EXCLUSION AND REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT**

It is evident from the preceding discussion that inclusive development is a complex theme of research. Very few scholars have addressed this theme particularly on the tribals of

North-East India. Therefore, in this background an attempt has been made to fill the missing link and so to make it objective it was necessary to follow a sound research methodology. The first and most important part of it was to select the right indicators.

Yet, there is no universal standard to measure inclusive growth or inclusive development so far. Perhaps, one of the best known measures of development is the Human Development Index (HDI) which embodies three indicators which is not based solely on income but considers other dimensions of well-being as well. Yet, the question arises as how well the HDI captures the inclusive development and social exclusion. The index combines income/living standard (measured by per capita income), education (measured by literacy rate), and health (measured by life expectancy)<sup>1</sup>.

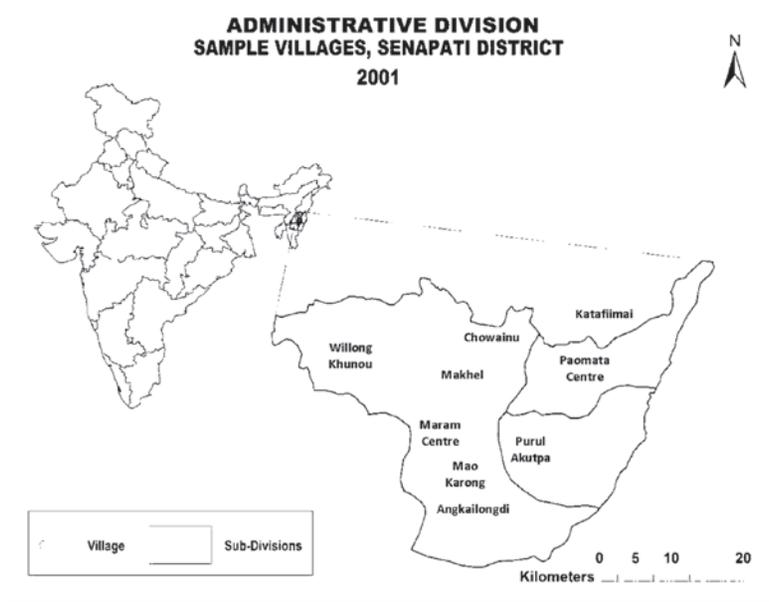
Thus, consistent with the imperative of enforcing inclusiveness as the main thrust in development domain, and since there is no definite research method to measure inclusive development and social exclusion, attempts have been made to measure inclusive development in terms of different processes of inclusion/exclusion indicators—social, economic, political and infrastructure. Thus, a major limitation lies in methodological difficulties while capturing the nature of development.

## RESEARCH METHOD

Both qualitative and quantitative methods have been adopted for the present study with the research hypothesis “geographical areas of relative isolation will exhibit lower level of development and hence higher degree of social exclusion compared to areas with better accessibility”. Since there is no standard formula agreed upon to measure inclusive growth or inclusive development, the idea of a social responsibility function was used while deciding on the indicators and variables. Considering the specification of the region and the importance of community bond over family and village, the community has been selected as the unit of study. In total, nine villages from three sub-divisions of Senapati district in Manipur have been taken as samples namely, Mao-Maram, Paomata and Purul wherein four tribal groups -- Mao, Maram, Paomai and Thangal -- are predominant. The selected sample villages are given as under (also shown in Map 1):

- Three Poumai Naga villages: Paomata Centre, Katafimmai, and Purul Akutpa;
- Three Mao villages: Chowainu, Makhel and Mao Karong;
- Two Maram villages: Maram Centre and Willong Khunou; and
- One Thangal village: Angkailongdi has been selected for the present study.

<sup>1</sup> 2010 Human Development Report, UNDP.



Map 1

Primary data collection method has been used to gather information for the research purpose through the medium of interview, questionnaire and group discussion.

A combination of two sampling designs has been used for selection of village samples, namely, simple random sampling (without replacement) and cluster sampling. In simple random sampling without replacement, the unit/sample selected at each draw is not returned to the original population so that the size of the universe/population from which the samples are drawn changes at every draw.

The entire population of 116 villages was stratified into different clusters in order to choose the village samples mainly based on two criteria

as given under and also taking into consideration that the villages had to be selected keeping in mind the tribes inhabiting across the region:

- a) *area of relative isolation*: those villages which are located in places devoid of easy accessibility such as important administrative centres, main market and highways), and
- b) *villages with easy accessibility*: those villages in spatial proximity with the National Highways, State Highways, District/ Sub-Divisional Headquarters.

Based on these criteria, data has been collected from 40 respondents each from village sample, again following the random sampling in selection of household samples. Different sample villages have been

selected corresponding with the four tribes under consideration. Accordingly, three villages each of Poumai Naga and Mao (three from areas of relative isolation and other three from areas of better accessibility meaning the villages are located closer to important centres which could be District/Sub-division headquarters or National/State Highways); two villages of Maram tribe (one from remote area and the other one from near the National Highway); and since Thangal tribe has a very small population and also they are all located somewhat close to areas of better accessibility only one village has been selected for the study.

Information gathered on various aspects of well-being for all of the village samples provides detailed information on demographic and economic characteristics; health status and education of family members; awareness of and participation in development programmes; housing, water, and sanitation conditions of families; availability of credit to finance poor family; family income and expenditures, etc. Basically the approach towards the study of inclusive development in present research is based on development programmes and its implementation. Henceforth, attempt has been made to assess whether the opportunities or benefits of growth and development are either adequate and whether it reaches the target group or not. This exercise was necessitated by the fact that people's participation forms

an important feature of inclusive development.

### **SOCIAL EXCLUSION AND INCLUSIVE DEVELOPMENT INDICATORS**

The inclusive development indicators may be broadly organised as under:

- (i) Social
- (ii) Economic
- (iii) Political
- (iv) Infrastructure

The choice of indicators is made in consistent with the framework of social exclusion and inclusive development discussed in previous section. Data on development indicators are obtained by comprehensive survey where a sample of the population have been interviewed about their access to health care, education, employment and working conditions, economic resources and material standard of living, housing, safety and security, social relations, political resources, infrastructure, etc.

### **METHOD OF DATA ANALYSIS**

Findings on level of development were drawn using percentage and represented in the form of tables and dot maps. Besides, methods of composite index and index of remoteness have been employed to map out spatial character of regional development. Thus, the performance of each indicator under the four broad aspects of inclusive development were arranged in a descending order and final score was calculated for each aspect i.e., economic, social, political and infrastructure. To obtain nature

of overall inclusive development the final score of each aspect was added and hence the final z score of overall development aspects of the four important tribal communities was calculated.

### (a) Composite index

This method helps in capturing the multi-dimensional aspects in a single dimension; that is, it helps capture the overall regional development. It is interpreted as higher the index, higher is the level of development and vice-versa. To make the indicators comparable with each other, the variables have been standardised by subtracting the mean of every indicator and divided by their respective standard deviation. It is calculated using the following formula:

$$ci = \frac{X - \bar{X}}{SD}$$

where ci is the composite index, x is the unit of observation,  $\bar{x}$  is the mean of each variable and SD is the standard deviation.

Thus, the standardised data is added to find out the aggregate development factor score.

### (b) Index of remoteness

The main focus of Index of remoteness is to define remoteness in terms of socio-economic parameters influencing the study area. It is basically defined in terms of physical distance separating the base spatial unit from nodes of activity and how distance and ethnic boundaries restrict opportunities for interaction.

### INDICATORS OF REMOTENESS

The physiographic and other differences between the hills and plains of Manipur are not only articulated in socio-cultural and politico-economic difference but these also create differences in the nature of spatial interaction which in turn are important for inclusive development. To measure levels of spatial interaction an Index of Remoteness has been used. It is based on the following main features:

- (i) approximate road mileage from the sample village to District HQ (in kilometres)
- (ii) approximate mileage with kutcha road from District HQ to the sample village (in kilometres)
- (iii) number of ethnic /linguistic boundaries used to reach the nearest main market
- (iv) number of ethnic/linguistic boundaries used to reach the state capital
- (v) number of dialects used between the nearest main market and the sample village
- (vi) number of dialects used between the state capital and the sample village

The remoteness has gained importance in explaining the spatial dimension of development as it is defined in terms of physical distance separating the sample villages from nodes of activity and how distance and ethnic/linguistic boundaries restrict opportunities for spatial interaction. In highly accessible areas, there is relatively unrestricted accessibility

to a wide range of goods and services and hence greater opportunities for spatial interaction; whereas in very remote areas, there is very little accessibility of goods, services and opportunities for interaction and hence more subjected to exclusion.

### (c) Correlation

Measurement of the degree and direction of correlation between variables is important as it helps particularly the geographers in explaining the variations in various spatial phenomena, and therefore the calculation is carried out in the following manner:<sup>2</sup>

Measurement of Correlation (formula) as suggested by Karl Pearson is given as:

$$r = \frac{\sum XY - \frac{\sum X \sum Y}{N}}{\sqrt{\frac{\sum x^2 (\sum x)^2}{N}} \sqrt{\frac{\sum Y^2 (\sum Y)^2}{N}}}$$

where  $r$  is the correlation coefficient between two variables  $X$  and  $Y$ , and  $N$  is the number of observations.

### OVERALL DEVELOPMENT AND SPATIAL FACTOR

As previously discussed, development is multi-dimensional in nature. It is the outcome of several processes which may be of social, economic, political, and infrastructure; each of these aspects plays its own role in determining the development level of the region. Therefore, the complexities

of interaction among these factors cannot be probed adequately without looking at them in a comprehensive multi-dimensional framework. Thus, for capturing the overall regional development, final composite index has been calculated to determine the overall development level of the sample villages.

Table 1 and Map 2 show a wide spatial variation in overall development composite index values. Angkailongdi village situated close to the well connected centre has obtained the highest composite index scoring 24.6 value. Makhel and Mao Karong villages are at the second and third positions respectively with 9.89 and 7.26 composite index values. These villages enjoy the advantage of linkages whereby it attracts most of the development opportunities and thus helped in acquiring some of the modern socio-economic and infrastructural amenities. However, Maram Centre, which supposedly figure in the same league accounts for relatively low overall development index as the village seems to have weak inter and intra-regional linkages with respect to socio-economic development parameters. The other villages showing relatively developed overall development level include Paomata Centre and Chowainu and the composite index value for these villages are 3.30 and 2.00 respectively. Better accessibility and proximity to service centres

<sup>2</sup>Mahmood, Aslam. 1998. Statistical Methods in Geographical Studies. Rajesh Publications, New Delhi. pp. 48-53

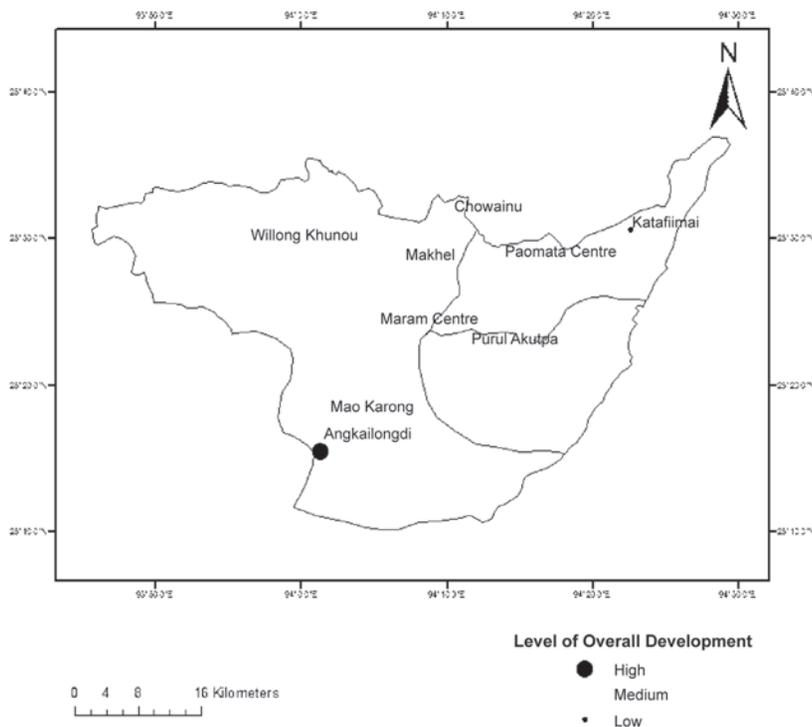
seem to have led to acquiring the relatively better development index. Paomata centre is situated near the sub-divisional headquarter and located close to the state highways but the road condition is deplorable which adversely affects the smooth flow of traffic and the overall spatial interaction.

Level of overall development is lowest in Katafimmai village scoring as low as -37.14 value of the composite index. Other villages that fall in the lowest rung are Maram Centre and

Purul Akutpa with composite index values of -2.86 and -4.50 respectively. Remoteness compounded by low literacy rate and poor transport connectivity is mainly responsible for the low development level at Katafimmai village. On the other hand, relative inaccessibility and weak inter and intra-linkages have contributed to low level of overall development in Purul Akutpa village.

Conclusions can be drawn from the statistical analysis of the correlation coefficient between

**LEVEL OF OVERALL DEVELOPMENT IN SAMPLE VILLAGES  
SENAPATI DISTRICT - 2011**



Map 2

**Table 1**  
**Correlation Coefficient and t value – Overall Development Indicator and Remoteness Index**

	<b>Correlation value of RI and OCI</b>	<b>Calculated t value</b>	<b>Tabulated t (0.05, 7d.f.)*</b>	<b>Result</b>
Result	-0.691	2.531	2.364	Significant Rejects the null hypothesis

where, RI = remoteness index, OCI = Overall development composite index

\* Tabulated value with 7 degree of freedom at 0.05 level of significance is 2.364

the remoteness index and overall development composite index that the two variables are negatively correlated at the value of -0.691. Table 1 shows that the calculated t value is greater than the corresponding tabulated value, meaning thereby that the correlation coefficient is significant. The tabulated value of correlation coefficient at 5% significance with 7 degree of freedom is 2.364 and is lesser than the calculated t value of 2.531. Meaning, there is significant correlation between remoteness index and overall development composite index at 0.05 level (2-tailed) and thus, it rejects the null hypothesis.

The statistical explanation of these t values says that the correlation between the overall regional development composite index and remoteness index is statistically significant. It implies that the unequal spatial interaction processes are related with regional inequality and patterns of regional growth. It is largely due to the components included in the indices of development parameters that these aspects have led to a reduction in territorial disparities, but have not led

to greater polarisation. More remote areas benefit less from growth in terms of its poverty alleviation programmes leading to a divergence in poverty rates across the region.

However, when one looks closely at development parameters individually inferences can be made that not all the villages or households situated in areas of relative isolation exhibited a low level of development in social, economic and political indicators and hence not subjected to greater exclusionary process. And, not all those households or villages situated in areas with better accessibility and spatial proximity to important service centres have always demonstrated a higher level of development in all indicators. Thus, these findings of individual development parameters nullify the hypothesis that “the villages situated in areas of relative isolation will exhibit lower level of development and hence higher degree of exclusion compared to areas with better accessibility. Nonetheless, when taken for overall development composite index, the hypothesis is validated to a considerable extent.

Besides, it is found that there is also weak inter and intra-linkages, limiting the developmental opportunities, for instance inter and intra-tribal disparity in the level of development indicators. This obviously hampers the process of inclusive development as it results in tribal rivalry pertaining to power relation. Thus, it can be said that inter-tribe disparity in the level of development will impede inclusive development. In addition, villages with low literacy rate have predominance of traditional activities and very less proportion of the household population is into market-oriented activities, other than just the traditional activities that is, agriculture. Thus, it is understood that literacy rate also plays a determining role in achieving inclusive growth and development coupled with various support from the state and its agencies.

### **EDUCATION: INCLUSION AND EXCLUSION DIMENSION**

As educational development is a stepping-stone to economic and social development, and the most effective instrument for empowering the marginalised like the tribal, efforts have been made by the Ministry of Tribal Affairs to improve their educational status exclusively by carrying out various development tasks by formulating different Schemes. Post-Matric Scholarship (PMS), Book Bank, Scheme for Construction of Hostels for ST Girls and Boys, Rajiv Gandhi National

fellowship and Education among ST girls in Low Literacy Districts etc., are some of the government programmes formulated for promoting education among STs. Nonetheless, these schemes fall short of expectation. From the survey it is found that people are not sensitised about the education schemes and hence ignorant about it. Except for the Post-Matric Scholarship (PMS), both students and parents are not aware of the other programmes which are aimed at enhancing their social mobility.

Even though tribal education was given utmost importance during the plan periods, the planners have failed to even recognise the basic need of the tribal people, for instance, in providing hostel facilities for Scheduled tribe students, both boys and girls. Till recent times, it is for this simple reason that some ST students drop out of schools for lack of adequate accommodation in view of their poor economic conditions. It was only in 2010 that the proposal for setting up hostels for ST boys and girls in the tribal areas of Manipur has been accepted in the hope that no students drop out on grounds of inadequate accommodation.

It is also noticed from the survey that people are increasingly concerned about quality education and so the children are sent to unaided private schools, which is presumably higher in quality, even at the cost of paying higher school fees. So much so that the parents squeeze in their budget

and make sure that their children are enrolled in private schools in their own village or in the neighbourhoods.

It is noteworthy that tracking on the path of inclusive development, Manipur state government in compliance with the RTE Act has taken up various activities during the past years. As part of context specific interventions pictorial charts and textbooks have been introduced in various tribal dialects spoken in hill districts of Senapati, Tamenglong, Ukhrul, Churachandpur and Chandel, and efforts are on for inclusion of all tribal dialects in the school curriculum. The recent development has been the recognition and introduction of three tribal dialects of Poumai, Gangte and Liangmai in school syllabus up to Class VIII. It is reported that text books published by Poumai Literature Committee in 'Poula' dialect (Poumai Naga dialect) is being taught in schools on voluntary basis since a decade back. Mao dialect textbooks have been introduced up to matriculation. Still, the tribal dialects of Seme, Maram, Inpui, Maring, Anal, Chiru, Kharam, Thangal and many others are yet to be brought within the folds of inclusive education in terms of mother tongue. It is significant in the context of Manipur because inclusion of tribal dialects in the school curriculum can act as a unifying force of the people wherein the ethnic mobilisation is active.<sup>3</sup> It is

also in this regard that tribal dialect textbooks are introduced not only in government and aided schools but are instituted even for private unaided schools.

Thus from the present analysis, it is understood that greater spatial interaction plays a significant role in spreading awareness among the hill tribes in response to the development benefits. Tribes near the district headquarter have higher level of awareness as compared to tribes located far from it. Thus, taking advantage of linkages, these villages have attracted most of the developmental opportunities including educational infrastructure. Consequently, most of the villages situated in the remote parts remain unaffected by modern developmental influences due to poor spatial interaction. On end note, it can be said that the interaction processes play a determining role in inclusive growth and thus has to be regarded as the basic tenet of development so as to fulfill the objective of inclusive development.

### **CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS**

Given that tribal areas lag behind in the development achievements, and that infrastructure is causally linked to improvements in different development parameters, investment in rural infrastructure also holds the key to inclusive development,

<sup>3</sup>Ragongning Gangmei. May 20, 2013, Chairman of Council of Tribal Language and Literature Societies, Manipur (CTLLSM), doi: <http://e-pao.net/GP.asp?src=29..310513.may13>.

not only in Manipur but the North East region as a whole. Thus, from this instance, it can be illustrated that the districts which are situated in remote areas suffers more from neglect in development pursuits, in their respective states. On account of these problems also, the frontiers witness a greater ethnic mobilisation, culminating in militarisation.

Furthermore, taking cognizance of development disparity, North-East is the only region in India which has a ministry, called Ministry of Development of North Eastern Region (MDNER), exclusively meant for them that manages the matters relating to the planning, execution and monitoring of development schemes and projects in NER including Sikkim, with a vision to accelerate the pace of socio-economic development to bring at par with the mainstream. Yet, even after many years of economic planning in the country, primary sector continues to dominate the economy of the people, characterised by stagnant economic growth. Industrial sector remains stagnant and the tertiary sector is dominated by government administrative services, and the trade and commerce are mostly in the hands of non-local traders resulting in capital outflow from the region, while the educated unemployed population keeps rising at an alarming rate as the region lacks adequate job avenues to absorb them. Therefore, despite a strong natural resource base, its potentials and generous funding allocations from

the centre, the region still records low level of regional development, while at the same time broadening avenues for political dialogue.

As with regard to school education, the problems faced by children in the tribal areas of the state are often different from that of children belonging to Scheduled Castes. Thus, in conformity with the provisions of RTE Act, there is a need for SSA to provide context specific intervention in the form of hostels, incentives or a special facility as required especially for those in peripheral locations. Some of the suggested interventions, which can be considered, are preparing textbooks in mother tongue for tribal children at the primary education where they do not understand other languages. Besides, efforts can be made to bridge language barriers for non-tribal teachers by teaching them the basics of tribal dialect, and impart special training for them to encourage them to work in tribal areas.

Thus, in order to bridge the development gap there is a need to create a viable environment for private investment, by removing infrastructural bottlenecks and by providing basic minimum services, and by removing impediments to lasting peace and security in the region, as the ethnic identity movement and social unrest has for long been held responsible for impediments of progress in the region. The conclusion is obvious here because economic growth

can be obtained and sustained in a sustainable manner only if the development discourse becomes inclusive and subsequently achieve inclusive development of the needy and the marginalised.

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