



## Social Inclusion and Economic Empowerment of Common People through Attainment of SDG 2030

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**Abstract:** The research is directed to apprehending the initiatives taken by the Indian Government to socially include and economically empower the marginalised population towards the attainment of the Sustainable Development Goals 2030. The study revealed that the supply of foodgrains per capita has improved to 506 kg in 2017 as compared to 445 kg from 2006. Although, India is still lagging to ensure the 100% coverage of her population in terms of both quantitative and qualitative standards. The Insurance coverage of Indian Citizens has extended to 3571 lakhs in 2018-19 from 1891 in 2011 following the implementation of Govt. Schemes such as RSBY and Ayushman Bharat. Although the outreach of Private Sector in the field of Insurance is quite low in India. The inclusion of poor into formal education and literacy has improved significantly from 27% in 1951 to 81% in 2011. Sanitation and Drinking Water coverage has also improved with the Govt. intervention like 'Swachh Bharat Mission'. Around 99% of Indian households have toilet as per the data obtained in 2019. On the employment front, India has not been performing satisfactorily to provide employment to the population. Income Inequality has also been a major concern and roadblock in the avenue of inclusive development. The top 1% acquired around 24% of country's wealth in 2000, whereas in 2021 33% of the country's wealth is captured by the same. Only 6% wealth accrues to the bottom 50% in 2021, which is even smaller than the figure of 8.3% recorded in the year of 2000.

**Key Words:** Income inequality, Sanitation, Social Exclusion, Economic Empowerment, Gender Gap, Literacy, Health Insurance, SDG.

### 1. INTRODUCTION:

Indian society has been highly diverse traditionally with a lot of differences in terms of caste, religions, language and ethnicity. The caste system and untouchability have long plagued India and widespread poverty fuelled by the illiteracy in the backdrop of colonial extortion has caused an economic backwardness. As per the recent report, 22% Indian population lives below the poverty line and untouchability and religious constraints prevail in the many parts of Indian society. Economic empowerment is necessary for the Social Inclusion of the marginalized section, but not sufficient to realize so. Mere economic prosperity and standing up on its own may not ensure the socially backward segment to be mingled with the mainstream social flow, unless the behaviour and mindset of them as well as the society don't change. Also, their self-esteem and self-actualization play a major role in this regard. Education is a vital aspect to supplement the economic empowerment to shift the social dynamics. Also, the social security coverage extended by the Govt. is another important aspect for the social inclusion of the underprivileged.



**Figure 1: Sustainable Development Goals**

To solve the critical needs of the society and to ensure global peace and prosperity through an inclusive development, the United Nations General Assembly has set the Sustainable Development Goals in 2015. There are total 17 goals encompassing the areas of poverty, hunger, health, sanitation, inequality, empowerment, clean energy, affordable living, environment to be realized by 2030. India has also pledged to fulfil the goals by the set time and executing various interventions progressively towards attaining those. NITI Aayog, the prime think tank of India, analyses yearly the progress made by the Govt. in the areas of Sustainable Development and ranks the States based on their respective performances.

## 2. REVIEW OF LITERATURE:

**Panini (2014)** viewed that the informal and unorganized sector in India is the main reason for the social exclusion. He has taken the scenario of Indian agriculture where the marginalized farmers have barely any farmland and resources to cultivate on their own. They don't even have ownership of the land and proper right to their produce. Such excluded farmers are often heard of committing suicide in case of calamities due to a lack of social protection and economic backup.

**Saxena (2014)** has figured out that there is an unequal distribution of Urban Development in India, where the large cities are better off and the small and medium towns are deprived. The root cause of this inequality is considered to be market-oriented development which focuses more on absorbing migrants in the large cities rather than uplifting the poor inhabitants of small and marginal ones. The benefit of government schemes hardly made any impact on the livelihood of the slum dwellers in small Tier III to Tier VI cities.

**Tilak (2015)** highlighted that the social exclusion of the poor is evident in terms of inequality in the higher education system. There is a large gap in enrolment in higher education in terms of rural and urban students. As per the 2004-05 data, the enrolment rate stood at 2.5% in rural areas as compared to 14.5% in urban areas. This gap is even wider when considering the SC and ST population and the transgenders.

**Thorat and Newman (2009)** noted that Dalits predominantly face discrimination in India. Although the Dalits are favoured by the political parties for their own interest, that didn't change their life. Apart from the social exclusion, they face economic exclusion as well. They altogether encounter discrimination in terms of job, wages, cheaper loans, land purchase etc. Dalits are majorly exploited and this prevents them from being included in the social mainstream and hinders their upliftment in terms of economic parameters.

**Jeffrey and Others (2004)** argued that the education is a tool that can be used to reduce social inclusion of Dalits. However, education is not totally successful in this case. Because education alone can't redistribute the wealth and



increase the total employment neither. Many Dalit students have attained higher education but failed to secure job due to lack of money to bribe for that.

**3. RESEARCH GAP:**

After reviewing the research paper following research gaps can be highlighted:

- Issues of food security and hunger needs to be addressed as it is the basic need and prominent goal of SDG
- Gender equality needs to be focused to be a major agenda of Social Inclusion.
- Social safety net in terms of health protection needs to be addressed.
- The issues of formal sanitation should be taken into account as emphasized in SDG.
- Economic empowerment should be revisited in terms of unemployment rate.

**4. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY:**

- To look into the issues of Social Exclusion and find out the reasons behind them.
- To analyse the effort made on behalf of the Govt. to materialize the SDGs in terms of betterment of the poor to enable social inclusion.
- To examine the extent to which the economic empowerment of the marginalized section has occurred and its implication on Social Inclusion.

**5. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY:**

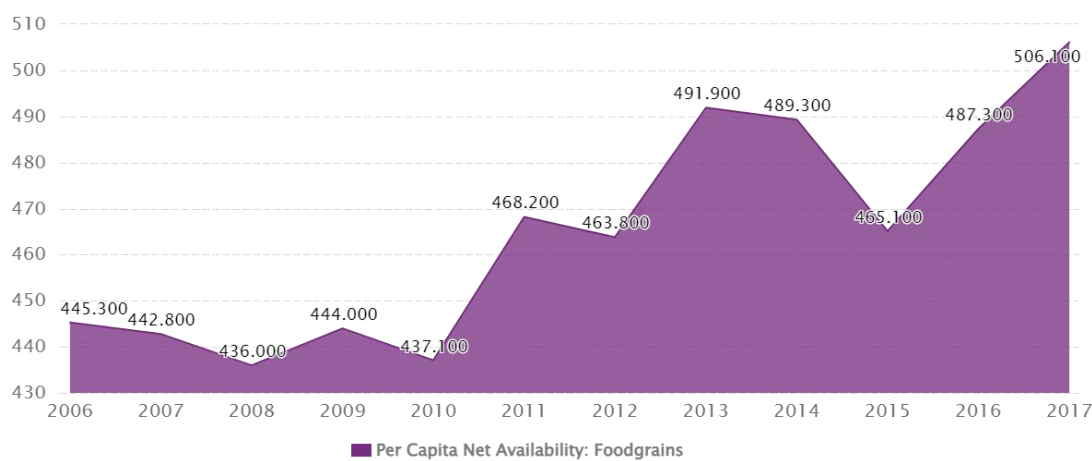
The study analyses the data compiled from various sources including reports published by Indian Govt. and World agencies, journals, research papers and forums. The dataset relating to the parameters of Social Inclusion and Economic Empowerment are analysed with respect to the achievement in various fields mentioned under Sustainable Development Goals. The following table exhibits the parameters and corresponding goals of SDG 2030.

Parameters of Social Inclusion and Economic Empowerment	Corresponding Sustainable Development Goals
Food Security	SDG 2: Zero Hunger
Health Insurance Coverage	SDG 3: Good Health and Well-being
Literacy & Gender parity	SDG4: Quality Education & SDG 5: Gender Equality
Sanitation Coverage	SDG 6: Clean Water and Sanitation
Employment	SDG 8: Decent Work and Economic Growth
Economic Inequality	SDG 10: Reduced Inequality

**Table 1: Parameters and corresponding goals of Sustainable Development**

**6. DATA ANALYSIS:**

**6.1. Food Security- SDG 2: Zero Hunger:**



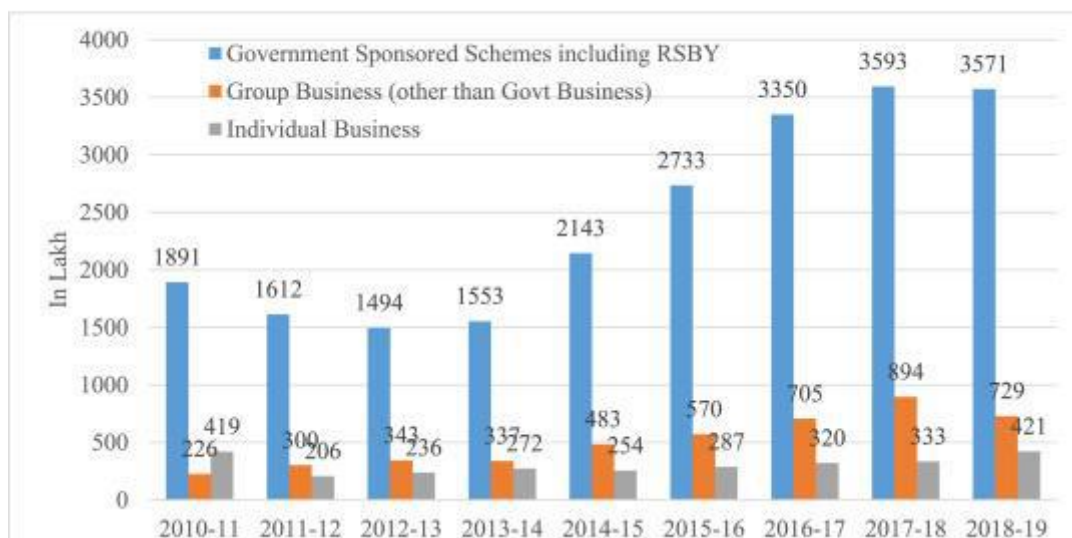
**Graph 1: Per Capita Availability of Food grains in India**



Per capita foodgrain availability in India has increased from 445kg in 2006 to 506 kg in 2017. Foodgrain availability has got a boost since 2011 with an average availability of 485kg over the years. India is doing good in ensuring food security to feed its massive 1.3 billion population in terms of rising food supply in successive years. However, with a 27.5 score in Global Hunger Index 2021 India ranked 4 out of 107 countries. 15.3% of Indian population are below the minimum dietary requirement in India in 201. So, India needs to focus more on ensuring proper food availability to each and every citizen with the minimum permissible standard.

**6.2. Health Insurance Coverage- SDG 3: Good Health and Well-being:**

**Penetration of Health Insurance Scheme in India: Number of Persons Covered**

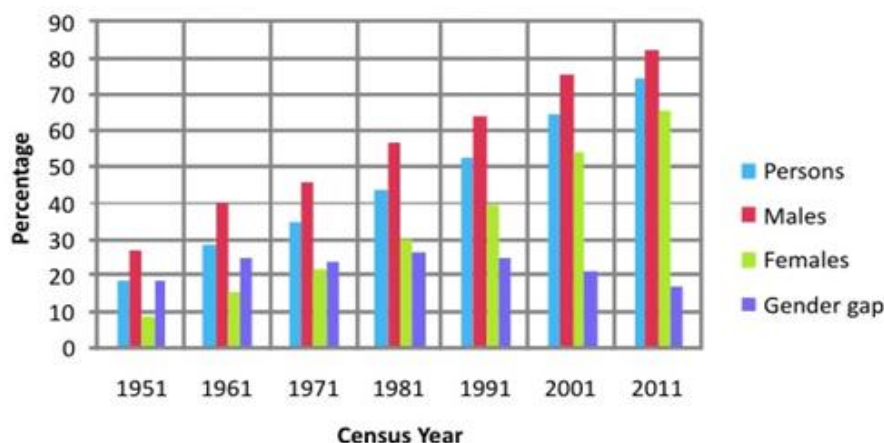


**Graph 2: Health Insurance Penetration in India**

An important parameter of social inclusion of the underprivileged is the protection against health emergency. India has taken many initiatives in both central and state level in this regard. The most notable one is the ‘Rashtriya Swasthya Bima Yojana (RSBY)’ launched in 2008 with a sum assured of Rs. 30000 per family per year and the latest one is the ‘Ayushman Bharat’ scheme launched in 2018 with a sum assured of Rs. 5 lakh per family per year. The Govt. sponsored insurance penetration in India has significantly improved post rollout of RSBY from 1891 lakh persons in 2010-11 to 3571 lakhs in 2018-19. However, private sector individual and group insurance coverage had been consistently lower in India.

**6.3. Literacy & Gender parity- SDG 4: Quality Education & SDG 5: Gender Equality:**

**Literacy Trend in India**

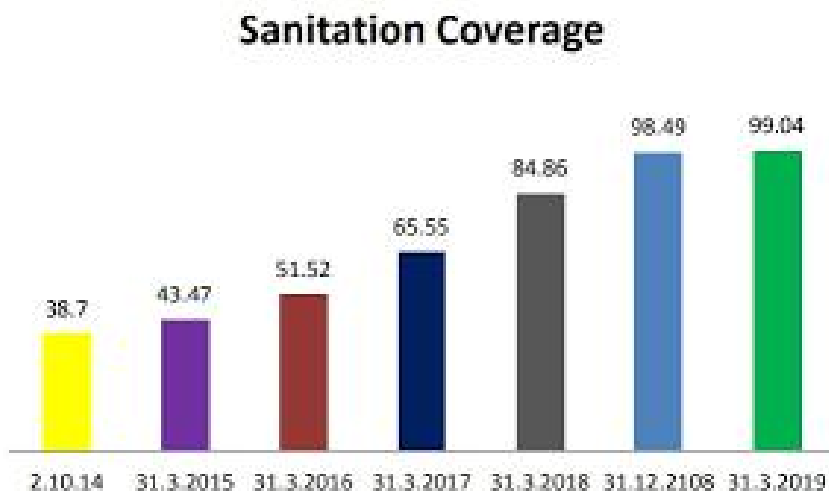


**Graph 3: Literacy Trend in India**



Social Inclusion through literacy and schooling has notably improved from merely 27% literacy rate in 1951 to 81% in 2011. Govt. schemes such as Sarva Siksha Aviyam, Rashtriya Uccharat Sikha Aviyam have given in boast in the education in the later decades of 20<sup>th</sup> century. Moreover, the Right to Education Act, 2009 made provided for free and compulsory education to children in the age group of 6 to 14. Also, the gender gap in education has been narrowed over the years, indicating a greater leap towards gender-inclusive social inclusion of poor in India. Recent initiatives of Govt. such as ‘Beti Bachao Beti Padao’ has further enhanced the opportunity of the education of girl children in India.

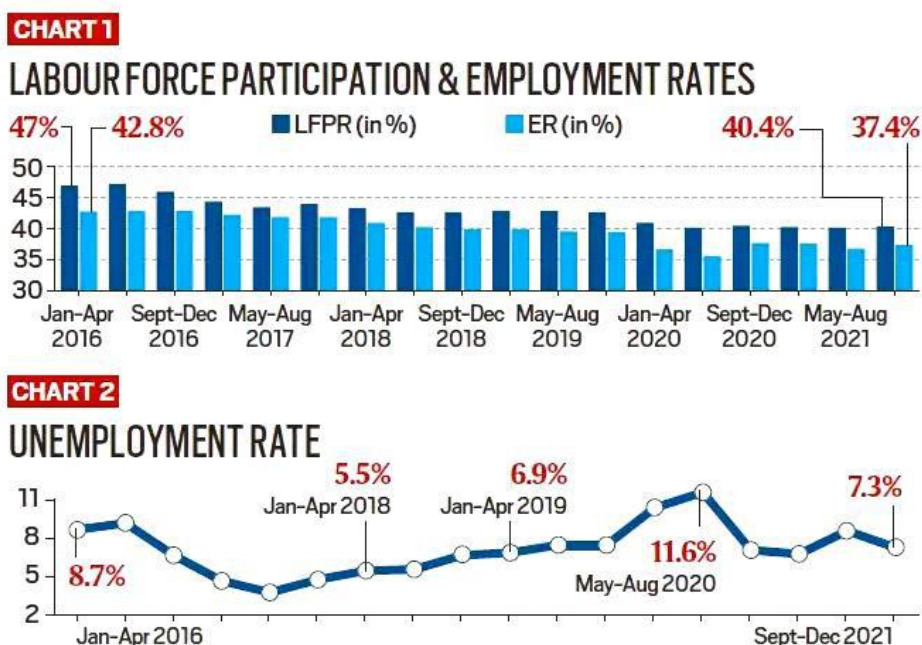
**6.4. Sanitation Coverage- SDG 6: Clean Water and Sanitation:**



**Graph 4: Sanitation Coverage in India**

Sanitation is one of the basic needs of human being. Since the launch of Swachh Bharat Mission in 2014, toilet construction in rural and urban households has significantly increased. From merely 38.7% households in 2014, the covered toilet access has increased to almost 99% in 2019. Village Panchayats have been awarded with Open Defecation Free (ODF) status for eliminating sanitation in rural area.

**6.5. Employment- SDG 8: Decent Work and Economic Growth:**

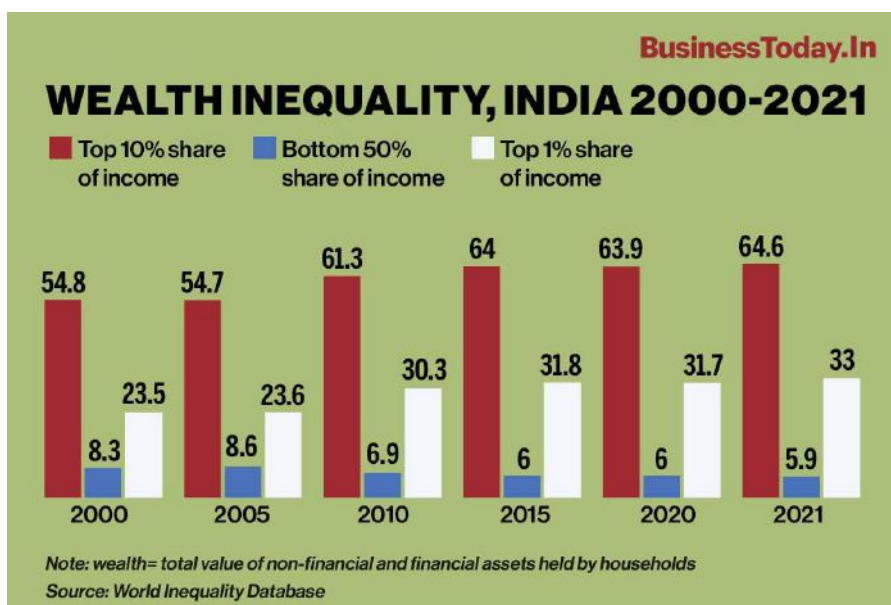


**Graph 5: LFPR, Employment and Unemployment Rate in India**



The economic empowerment of the poorer section is represented by the Labour Force Participation Rate. The LPPR has declined from 47% in 2016 to 40% in 2021. Unemployment rate has decreased in 2017 although it kept on rising later on and reached highest in the second quarter of 2020 due to Covid pandemic. At the end of 2021, unemployment rate is still higher at 7.3%. This renders that India is not so efficient in arranging employment opportunity for its growing population.

### 6.6 Economic Inequality- SDG 10: Reduced Inequality:



Graph 6: Wealth Inequality in India

There is stark contrast in income distribution in India. In 2000, where the top 1% held 23.5% of countries' wealth, the figure rose to 33% in 2021. Similarly top 10% held 54.8% of countries' wealth in 2000, which rose to 64.5% in 2021. With respect to the bottom 50% of Indian population merely 6% wealth are held by them, which is even lower than the figure of 8.3% in 2000.

### 7. CONCLUSION:

India has taken many initiatives aiming at the social inclusion and economic empowerment of the marginalized communities in lines with the Sustainable Development Goal 2030. It has made a good progress in achieving the targets.

- The per capita foodgrain and pulses availability in India have increased significantly in the recent years given the increased yield and mechanization. However, India needs to ensure its last mile food security in terms of the provision of basic dietary standards to each of its citizens.
- India has well covered the poorer section under the ambit of Health insurance to protect them against the out-of-pocket expenditure in medical contingencies.
- Literacy rate has improved significantly with the narrowing of gender gap in education. Enrolment in Higher education also surged with the scholarship support and education loan facility provided to the student.
- India has performed tremendously well in bringing its citizens under the ambit of sanitation coverage with building of toilet in almost every village and changing the habit of rural population towards cleanliness is also materialized.
- However, India fails to generate productive employment satisfactorily to its citizens despite rolling out various employment generation program in both rural and urban area.
- The income inequality is the biggest challenge in the social order in India and its increasing trend threatens the objective of inclusive development of a welfare state like India.

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