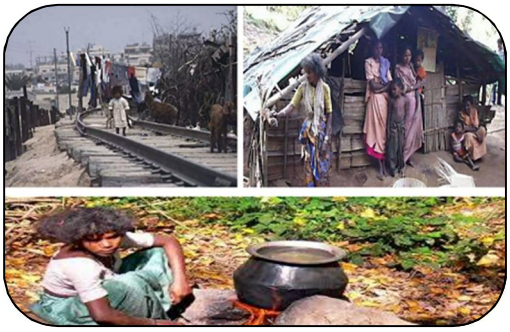
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POVERTY AND SOCIAL EXCLUSION IN INDIA

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ABSTRACT



Poverty and social exclusion remain significant challenges in contemporary Indian society despite economic growth, technological development, and various social welfare initiatives. Poverty is not limited to inadequate income but also involves restricted access to education, healthcare, employment, housing, nutrition, social security, and other essential resources. Social exclusion refers to the processes through which individuals or groups are prevented from fully participating in social, economic, cultural, and political life. In India, poverty and exclusion are closely associated with caste, gender, rural–urban differences, disability, occupation, education, and unequal access to opportunities. Marginalized communities frequently experience multiple forms of disadvantage that reinforce one another across generations. Rural poverty, urban informal employment, unemployment, unequal educational opportunities, and inadequate healthcare further contribute to social vulnerability. Women, children, Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes, minorities, migrant workers, persons with disabilities, and other disadvantaged groups may face greater barriers to social and economic participation. Understanding the relationship between poverty and social exclusion is therefore essential for promoting inclusive development and social justice. The study examines the major causes, dimensions, and consequences of poverty and social exclusion in India and considers their impact on individuals, families, communities, and social development. It highlights the importance of education, employment, social protection, healthcare, housing, financial inclusion, and equal access to public services in reducing multidimensional deprivation. Government welfare programmes and constitutional safeguards have contributed to improving opportunities for disadvantaged groups, but challenges related to implementation, accessibility, awareness, and unequal distribution of resources continue to exist. Community participation, social awareness, empowerment, and inclusive policies are essential for addressing persistent forms of exclusion.

KEYWORDS: *Poverty, Social Exclusion, India, Inequality, Marginalized Communities, Social Justice, Social Inclusion, Unemployment, Caste, Gender Inequality, Rural Poverty, Urban Poverty, Social Protection, Human Development, Inclusive Development.*

INTRODUCTION

Poverty and social exclusion are among the major social and developmental challenges facing Indian society. Poverty refers not only to a lack of income but also to inadequate access to food, education,

healthcare, housing, employment, and social security. Social exclusion refers to the processes through which individuals or groups are prevented from participating fully in economic, social, cultural, and political life. India has experienced significant economic development and improvements in infrastructure, education, and technology, yet poverty and unequal access to opportunities continue to affect many communities. Poverty is closely connected with unemployment, low wages, insecure livelihoods, inadequate education, poor health, and limited access to productive resources. Social exclusion can be influenced by caste, gender, class, religion, disability, geographical location, and other social conditions. Marginalized communities may face multiple disadvantages that restrict their ability to improve their socio-economic position. Rural households may experience limited employment opportunities and inadequate public services, while urban poor populations may face insecure work, inadequate housing, overcrowding, and limited social protection. Children from poor families may experience educational disadvantages that influence their future opportunities. Women in economically disadvantaged households may face additional barriers to employment, education, property ownership, and decision-making. Thus, poverty and social exclusion are interconnected problems that require comprehensive social and economic responses.

The consequences of poverty and social exclusion extend beyond individual economic hardship and influence families, communities, and broader social development. Persistent deprivation can reduce social mobility and reproduce inequality across generations. Limited access to quality education and healthcare can reduce human capabilities and increase vulnerability to unemployment and insecure livelihoods. Social exclusion can also weaken participation in community institutions and decision-making processes. Government welfare programmes, constitutional safeguards, employment initiatives, education schemes, social security measures, and affirmative policies have attempted to address these challenges. However, difficulties related to implementation, awareness, accessibility, and unequal distribution of resources can limit their effectiveness. Globalization, urbanization, migration, digitalization, and changing labour markets have also created new opportunities as well as new forms of vulnerability. Digital exclusion, for example, can restrict access to online education, employment opportunities, financial services, and public welfare information. Addressing poverty therefore requires more than income support; it requires improving access to education, healthcare, employment, housing, social security, and meaningful participation. The present study examines the nature, causes, dimensions, and consequences of poverty and social exclusion in India and emphasizes inclusive development, social justice, empowerment, and equal opportunities as essential conditions for sustainable social progress.

AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

Aim:

To study the nature, causes, dimensions, and consequences of poverty and social exclusion in India and to examine measures for promoting social inclusion, equality, empowerment, and sustainable development.

Objectives:

- To understand the concept and different dimensions of poverty and social exclusion in India.
- To examine the major economic, social, cultural, and structural causes of poverty.
- To study the relationship between poverty, inequality, and social exclusion.
- To examine the impact of unemployment, low income, and insecure employment on poverty.
- To analyze the role of caste, gender, class, and social status in creating social exclusion.
- To study the socio-economic conditions of marginalized and vulnerable communities.

- To examine the impact of poverty on education, healthcare, nutrition, housing, and social security.
- To understand the consequences of poverty and exclusion for children, women, youth, and elderly persons.
- To examine rural and urban dimensions of poverty and social exclusion.
- To study the relationship between migration, informal employment, and social vulnerability.
- To examine the role of education and skill development in reducing poverty and promoting social mobility.
- To assess the role of government welfare programmes and social protection measures in addressing poverty.
- To examine the importance of financial and digital inclusion in improving access to opportunities and services.
- To identify major barriers that prevent marginalized groups from participating fully in social and economic development.
- To suggest appropriate measures for reducing poverty, strengthening social inclusion, promoting equality, and achieving sustainable and inclusive development in India.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The literature on poverty and social exclusion in India demonstrates that poverty is a multidimensional condition involving income deprivation, inadequate access to basic services, limited opportunities, and social disadvantage. Amartya Sen emphasized that poverty should be understood in terms of deprivation of capabilities and freedoms rather than income alone. His capability approach highlights the importance of education, healthcare, nutrition, employment, and participation in improving human well-being. Jean Drèze and Amartya Sen examined the relationship between economic development, public services, social opportunities, and human development in India. Their work demonstrates that economic growth alone cannot eliminate deprivation without improvements in health, education, nutrition, and social security. A.R. Desai examined poverty and inequality through the broader structure of Indian society and emphasized the influence of economic and social institutions on disadvantaged populations. Andre Béteille's studies of caste, class, and inequality provide important insights into the relationship between social stratification and unequal access to resources and opportunities. M.N. Srinivas examined caste and social change in India, providing a foundation for understanding how traditional social structures influence social mobility and social participation. R. Ahuja's work on social problems in India discusses poverty, unemployment, inequality, caste discrimination, and other forms of social disadvantage as interconnected social concerns.

Recent literature has increasingly focused on multidimensional poverty, social exclusion, gender inequality, rural–urban disparities, migration, and access to social protection. Studies indicate that poverty can restrict access to education, healthcare, housing, employment, and political participation, thereby reinforcing social exclusion across generations. Research on marginalized communities has highlighted the continuing disadvantages experienced by Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes, women, migrant workers, and other vulnerable groups. Rural studies have emphasized the importance of land, employment, agricultural livelihoods, public infrastructure, and social services in determining household well-being. Urban poverty research has drawn attention to informal employment, insecure housing, inadequate sanitation, and limited access to social protection. Literature on gender and poverty shows that women may experience greater vulnerability because of unequal employment opportunities, unpaid care responsibilities, limited ownership of assets, and restricted decision-making power. Recent studies also examine digital exclusion and financial exclusion, suggesting that limited access to technology, banking, and

digital services can create additional barriers to development. Government reports and development studies emphasize social protection, education, employment generation, healthcare, financial inclusion, and targeted welfare programmes as important measures for reducing deprivation. Overall, the reviewed literature indicates that poverty and social exclusion are interconnected processes requiring multidimensional and inclusive approaches. The present study builds upon these perspectives to examine the causes, consequences, and possible strategies for addressing poverty and social exclusion in India.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The present study adopts a descriptive and analytical research methodology to examine poverty and social exclusion in India. The study is primarily based on secondary data collected from books, research journals, government reports, census publications, policy documents, academic articles, institutional reports, and reliable development-related sources. The research focuses on the major dimensions of poverty and social exclusion, including income deprivation, unemployment, inequality, limited access to education and healthcare, inadequate housing, social discrimination, and restricted participation in economic and social activities. Relevant literature is systematically reviewed to understand the conceptual, social, economic, and structural dimensions of poverty. The study examines the relationship between poverty and social exclusion among different social groups and considers the influence of caste, gender, class, geographical location, education, and employment. Rural and urban dimensions of poverty are also considered to understand differences in living conditions and access to opportunities. Information is selected according to its relevance, reliability, and connection with the objectives of the study.

The collected information is organized thematically and analyzed through descriptive and interpretative approaches. The study examines the consequences of poverty and exclusion in relation to education, healthcare, nutrition, employment, housing, social security, and social mobility. Particular attention is given to vulnerable and marginalized communities that experience multiple forms of deprivation. Government policies, welfare programmes, social protection measures, employment initiatives, educational schemes, and financial inclusion programmes are reviewed to understand institutional responses to poverty and exclusion. The study also considers the role of NGOs, social workers, community organizations, and local institutions in promoting social inclusion and empowerment. Ethical considerations include accurate representation of information, proper acknowledgement of sources, avoidance of plagiarism, and responsible interpretation of secondary data. Since the study is based primarily on secondary sources, no personal or sensitive information is collected directly from respondents. The methodology provides a comprehensive framework for understanding the causes, consequences, and dimensions of poverty and social exclusion and for suggesting measures aimed at promoting equality, social justice, empowerment, and inclusive development in India.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Poverty and social exclusion remain major challenges affecting the social and economic development of India. Poverty is not limited to insufficient income but also includes inadequate access to education, healthcare, nutrition, housing, employment, social security, and other essential resources. Despite economic growth and various development initiatives, significant differences continue to exist in access to opportunities and resources among different social groups. Unemployment, low wages, insecure employment, rising living costs, and limited livelihood opportunities can increase economic vulnerability. Social exclusion further intensifies poverty by restricting the participation of disadvantaged individuals and communities in economic, social, cultural, and political life. Caste, gender, class, disability, geographical

location, and social status can influence access to resources and opportunities. Rural communities may face inadequate infrastructure, limited employment opportunities, and restricted access to quality public services, while urban poor populations may experience insecure employment, inadequate housing, overcrowding, and poor living conditions. These conditions can create cycles of deprivation that continue across generations.

The problem becomes more complex when poverty is combined with discrimination and limited social participation. Children from poor households may experience difficulties in accessing quality education, while inadequate healthcare and nutrition can affect their long-term development. Women from economically disadvantaged households may face restricted access to employment, property, financial resources, and decision-making opportunities. Marginalized communities may experience discrimination that limits social mobility and participation in development processes. Migration and informal employment can create additional vulnerabilities through insecure work, lack of social protection, and inadequate housing. Digital and financial exclusion have also emerged as important concerns because limited access to technology, banking services, and digital information can restrict access to education, employment, welfare programmes, and economic opportunities. Although constitutional safeguards, government welfare programmes, social protection measures, and development initiatives seek to address these challenges, gaps in awareness, accessibility, implementation, and institutional support may continue to affect their outcomes. Therefore, there is a need for systematic study of the causes, dimensions, and consequences of poverty and social exclusion in India and for identifying effective measures that can promote equality, empowerment, social justice, and inclusive development.

NEED OF THE STUDY

The study of poverty and social exclusion in India is important because poverty continues to affect the quality of life and development opportunities of individuals, families, and communities. Poverty is a multidimensional problem that includes inadequate income, unemployment, poor housing, limited education, inadequate healthcare, malnutrition, and lack of social security. Economic development and technological progress have created new opportunities, but these benefits are not equally accessible to all sections of society. Social exclusion further increases vulnerability by restricting the participation of disadvantaged groups in economic, social, cultural, and political activities. Caste, gender, class, disability, geographical location, and educational status can influence access to resources and opportunities. The study is therefore needed to understand the relationship between economic deprivation and social exclusion. It can help identify the structural and social factors that contribute to persistent poverty and unequal participation. Understanding these factors is essential for developing effective strategies for poverty reduction, social empowerment, and inclusive development.

The study is also needed to examine the impact of poverty and exclusion on education, healthcare, employment, housing, nutrition, social security, and social mobility. Particular attention is required for marginalized communities, women, children, rural populations, migrant workers, and economically vulnerable households. Rapid urbanization, migration, informal employment, digitalization, and changing labour markets have created new forms of vulnerability that require systematic examination. Digital and financial exclusion can further limit access to government services, education, employment opportunities, banking facilities, and social protection. A comprehensive study can help evaluate the role of government welfare programmes, social protection measures, educational initiatives, employment schemes, and community-based interventions. It can also provide useful insights for policymakers, social workers, researchers, NGOs, and development organizations. The study is therefore necessary for promoting social justice, equal opportunities, human dignity, empowerment, and meaningful participation of disadvantaged

groups. Addressing poverty together with social exclusion can contribute to sustainable development and the creation of a more equitable and inclusive Indian society.

FURTHER SUGGESTIONS FOR RESEARCH

Future research on poverty and social exclusion in India should adopt multidimensional approaches that examine income, education, healthcare, housing, nutrition, employment, social security, and participation in society. Comparative studies may be conducted across rural, urban, and tribal areas to identify differences in the nature and intensity of poverty. Researchers should examine poverty among Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes, women, children, elderly persons, persons with disabilities, migrant workers, and other vulnerable groups. Longitudinal studies can help understand how poverty and exclusion change across generations and how social mobility is affected. Further research may examine the relationship between unemployment, informal employment, low wages, and household poverty. Studies should also explore the impact of education, skill development, and employment opportunities on reducing long-term deprivation. Greater attention can be given to gender dimensions of poverty, including women's access to employment, property, financial resources, education, and decision-making. Research on rural poverty should examine landlessness, agricultural livelihoods, infrastructure, public services, and rural employment opportunities. Urban studies can focus on informal settlements, housing insecurity, migrant workers, informal employment, and access to essential services.

Further research should also examine emerging forms of exclusion associated with digitalization and financial systems. Studies can investigate how lack of internet access, digital literacy, banking facilities, and technological resources affects poor and marginalized communities. Research should evaluate the accessibility and effectiveness of government welfare programmes and social protection measures at the local level. Field-based studies using surveys, interviews, case studies, focus groups, and participatory research can provide deeper understanding of the experiences of excluded communities. Interdisciplinary research combining sociology, economics, social work, political science, public administration, education, and development studies can provide comprehensive explanations of poverty and exclusion. Future studies may examine the role of NGOs, self-help groups, community organizations, social workers, and local institutions in promoting empowerment and inclusion. Research can also explore the relationship between poverty, climate change, environmental vulnerability, migration, and livelihood insecurity. Greater emphasis should be placed on evidence-based policies, community participation, and locally appropriate interventions. Further studies should identify sustainable strategies for improving social mobility, access to opportunities, and participation in development. Such research can strengthen policy formulation and contribute to reducing poverty, discrimination, social exclusion, and inequality in India.

SCOPE AND LIMITATIONS

The scope of the study on poverty and social exclusion in India is broad and covers the economic, social, cultural, educational, and political dimensions of deprivation and inequality. The study examines poverty not only in terms of income but also through access to education, healthcare, nutrition, housing, employment, social security, and basic public services. It focuses on the relationship between poverty, inequality, and social exclusion in different sections of Indian society. Special attention is given to marginalized and vulnerable groups, including women, children, Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes, minorities, migrant workers, elderly persons, persons with disabilities, and economically disadvantaged households. The study also considers differences between rural and urban areas and examines the effects of unemployment, informal employment, low wages, migration, and limited livelihood opportunities. The scope further includes the influence of caste, gender, class, education, occupation, and geographical

location on access to social and economic opportunities. It considers the role of government welfare programmes, social protection measures, education, skill development, financial inclusion, and employment initiatives in reducing poverty and promoting social inclusion. The study also recognizes the emerging importance of digital inclusion and access to technology in improving participation in contemporary society.

The study has certain limitations that should be considered while interpreting its findings. The research mainly depends on secondary information obtained from books, research articles, government reports, policy documents, institutional publications, and other available academic sources. Therefore, the study may not fully capture the personal experiences and changing circumstances of every poor and socially excluded individual or community. Differences in definitions, indicators, methodologies, and time periods used by different sources may affect comparison and interpretation of poverty-related information. The large geographical and demographic diversity of India also makes it difficult to provide detailed coverage of every state, district, community, and social group. The study does not conduct an extensive primary survey covering all regions of the country. Rapid changes in employment patterns, migration, technology, prices, government policies, and social conditions may also influence the nature of poverty and exclusion over time. Some forms of discrimination and exclusion may remain difficult to measure through quantitative indicators alone. Despite these limitations, the study provides a broad understanding of poverty and social exclusion and highlights important areas for further research, policy intervention, social empowerment, and inclusive development.

SCOPE OF THE STUDY

The scope of the study on poverty and social exclusion in India covers the major economic, social, cultural, educational, and institutional dimensions of deprivation. The study examines poverty as a multidimensional condition involving inadequate income, unemployment, poor housing, limited education, inadequate healthcare, malnutrition, and insufficient social security. It explores the relationship between poverty, inequality, and social exclusion and examines how unequal access to resources and opportunities affects different sections of society. Particular attention is given to women, children, Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes, minorities, migrant workers, elderly persons, persons with disabilities, and other economically and socially vulnerable groups. The study considers both rural and urban dimensions of poverty and examines differences in employment opportunities, infrastructure, public services, and living conditions. It also covers the influence of caste, gender, class, education, occupation, and geographical location on social participation and economic opportunities. The study further examines the effects of informal employment, low wages, unemployment, migration, and livelihood insecurity on poor households. It considers the importance of education, skill development, healthcare, financial inclusion, housing, and social protection in improving living conditions and promoting social mobility.

The scope of the study also includes an examination of government policies, welfare programmes, employment initiatives, social security measures, and development programmes designed to reduce poverty and social exclusion. It explores the role of local institutions, non-governmental organizations, social workers, community organizations, and self-help groups in promoting empowerment and inclusion. The study gives attention to the emerging relationship between digitalization and social exclusion, particularly regarding digital literacy, internet access, online services, and financial technology. It also considers how urbanization, globalization, migration, technological change, and changing labour markets influence poverty and social participation. The study seeks to understand the consequences of exclusion for education, health, employment, dignity, social mobility, and participation in community life. It provides a broad framework for understanding structural and social factors that reproduce poverty across

generations. The study may be useful to researchers, policymakers, social workers, educators, government agencies, NGOs, and development organizations working toward inclusive development. Overall, the scope emphasizes social justice, equal opportunities, empowerment, human dignity, and sustainable strategies for reducing poverty and strengthening social inclusion in India.

DISCUSSION

Poverty and social exclusion in India are closely interconnected social problems that influence the quality of life and development opportunities available to individuals and communities. Poverty is not limited to insufficient income but also involves inadequate access to education, healthcare, nutrition, housing, employment, and social security. Social exclusion further intensifies poverty by restricting the participation of disadvantaged groups in economic, social, cultural, and political activities. The discussion indicates that caste, gender, class, occupation, disability, geographical location, and educational status significantly influence access to resources and opportunities. Rural communities often experience poverty through limited employment opportunities, inadequate infrastructure, dependence on agriculture, and restricted access to quality public services. In urban areas, poverty is increasingly associated with informal employment, low wages, insecure housing, overcrowding, migration, and inadequate social protection. Women and children are particularly vulnerable because household poverty can limit their access to education, nutrition, healthcare, and decision-making opportunities. Marginalized communities may experience multiple forms of disadvantage simultaneously, creating barriers to social mobility and reinforcing intergenerational poverty. These conditions demonstrate that economic growth alone cannot eliminate poverty unless the benefits of development are distributed more equitably across different sections of society.

The discussion further highlights the importance of inclusive policies and effective social protection in addressing poverty and exclusion. Education and skill development can improve employment opportunities and contribute to long-term social mobility, while healthcare and nutrition programmes can strengthen human capabilities and reduce vulnerability. Government welfare programmes, employment initiatives, financial inclusion measures, housing schemes, and social security programmes can provide important support to economically disadvantaged households. However, gaps in awareness, accessibility, implementation, documentation, institutional capacity, and local delivery may prevent vulnerable groups from receiving full benefits. Digitalization has created new opportunities for financial and social inclusion, but lack of digital literacy, internet access, devices, and technological skills can create new forms of exclusion. Community participation, self-help groups, NGOs, social workers, and local institutions can play an important role in connecting marginalized communities with available resources and strengthening empowerment. Reducing poverty therefore requires coordinated interventions addressing both material deprivation and social discrimination. A multidimensional approach combining economic opportunities, quality public services, social justice, gender equality, empowerment, and community participation is essential. The overall discussion suggests that sustainable poverty reduction requires not only increasing income but also ensuring dignity, equal opportunities, meaningful participation, and social inclusion for all sections of Indian society.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Poverty and social exclusion in India require comprehensive, inclusive, and sustainable interventions that address both economic deprivation and social inequalities. Government policies should focus on creating stable employment opportunities, improving wages, and strengthening livelihood opportunities for poor and vulnerable households. Greater investment should be made in quality

education, vocational training, skill development, and employment-oriented programmes to improve social mobility. Universal and affordable access to healthcare, nutrition, sanitation, clean drinking water, and adequate housing should be strengthened, particularly in disadvantaged communities. Social protection programmes should be made more accessible, transparent, and responsive to the needs of vulnerable populations. Special attention should be given to women, children, Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes, minorities, migrant workers, elderly persons, and persons with disabilities. Rural development should promote agricultural livelihoods, rural industries, infrastructure, and non-farm employment opportunities. Urban poverty should be addressed through affordable housing, secure employment, basic services, and improved social security for informal workers. Measures should also be taken to reduce discrimination based on caste, gender, class, disability, occupation, and social status. Community participation should be encouraged in planning and implementing development programmes so that interventions reflect local needs and priorities.

Financial and digital inclusion should be strengthened by expanding access to banking, credit, insurance, digital services, and financial literacy among economically disadvantaged groups. Digital literacy programmes should be promoted to prevent technology-based exclusion and ensure that poor households can access online education, government services, employment opportunities, and financial facilities. Government welfare programmes should be regularly monitored and evaluated to identify gaps in implementation and improve their effectiveness. Greater coordination among government departments, local bodies, NGOs, social workers, educational institutions, and community organizations should be encouraged. Self-help groups and community-based organizations should be supported to promote collective empowerment, entrepreneurship, savings, and livelihood development. Women's economic participation and decision-making capacity should be strengthened through education, employment, skill development, property rights, and financial opportunities. Special programmes should support migrant workers and informal workers who often face insecure employment and limited social protection. Policies should be based on reliable data and multidimensional indicators of poverty and exclusion rather than income alone. Research institutions should conduct regular studies to identify emerging forms of exclusion and evaluate the impact of poverty-reduction measures. Overall, India should pursue development strategies based on social justice, equality, dignity, empowerment, participation, and equal access to opportunities to build a more inclusive and socially sustainable society.

CONCLUSION

Poverty and social exclusion in India are complex and interconnected challenges that affect economic development, social well-being, and human dignity. The study demonstrates that poverty cannot be understood only through income or consumption levels, as it also involves inadequate access to education, healthcare, nutrition, housing, employment, and social security. Social exclusion further deepens poverty by restricting the participation of disadvantaged individuals and communities in economic, social, cultural, and political life. Caste, gender, class, disability, occupation, education, and geographical location continue to influence access to resources and opportunities. Rural poverty is associated with limited employment, inadequate infrastructure, agricultural dependence, and insufficient public services, while urban poverty is increasingly connected with informal employment, insecure housing, migration, and inadequate social protection. Women, children, Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes, minorities, migrant workers, elderly persons, and persons with disabilities often experience multiple forms of disadvantage. These conditions can create intergenerational cycles of deprivation and restrict social mobility. Therefore, economic growth alone is insufficient unless its benefits reach marginalized sections of society through equitable opportunities and inclusive institutions.

The study concludes that reducing poverty and social exclusion requires a multidimensional and participatory approach involving government, civil society, communities, educational institutions, and development organizations. Quality education, skill development, employment opportunities, healthcare, nutrition, affordable housing, financial inclusion, and effective social protection are essential for improving the living conditions of disadvantaged populations. Government welfare programmes and development initiatives need effective implementation, monitoring, transparency, and accessibility to ensure that benefits reach the intended beneficiaries. Digitalization can create new opportunities for inclusion, but digital literacy and access to technology must be strengthened to prevent new forms of exclusion. Community participation, social empowerment, gender equality, and protection from discrimination are equally important for achieving sustainable development. Policies should recognize the diverse experiences of poverty across regions and social groups and should be guided by reliable multidimensional evidence. Ultimately, the elimination of poverty and social exclusion requires a commitment to social justice, equality, dignity, participation, and equal opportunities. An inclusive India can be achieved when every individual has meaningful access to resources, rights, services, opportunities, and participation in the development process.

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