

Social Inclusion and its Relevancy in Developing Countries like Nepal: A Brief Review

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Article History

Received : 10 November 2020

Revised : 17 November 2020

Accepted : 30 November 2020

Published : 30 December 2020

Key words

development, social inclusion, education and training, poverty, prosperity, bottom-up model

JEL classification:

O1, B55, P36, I30

Abstract: On the basis of some existing researches and work, this paper tries to triangulate the importance of social inclusion that helps to uplift the living standards of poor and low income people. A broad range of literature existed in this matter emphasized on the inclusion of a group excluded people-is found as a major issue in this study. In contrast, two issues intact with this study are emphasized here. Exclusion as being a chronic problem in development, social inclusion is not highlighted in the developing countries like Nepal. Secondly, elimination of development hurdles present economically, socially or culturally are not highlighted as major issues in these countries. Noted these concerns, the researcher proposes a bottom-up model, however, not tested-to eliminate development hurdles first and effective implementation of development policies and programs then. This model seems effective in the context of developing countries due to some vital reasons. First, it promotes country's development by zeroing development hurdles. Secondly, take-off stage of development is not self sustained unless agro-dependent mass won't be shifted to industry, trade and commerce. To this extent, inclusion process can be an effective measure to promote people. Thirdly, backwash effects can be prevented by social inclusion agenda for underdeveloped countries because neglecting it may lead to decline in peripheral population and employment and hence leads to weaken the rural economy.

1. INTRODUCTION

At the present, prosperity through inclusion of excluded people is admired for the development of the underdeveloped local areas of developing countries where majority of population is of poor and low income people. A process of including

socially excluded people in the various dimension of social activities-social inclusion-is becoming a major issue in the developing countries in order to empower women, socially biased and marginalized, ethnically backward and poor people and is important for them who have less access to social values, rights and are below the poverty benchmark. It, generally, addresses how societal values to be respectable of all the citizens towards their differences (basically, in case of races, ethnicities, religions, economic, income and others) and everyone's basic needs, and welcomes and enables full participation in the corresponding community.

Developing countries emphasize to include the excluded mass of people as a development agenda through the policy making process. Asian Development Bank (ADB)-works and helps the developing and least developed countries to increase the level of socially marginalized people on economic, social and political grounds-defines the removal of institutional barriers and the enhancement of incentives to increase access by diverse individuals and groups to development opportunities. To this extent, changes in policies, rules, and social practices and shifts in people's perspectives and behavior toward excluded groups are vital (ADB, 2010).

The agenda of social inclusion and exclusion, in these days, seem to be emphasized through government policy formulation in the developing countries. Chronically existing social problems and development hurdles such as deprivation, low quality education, labour market disadvantage, unemployment, poor health, poor housing or homelessness, illiteracy, inequality, incapability to participate in social activities and others can be set as objectives of policy making process (Atkinson *et al.*, 2002). As a developing country, Nepal tried to implement few activities to include socially excluded people such as empowering people politically, employing people in social activities and decision making process, separation of quota reservation system for women and ethnically marginalized people and others. However, the issues of exclusion, marginalization, poverty and others are at higher extent in the society.

Nepal as being at the stage of development process, the outcome of development across all sectors is connected with the local socio-economic and other factors like gender, caste, ethnicity, geographical location, regional identity, and economic status and they are the strong determinants of access to services, resources, and political representation. Therefore, the inclusion agenda is now firmly placed in the development discourse and several efforts have been initiated at the policy, legal, institutional, and programming levels of the country (ADB, 2010). Social inclusion

itself is a process of empowerment of people to strengthen them for social responsibility in one hand, and on the other hand it contributes to reduce poverty level of the country with the inclusion of socially excluded people into the development process. The access of social, economic, wealth as well as public decision making activities to people are essential to promote them. Likewise prosperity is the people's access in wealth and social wellbeing is the true prosperity and is more than the material wealth (Legatum Prosperity Index, 2018). This implies prosperity is all rounder development of human beings which can be achieved and increased by the inclusion of all excluded people.

On the other hand, the underdeveloped or periphery of the least developed countries are further in the trap of backwash effect—a state of movement of people, human capital as well as physical from other parts of the country to gravitate towards the growing centre (Myrdal 1958). High level migration from periphery to core, disfavored the economic activities in the periphery, scarcity of labor force, regional inequalities due to capital movement in the core from periphery and scarcity of saving and investible funds in the periphery due to siphoning off savings from the poor to richer regions and others are resulting the periphery of the least developed economies remains mainly agriculture with low productivity.

Researches on social inclusion are trending internationally because it supports to achieve the objective of prosperity of the countries, however, for the context of Nepal, there is neither priority for the investigation of better way in achieving prosperity nor prosperity agenda is clear. The question is why government or politicians are silent for this issue and why they do not prioritize to sweep out the chronic development hurdles present at the local level? Or development hurdles are less identified by the politicians, government authorities and others are unclear.

In this regard, primarily a diagnosis of the level of social inclusion seems vital to implement policies effectively. Secondly, a conceptual framework of the development model that helps to achieve the objective of prosperity in the country can be important for policy makers. Without diagnosis of the actual level of prosperity and social inclusion, to achieve the objective of upgrading the country from least developed to developing one (for the case of Nepal) is not possible because most of the indicators of prosperity¹ includes the socio-economic indicators² of human beings. This article is a step to construct a conceptual framework of the development model in one hand and to highlight process of zeroing development hurdles of Nepal on the other.

2. PROBLEM IDENTIFICATION: SOCIAL INCLUSION AND PROSPERITY

Nepal has realized the need of prioritizing to uplift the living standards of poor and low income people. Thus, the country is carrying a major agenda to achieve an inclusive society (Nepal Social Inclusion Survey-2012, 2014). Since social indicators consider the well-being of citizens, inclusion of people in development activities and participation of all kinds of people in the country building. Some aspect of inclusion is highly lack in society and it is making people back in various aspects. For instance, the poor are poor because they are caught up in low productivity activities due to not being able to gain access to many essential basic inputs such as water, electricity, affordable transportation, financial services (Pant, 2018). Is really a lack of people's access in such agendas is contributing to dampen them in poverty level, can be a research issue.

A people participation-based approach at local level enables people in various types of development programs and services. At the same time, policy-makers and analysts should not underestimate to identify broad areas of human needs, and to track changes over time. The specific needs of people and the society can readily be examined and addressed under the social inclusion via bottom up approach. The process of digging out the problems and weaknesses of the various sectors of the economy seems to be left very back because very low amount of expenditure is allocated for the research and development in comparison to other developing and developed countries³.

Social inclusion and prosperity are seemed to be two parts of a coin. Improvement in social inclusion can increase the level of prosperity of the country. Since most of the indicators of prosperity are similar to the things to be considered in the social inclusion⁴. This implies improvement of social inclusion enhances the level of prosperity of the country in one hand. On the other hand, to stop backwash effects, why not to stress on prosperity through social inclusion via participation and inclusion of local people in the development process?

3. OBJECTIVES AND RESEARCH QUESTIONS OF THE STUDY

Primarily, this study aims at exploring the brief review on social inclusion. In spite of this, it will attempt to construct a framework of development model to eradicate hurdles of the economy. Since it is an issue related to poverty and raises the questions like why certain groups in the society over characterize among the poor and some are lack of essential needs of life such as food stuffs, safe and clean drinking water,

access to quality education, health and other services (World Bank, 2013), underlying problems concerned to poor people and tried to solve under social inclusion process. Social inclusion seems a better method of poverty alleviation than the activities employed in the name of poverty alleviation; i.e., it concerns to find out who actual poor is and who is not. This clearly indicates poverty issue divides people of the society in two groups but social inclusion comes in the process of equal participation to all people for various activities that unite them. Regarding such importance of social inclusion and prosperity, this research tries to answer some questions in the context of Nepal. For instance, which are the factors that drag the development process of the country, why bottom-up development model will be an appropriate method to develop the country?

4. A BRIEF REVIEW ON SOCIAL INCLUSION

Debates on social inclusion connect with the exclusion matters. The nature and meaning of social inclusion are closely asserted with social exclusion (Cameron, 2006). Inability of people's participation in the social activities or in politics gives rise to exclusion (Miller, 2007). This implies the minimization of such exclusion activities increases the inclusion level. Literature on social inclusion covers the area of involvement of vulnerable groups, disables and socially marginalized people in social activities by minimizing their nonparticipation. Simpican *et al.* (2015) argue social inclusion is a term that includes social interaction and participation of community people which implies people's participation to interact with social decision, community activities and other human right activities. Explaining more on it they say it is not only a social networking of family members, staff, friends, intimate partners or in simple sense is a activity in community participation but also concerns with the productive activities such as employment, education, consumer's access to goods and services, religious and cultural activities. Among other factors, inclusive education is one key mechanism that presence of high unemployment is due to lack of education. If employment in the labor market is a precondition for inclusion, then education is mechanisms of social inclusion UNDP (2006).

Emphasizing on high quality social services, Pellisera *et al.* (2012) say social inclusion is an equal participation of people in different social sphere that enables to fight against poverty, enables to promote people in labor market and promote people to achieve high quality social services. In recent years, internationally recognized institutions which are working for poor countries are also focusing on social inclusion because, firstly, it enables people in economic development and secondly, social

inclusion is a better way of eradicating poverty. The United Nation explains social inclusion, in brief, is a process of combating poverty and exclusion (United Nation, 2010). World Development Report (2001) entitled “Attacking Poverty”, explains poverty is encompassing not only with low income and consumption but also low achievement in health, nutrition, education and other aspects of human development.

Broadly speaking, Dugarova (2015) refers social inclusion as a goal, process and outcome and aims at achieving inclusive society that enables people’s participation in decision making process by marginalized groups to reduce inequalities, eliminating exclusions and discrimination and to achieve social justice and cohesion. This clarifies the importance of social inclusion that it is an essential part of the development of any developing country like Nepal that can be helpful to promote the living standard of the people and is a tool to measure the progress in achievement of the basic needs of people in worldwide. However, Nepal is not recording the actual condition of the social inclusion and prosperity. Researches show there is more or less connection among the human development indicators, social inclusion and prosperity of the human life via country (see table 1).

Social inclusion surveys in Nepal are very few in number. The Living Standard Surveys are conducted by the Central Bureau of Statistics in 1995, 2003 and 2011. These surveys are not focusing particularly for Social Inclusion Survey to measure social inclusion indicators. Nepal Living Standard Survey mainly focuses to measure the poverty, unemployment, demographic and health survey rather than the social inclusion/exclusion issues. These assess the employment level and the existing manpower condition of the country. Recently the Central Department of Sociology/ Anthropology Tribhuvan University conducted a survey called Nepal Social Inclusion Survey (NSIS) based on the social sampling in 2012 which focused on the inclusion aspects of various caste/ethnic groups. However, these studies are silent to assess the linkage between social inclusion and development or prosperity. NSIS focuses onto descriptive scenario of social inclusion/exclusion to explain its condition cast wise/ethnic wise in the country. On the other hand, it does not say anything about the progress of basic needs of the people. Among the various facets of social inclusion, the need of social inclusion including financial inclusion is indisputable because social inclusion will contribute towards greater social and economic stability and hence helps to achieve the target of prosperity of the country (Pant, 2018).

In summary, the process of heightening the excluded people’s participation in development and other activities at local and national level promotes people’s access in labour market, high quality social services, reduction of poverty and inequality

Table 1: Indicators of Social Inclusion and Prosperity

1. Benchmarking Inclusive Growth and Development ⁵								
<i>P1: Education and Skills</i>	<i>P2: Employment & Labor Compensation</i>	<i>P3: Asset Building & Business Investment</i>	<i>P4: Corruption and Rents</i>	<i>P5: Fiscal Transfers</i>	<i>P6: Basic Services & Infrastructure</i>			
Access, Quality and Equity	Employment and Wage & non-wage Compensation	Entrepreneurship, Financing real economy and Investment of rents	Business and Political ethics & Concentration of rents	Tax code and Social protection	Basic infrastructure and Health-related services infrastructure			
2. The Legatum Prosperity Index, 2018								
<i>P1: Economic Quality</i>	<i>P2: Business Environment</i>	<i>P3: Governance</i>	<i>P4: Personal Freedom</i>	<i>P5: Social Capital</i>	<i>P6: Safety & Security</i>	<i>P7: Education</i>	<i>P8: Health</i>	<i>P9: Natural Environment</i>
Living standard afforded by an economy	Entrepreneurial environment	The rule of law	Basic legal rights	The strength of personal & social relationship	National security	Access to education	Health outcomes	Quality of the natural environment
Economic inclusiveness	Business infrastructure	Integrity of government	Individual liberties	Social norms	Personal safety	Quality of education	Health systems	Environmental pressures
Anti-monopoly policy	Access to credit	Government performance	Social tolerance	Civic participation	The security of living conditions	Human capital	Illness and risk factors	Preservation efforts
Labour force participation	Investor protections and Labourmarket flexibility	Political participation						
Trade competitiveness								
Openness to trade								

contd. table 1

3. Nepal Social Inclusion Survey-2012							
<i>Education</i>	<i>Health and Sanitation</i>	<i>Housing Conditions</i>	<i>Land & Natural Resources</i>	<i>Economic Inclusion</i>	<i>Governance</i>	<i>Culture & Social Solidarity</i>	<i>Gender</i>
Literacy Status	Healthcare Services	Ownership	Size of Land Holding	Employment and Livelihood	Inclusion in Services	Cultural and Religious Identity	Access to Services and Resources
Current School Attendance	Safe Drinking Water	Improved Housing	Access to Land	Access to Non-agriculture Sources of Income	Access to Basic Services	Kinship and Social Solidarity	Participation in Decision-Making
Adult Education	Improved Toilet Facilities	Clean Energy for Cooking	Access to Forest and Pasture Land	Access to Non-agricultural sources of Income	Political Process	Discrimination	Experiences of Violence
	Medical Treatment	Electricity					
		Means of Communication					

and thus ultimately the increase in prosperity. And due to the close link between prosperity and social inclusion most of the governments include social inclusion agenda in policy perspective. However, to the best of our knowledge and search, there are no researches about social inclusion and prosperity and low stress on inspecting the development hurdles indicates the governments of least developed countries like Nepal have low priority on such emerging issue at policy formation and implementation level.

5. CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

The development level of people could be recognized through the availability of basic needs. If people are lack of basic human needs, their further development is not possible. Therefore, primarily fulfillment of basic human needs should be a first priority. Human basic needs are goods and services, such as nutrition, education, availability of shelter and health that enhance wellbeing of people and are essential apart from their effects on productivity (Perlo-freeman and Webber, 2009). The productivity is related to the improvement of basic human needs. A channel through which fulfillment of basic needs can enhance the quality of human life. Basic human needs fulfillment can be sourced by higher level of investment in the economy. The higher level of public or private investment is possible only at the higher level of public income. Therefore, the process of development is associated with the need to satisfy basic physical contributors to the quality of human life (Knowles, 1993). For example, healthier the human resource of a country better will be the development level of that country because the relationship between health and economic growth tends to be simultaneous (Perlo-freeman and Webber, 2009).

Developing countries like Nepal are facing various problems that are obstacles for the development of the country. These countries are facing the constraints on development like high economic poverty, high maternal mortality rates, unsafe drinking water, poor and dual education system and others (Globalization101.org). Finding the appropriate development track is possible only when the existing development hurdles from that country are cleared.

Through the active participation of the people in development activities, social inclusion increases their capacity, productivity and efficiency in one hand. This contributes to minimize the development hurdles on the other. Therefore, process of social inclusion and zeroing the development hurdles can be foundations of the development and prosperity of the country. And hence there develops a channel

among R and D, activities of social inclusion via process of zeroing the development hurdles to create the environment of rapid growth via prosperity of the country.

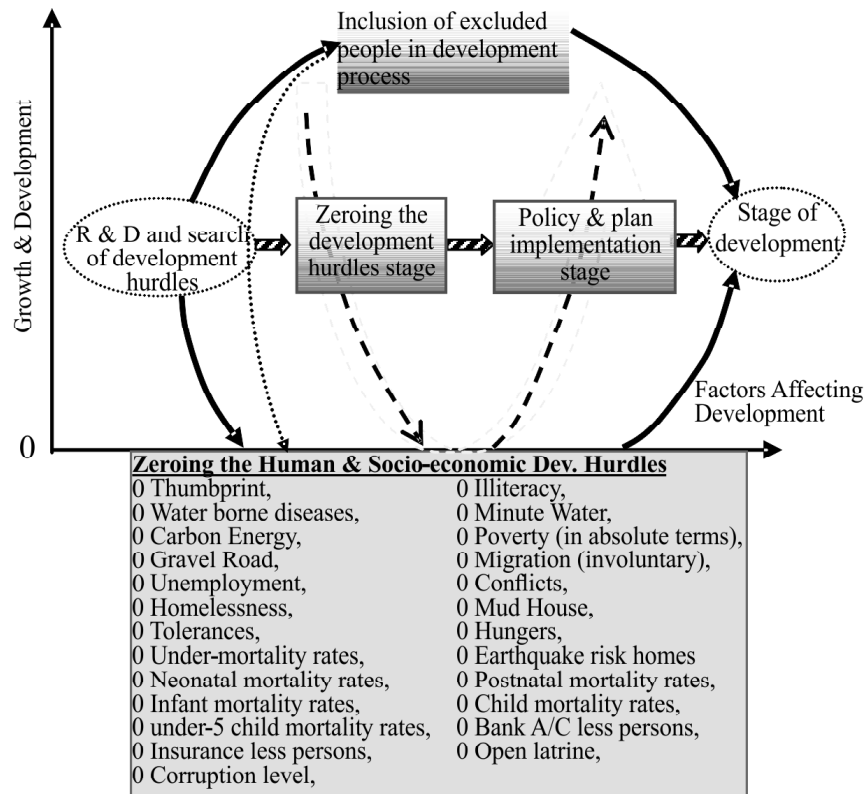
6. SOCIAL INCLUSION AND BOTTOM-UP DEVELOPMENT PROCESS

Least developed countries like Nepal have faced common and chronic problems in development process and the problems obstruct the economy to grow and develop at a required rate. To defeat the socio-economic constraints such as high economic poverty, high maternal mortality rates, unsafe and inadequate drinking water, poor and dual education system and others⁶, first, it requires complete elimination of these development hurdles. On the basis of past experiences and government's poor performances in the development process, an anticlockwise moving V-run bottom-up development approach is proposed that emphasizes on zeroing the development hurdles of the economy. This approach is supportive to catch up with developed economies and provides a way to take a step for development and is based on the bottom-up development model.

Basic needs fulfillment and living standards of people shows an association between them. One of the crucial social inclusion agenda-inclusive education- is that factor, which increases the opportunity for independent living in the community, i.e., it has positive association with living in the society (European Agency, 2018). Morris (2004) identifies 12 basic needs; adequate income, inclusive education and training, self advocacy, full access to environment, access to transport system, technical equipment and aid, equal opportunities for employment, appropriate and accessible information system, appropriate and accessible level of healthcare provision, counseling opportunity, accessible adapted housing and personal assistance that need to be living independently in the community. Without the removal of different types of barriers which abstract living standard of people, inclusion seems to be impossible. Primarily, to move towards inclusive system it requires the identification and removal of barriers which prevent the concerned group in participating fully in different opportunities such as learning opportunities (European Agency, 2015b).

Identifying the actual living status of poor that reflect in where poor live, at what condition they stay, how they earn for living etc. help to set appropriate poverty reduction strategies, since rural poverty status is strongly correlated with the employment sector (WB, 2018). This clearly indicates how important is to identify the hurdles and status of poor and low income people to include them in social inclusion and development process of the country.

Figure 1: Mechanism of Social Inclusion and Development



Source: Author's Construction

The bottom-up model, here, we emphasized is, firstly, for developing countries like Nepal, seems essential to focus on the development of grass-root, poor and low-income people. And without the development of those people to achieve prosperity, objective is not possible because the majority of population is under poverty (about 18%) and low-income people. Secondly, the gist of the bottom-up model here is to clearly sweep out the existing chronic hurdles of the society or the country.

The process of zeroing the development hurdles is assumed to be successful for: firstly, identifying those hurdles, secondly, implementing the appropriate policies and plans in result oriented base, and thirdly, include the people in all possible social inclusion activities to empower the local public. For this extent, field survey/ research will be helpful to identify the human, socioeconomic and cultural problems and hurdles existing in the rural and remote underdeveloped areas. Field survey collects

the actual figure of human, social and other development problems under the social inclusion modality. Conducting a survey under social inclusion model covers most of the indicators of prosperity and the indicators considered for the graduation of the country into developing one from the least developed.

7. WHY THE BOTTOM-UP MODEL

The bottom-up model prioritizes the local people for active participation in the development activities such as involvement of community people at the various stages of development programs which cover the initial phase of development, evaluation and the revision and coordination of locals with policymakers and local government bodies either directly or through the local agents (Isidiho and Mohammad, 2016). Researches and experiences illustrate social inclusion is an activity of involving the grass-root people who are under the poverty level and low-income in the development activities. When the government prioritizes the development of grass-root's poor and low-income people, it contributes to catch up with developed economies sooner. It is no doubt, to develop a country at a rapid speed, the first priority should be given to identifying the development hurdles because the existing hurdles of development make the program implementation less effective. Thus, zeroing the development hurdles is essential.

The efficient use of human resources by reducing the wage differentials and factor price distortions can be possible under the bottom-up approach because increasing the participation of people in various activities can promote the level of consciousness about their rights and reduces the discrimination on human rights and wages which will increase the empowerment of women and excluded people. These will forward a traditional economic society into the take-off stage sooner. According to Rostow, the take-off stage is self-sustained rather than the absorptive system in which mass of agro-dependent population will be shifted to industry, trade and commerce. The feudalistic income pattern of society will be changed to spend on productive sectors. The traditional type of social, political and institutional set up will be transformed to the modernized sector with a high rate of investment and reinvestment in the economy (Rostow, 1959). With the same strategy i.e., following the strong cooperation between government and business or the private sector, ability to adopt spatial-physical situation and acquire a maritime prowess, Meiji era, development of transport and banking system, high level technology-based education, established a working culture to locals and others, Japan driven the country into highly developed one.

The benefits from the bottom-up model such as; absorption of unemployed and underemployed local resources and disguised unemployment, capturing the youth force engaged either in political struggle or deploying for job search, minimization of chronic corruption, creation of the working environment with peaceful and unifying the locals, eliminating the existence of high level of wage differential among the people etc. will be achieved if the local representatives work and implement their policies and plans under the basic premise of bottom-up approach. Therefore, the bottom-up model is, for the locals, by the locals, empower the locals, activate the locals, advocate for the locals, start from the locals, and eliminate the development hurdles of the locals.

8. CONCLUSION

Social inclusion researches evidenced that this process can improve the living standards of people. It can be a foundation to reach the level of prosperity empowering to women and marginalized group of the society. However, various types of hurdles such as illiteracy, low participation in the decision process, high mortality rates, poverty and others are present in the developing countries due to exclusion, and presence of such hurdles in the development process are obstacle to achieve the level of prosperity of the country. Therefore, this review study suggests, primarily, zeroing such hurdles should be a priority to reach at the prosperity level of the country. The bottom up model-i.e., priorities local level people in the development process-(here we emphasize, can be a better approach) to achieve development goals so as to reach at country's prosperity target. Myrdal's (1958) backwash effects can be prevented by social inclusion agenda for underdeveloped countries because neglecting it may lead to decline in peripheral population and employment and hence leads to weaken the rural economy.

Through the social inclusion process, the low income and poor people can highly be benefitted because it helps to absorb unemployment, minimizes the corruption level, creates working environment to women and marginalized people. The bottom up approach has specific strategies such as people's participation in social decision making process, improve opportunities in education, improve the efficiency of local resources, localize financial access and so on (Sylva, 2018). Therefore, this study emphasizes to zeroing the development hurdles to improve the peoples' living standards. However, observations, results and conclusions present here are based on previous research works and experiences. Further researches are essential to test the provided development framework with the use of qualitative or quantitative or both methods.

Notes

1. The Prosperity Index score is determined by assigning equal weights to all nine pillars for each country. The mean of the nine pillar scores yields a country's overall Prosperity score. The overall Prosperity Index rankings are based on this score.
2. This index includes nine pillars; (i) Economic Quality measures the economic qualities such as openness of the economy, macro-economic indicators, base of economic growth, economic opportunity and efficiency of financial sector, (ii) Business Environment pillar measures the entrepreneurial environment, state of business infrastructure, barriers in innovation and flexibility in labour market, (iii) Governance indicator measures the performance in the areas such as rule of law, effective governance, and democracy and political participation, (iv) Education indicator measures two components; access to education, quality of education and human capital, (v) Health indicator measures the performance in the areas: basic physical and mental health of people, condition of health infrastructure and preventative care, (vi) Safety & Security indicator concerns to national security and public safety, (vii) Personal Freedom indicator measures the progress in basic legal rights, individual liberties and social tolerance, (viii) Social Capital indicator measures the strength of personal relationships, social network support, social norms and civic participation and (ix) Natural Environment pillar measures the performance in the areas: the level of quality of the natural environment, environmental pressures and preservation efforts (The Legatum Prosperity Index, 2018).
3. According to WB (2010 data), Japan 3.14%, China 1.71%, US 2.73%, S. Korea 3.45% and Nepal only 0.30% of their GDP spend on research and development (World Development Indicators, 2018).
4. See table 1.
5. It was prepared by Richard Samans, Jennifer Blanke, Gemma Corrigan and Margareta Drzeniek of World Economic Forum in 2015 and can be found at http://www3.weforum.org/docs/WEF_Inclusive_Growth_Development.pdf
6. For the case of Nepal, according to the National Population Census-2011, national literacy rate is 65.9% (in which F=57.4, M=75.1), neonatal mortality rate = 23/1000, postnatal mortality rate = 11/1000, infant mortality rate = 33/1000, child mortality rate = 5/1000, child age under 5 mortality rate = 38, households without toilets = 38.2%, households with flush toilet = 41.7%, households with simple toilets = 19.5%, mud bonded bricks/stone houses = 44.2%, drinking water source; tap water = 47.8%, hand pump = 35%, well and *kuwa* = 4.7%, spout = 5.7% and river = 1.1%, energy use at home; wood = 64%, kerosene = 1%, LPG = 21%, cow dung = 10.4%, biogas = 2.4% and electricity = 0.1%,

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To cite this article:

Bhim Prasad Bhusal. Social Inclusion and its Relevancy in Developing Countries like Nepal: A Brief Review. *Journal of Development Economics and Finance*, Vol. 1, No. 2, 2020, pp. 385-400