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**The Politics of Social Justice**

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Abstract:

The Politics of Social Justice is a big challenge of our times. For the first time in our history real social and economic change seems like a possibility, and the sheer unleashing of aspiration and energy across different sections of Indian society is staggering. But there are some concerns about the form the politics of justice will take, even in this newly buoyant and optimistic era. The first reflects on the limited set of instruments we have that can do full justice to the aspiration of social equality and second, on why caste still remains such an entrenched category around which the politics of social justice is constructed, and what the consequences of this entrenchment might mean. The present challenge of the politics of social justice must be seen against the backdrop of a general, perhaps more global and historical, pessimism about the relationship between democracy and equality. The most obvious instrument is redistribution through taxation. But there is no serious politics structured around using this instrument for several reasons. First, of all countries like India have recent and vivid memories of the distorting effects of high taxes in the context of low enforcement capacity. Second, in the context of globalisation and mobility of capital there is scepticism about the efficacy of very high tax rates. Third, taxes provide redistribution, through the instrumentality of the state. The second major instrument of redistribution is collectivising productive assets, particularly industrial capital, third instrument is the focus of one particular asset, land and fourth instrument for producing some kind of distributive justice is the state itself. On this view the primary mechanism through which redistribution happens is not transfer or collectivisation of assets, but through the state provision of public goods, particularly health and education. Institutionalisation of caste as the basis of equality has some interesting consequences. First, it is a form of legitimising class difference. Second, in India there is no serious discourse on the relationship between justice and discrimination. Third, because equality can now be claimed only on the basis of an immutable identity, there is a growing clamour for the state to institutionalize these. Fourth, identity politics and other forms of politics centred around welfare and justice are often posed as alternatives.

**Poverty Induced Forest Degradation in JFM Regime: Evidence from Orissa, India**

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Abstract:

Around 28% of the total forest area in India has been brought under Joint Forest Management (JFM) and the remaining 72% has been open access to the local communities. In such a scenario, communities that actively participate in JFM are also engaged in the degradation. (de facto open access forests to meet their basic livelihood necessities). This reveals that the

poverty-induced forest degradation still continues under the JFM regime. This paper theoretically and empirically explains the factors that determine the individual indulgence in forest degradation. Based on a survey of 140 households in the three forest fringe villages of the Chandaka Wildlife Division - Orissa, India, the study shows that lack of education, landlessness and low environmental awareness significantly influence the individual involvement in forest degradation. The implementation of JFM merely transfers the dependence of local community from one patch to another. It shows that unless the source of livelihood is secured, forest degradation by rural poor households will persist. Halting this depressing scenario calls for raising individual opportunity cost through employment generation, skill formation and land allocation to the landless.

Keywords: Poverty, Forest Degradation, JFM

### **Situation Assessment of Farmers: A Study of a Village in West Bengal**

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#### Abstract:

This paper examines the current economic situation of farmers of a target village. The study looks at the asset structure of the villagers, their income structure, costs of inputs, input and output in their market structure, the productivity of the villagers etc. The study is based on the data collected from a primary field survey in a village in Birbhum District, West Bengal. The study shows that income from agriculture is significantly determined by size of land owned but at the same time productivity is independent of land size. We also observe a positive relation between income from non farm, acting as a secondary source, and income from cultivation. There is a mark of development-led employment and income diversification. We also observe that commercialization of agriculture has occurred but at the same time there exists distress sale. This could be an indication of forced commerce. Another important observation is that increasing input costs, in most of the cases, has a negative impact on productivity, i.e., as the cost of input used per hectare increases, productivity declines.

### **Skill Upgradation of Rural Youth and Employability Potentials in Different Sectors in Tamil Nadu**

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#### Abstract:

In India, a large proportion of the population live in poverty due to the low level of skilled persons available in the work force. Skill development generally takes place in an informal way. Mostly, persons acquire skills through an informal system due to socio-economic circumstances of the family and the compulsions of earning a livelihood rather than attending a formal course. Proper skill upgradation training not only benefits the work force and allows it to earn a decent living, but also contributes to the national economy by better productivity of the workforce. Currently, very few opportunities for skill development exist for rural youth, especially for school dropouts and the existing uneducated/school educated workers. Hence, a new framework for skill development for the informal sector has to be evolved to absorb the

rural youth in potential jobs in the agriculture, industry and service sectors. With the help of 688 sample households located in 17 villages in 5 districts of Tamil Nadu, this paper attempts to identify employable rural youth in the three sectors, available employment options to absorb the BPL youth, training requirements for skill enhancement, adequacy of currently available training and to suggest measures for effective training and employment. tc "Assistant Professor, MIDS, Chennai"

**Jobless Growth based on a 2-Digit Industry-wise Analysis for Tamil Nadu : Pre and Post Reform Years 1984-2006**

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Abstract:

Analysing the ASI data for the state of Tamil Nadu at two-digit industry level, the paper finds that despite a relative decline in the growth of employment, value added and labour productivity; there is an increase in the employment elasticity (EE) during the post-reform years (1994-2006). Thus, although the post-reform growth in these variables is less than that in the pre-reform years (1984-1993), there is a high-base effect contributing to an increase in employment generated in the latter half of the period under focus. This is reflected in the employment elasticity for 10 out of 14 industries, derived by considering the joint impact of both output and capital on employment. The net effect is, therefore, a significant increase in the employment content of jobs at the 'all industries' level. Capital intensity has not altogether affected the employment creation process to give credence to the hypothesis of jobless growth in the state.