

## Foreword

Researches on poverty emerged historically in three important dimensions. First, the entire focus was on identifying what constitutes poverty and the continuous academic debates on fixing poverty lines that are almost unending. The second dimension represents a more practical group of studies investigating into what causes poverty and which group constitutes the poor. Finally, the third dimension deals with the amelioration measures. Among these three dimensions, which group constitutes the poor and why are the two important questions that needed answer for long. Amit Thorat in a pioneering paper in the *Journal of Social and Economic Development* (*Who are the Poor and Why?* 2006) followed by two other scholarly pieces handled the issue very carefully. This study by Dr R R Biradar also touches the same chord from a slightly different angle. Dr Biradar is concerned about the location of poverty among social groups and with the analysis of NSSO data he tries to bring forth that the concentration of poverty is among the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes. A largely known fact but empirically verified here. In this study Dr Biradar initially tries to locate the incidence of poverty among the SCs and STs. He largely agrees with the proposition that “it is difficult to identify the exact causes of poverty because it is the cause and effect of the development process. Poverty is the result of endowment, production, exchange and consumption failures (Sen 1981)”. When we say it is difficult to identify the causes of poverty and resort to failures, possibly one hints at an analytical surrender. It must be underscored that poverty is located more by design of the social order which dictated for centuries the wage hierarchy, fixity of profession, labour immobility, knowledge protectionism and finally strict social sanctions against any violations. Therefore, the design of locating poverty is an interesting issue. This researchable theme can come up for discussion as an important consequence of this monograph.

Dr Biradar further examines the livelihood strategies, social security and vulnerability of the deprived social groups. He analyses the livelihood structure with the help of primary data from his field survey and brings out clearly that delivery of education and healthcare services are critical in enhancing the reach of the poor to better livelihood, a proposition made by Dr Babasaheb Ambedkar about a century back. ‘Have we really succeeded in its implementation?’ is a question that seeks answer. Dr Biradar also hints at a strong negative association between social security and poverty, a known but less emphasised policy tool. The vulnerable are not able to take advantage of many of these programmes again more by design than

by default. Therefore, we need to equip the policy tool-box not only with better schemes of social security but include prominently those designed for the deprived sections. The design alone does not suffice but one needs to ensure its delivery. That is a task left open to the implementers. Dr Biradar brought out many of the issues that need to be analytically taken ahead.

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