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**SOCIETAL ALIENATION IN THE APARTHEID RULE – FRAGMENTING
THE “DIVISIONS”**- KARTIKEYA PRAKASH¹**INTRODUCTION**

Social Alienation in practice means the complete exclusion of a particular or a targeted group from the society and the groups so marginalized are put to a disadvantage by the denial of rights which are available to all. These groups are also denied equal opportunities in most of the spheres of human life. Their exclusion has always made them the most underprivileged sect, and they also become the poorest by virtue of them not getting the resources that are fundamental to social integration. The fragmentation has earned its certification from the institutions in our everyday society, i.e., the educational and legal system. This, in turn, makes it very tough for the oppressed classes to make it above the bar of inequality. The most exceptional example of state-sanctioned exclusion was the apartheid rule in South Africa, and as this rule came to an end, how the government took measures and steps to get back the socially excluded groups.

RESEARCH QUESTION AND METHODS

1. Why does social exclusion occur?
2. How did the apartheid rule in South Africa legitimize social exclusion?
3. What was the effect of this exclusion to the black community?
4. What were the laws later made by the government to re-integrate the disadvantaged sections?

To reach the end result and analyze the issue in-depth, the author has used many primary and secondary sources, including scholarly articles and research papers. The author has also looked into numerous books and respected journals as they offer a whole all-round sociological approach to social exclusion. Research surveys have also been used to provide statistical

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backing to various assumptions made in this paper.

RATIONALE

Social exclusion has gained much prevalence and prowess in recent times, but the repercussions and consequences are not very well known. This exclusion can happen on the basis of gender, caste, sex, background, ethnicity, and sometimes it can also be mincemeat of all. If we can go the roots of this, we can help prevent the same. We can analyze the patterns, the methods used and work on the prevention of the same. We also have laws that do give this exclusion a legal backing and others deal with ramifications of the issue. The author of the paper breaks down and dissects the difference between the same.

ANALYSIS

Social exclusion can happen due to myriad reasons, as it may occur because of a person's identity, i.e., their race, sexual orientation or economic status, culture. The sad part is that many times we find that it is the institutions that unofficially perpetrate it. Moreover, the subtle and unintentional gestures and actions also result in the commission of the same. Subtle and unintentional gestures and movements. According to Atkinson (1998),² the three defining features of social exclusion are relativity, agency, and dynamics. Dynamics here means the combination of all the circumstances and experiences in all the spheres of life for over a long period of time. Thus, it can be said that only one act or incident cannot be taken into the ambit of social exclusion. Still, only a sum of all the experiences over a period of time can cause harm to the society and can this can be taken into the purview of social exclusion. Intersectionality of identities also often results in individual sections of the deprived, being even more disadvantaged and socially excluded than the others in their community. For example, during the apartheid rule, the black community was put to a disadvantage. However, still, within the community, it was easier to be a male as compared to a female because they had to stay at home for the household tasks and to look after the children, this, in turn, further excluded the black women from the community.

In South Africa, the exclusion occurred at a larger scale. It was said to be a product of the hierarchy in power relations because of the concurrence in the composition of the groups and the inequality. This led to massive-scale exploitation of the less powerful by the powerful, and

² Atkinson, A. B. "Social Exclusion, Poverty and Unemployment," in A. B. Atkinson and J. Hills (eds.), *Exclusion, Employment and Opportunity, CASE Paper 4*, London: Center for the Analysis of Social exclusion, London School of Economics, 1998.

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this has resulted in a center-off power dynamics.³

The word “apartheid” means apartness or distinctness, and this has become a symbol of oppression and racial segregation, not just in South Africa, but all across the globe. The exclusion gained the support of the government in 1948 and this led to separate living areas, bad-quality facilities for the majoritarian black community, social interactions and no inter-class marriages.⁴ Though this kind of discrimination had already been happening for years, but now that there was a state policy in place for the segregation, there were strict sanctions for the same, and this led to the segregation being legitimized. The timing of these laws was odd, considering that the global community at large was moving away from colonization and repressive laws, and towards a more egalitarian perspective.

The laws which authorized the state-validated discrimination were:

1. **Population Registration Act, 1950**- This law is often considered as the bedrock and genesis of the racial laws in South Africa, with it demanding people to register themselves according to their racial group.
2. **Group Areas Act, 1950**- This was the first law to physically separate the races, by separating housing colonies, especially in urban areas.
3. **Bantu Self-Government Act, 1959**- This act further consolidated the physical segregation of the races by removing all black people from the cities into under-developed townships on the outskirts, thus displacing them from their homelands and ensuring that only white people can own property and lands.

Some other laws implemented at this time were the Prohibition of Mixed Marriages Act, 1949, Immorality Amendment Act, 1950, and Separate Representation of Voters Act, 1951. These laws, which were implemented for imposing fines, were then extended imprisonments and beatings.

The social exclusion faced by the blacks during this time stemmed from two major dimensions: the economic dimension, which refers to an exclusion from the opportunities to earn income, the labour market and access to assets; and the social dimension, which relates to exclusion

³Jakob de Haan, 1998, Further Evidence on the Relationship between economic freedom and economic growth, *Public Choice*, vol. 95, issue 3-4, 363-80.

⁴Johnston, H. (2009). “Addressing Social Exclusion: Analyses from South Asia and Southern Africa”. *Journal of Health, Population and Nutrition*, 27(4), 423-425. Retrieved from <http://www.jstor.org/stable/23499632>

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from decision making, social services and community and family support.⁵ It is not just related to citizenship rights but also to social relations. These are in reference to the allocation of resources and a sense of belongingness to the society and also being able to fulfil specific familial and societal roles.⁶

The repercussion of the societal exclusion was the lack of access to good education, medical facilities and public resources, which in turn leads to a decline in the number of educated youth, an increase in the spread of diseases and a drop in the physical and mental health of individuals and reduction in the public welfare.⁷ The lack of education had more severe consequences as it impaired the decision-making abilities of the children of that time because it affected the more vulnerable group of society.⁸ It targeted that group by which was already being oppressed and looked down upon. This played a very vital role in affecting the group psychologically. As there was a lack of education, it led to increased levels of illiteracy and this, in turn, led to unemployment, which further induced them to engage in crimes, substance abuse and addiction, increased gang violence, teenage pregnancies and criminal convictions.⁹

Even when the apartheid rule had come to an end, it was challenging to restore the inequality that had taken place. This was because the chances for upward mobility in the social stature had been deprived to the blacks. The result was high economic inequality and levels of poverty, especially the economic disparity between the black and white communities, which usually a rare occurrence in an upper-middle-class country.¹⁰

After this, the South African Government did come up with solutions like cash/in-kind legal guarantees, policy decisions and funding to help the deprived.¹¹ These steps were innovative and helped the government to close the inequality gap between its people. The three pillars that

⁵Michelle Adato, Professor Michael R. Carter & Julian May (2006) Exploring poverty traps and social exclusion in South Africa using qualitative and quantitative data, *The Journal of Development Studies*, 42:2, 226-247.

⁶Mulvey, Kelly Lynn & Boswell, Corey & Zheng, Jiali. (2017). "Causes and Consequences of Social Exclusion and Peer Rejection Among Children and Adolescents". *Report on emotional & behavioural disorders in youth*. 17. 71-75.

⁷ John Bynner, 1996, Use of Longitudinal Data in the study of Social exclusion, *OECD*.

⁸Stephan Klasen (2001) "Social exclusion, children and education. Implications of a rights-based approach", *European Societies*, 3:4, 413-445.

⁹Mulvey, Kelly Lynn & Boswell, Corey & Zheng, Jiali. (2017). "Causes and Consequences of Social Exclusion and Peer Rejection Among Children and Adolescents". *Report on emotional & behavioural disorders in youth*. 17. 71-75.

¹⁰Rispel Laetitia, Boitumelo Molomo, Sellinah Dumela, 2008, *South African case study on social exclusion*, World Rights.

¹¹Magruder, J. (2010). "Intergenerational Networks, Unemployment, and Persistent Inequality in South Africa". *American Economic Journal: Applied Economics*, 2(1), 62-85.

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this system revolved around were social assistance, mandatory social insurance and voluntary private insurance.¹² These steps have enabled the government to primary healthcare to 14% of the population,¹³ alongside income security through disability and unemployment grants/pensions.¹⁴ The government has also focused extensively on ICT (i.e., computer-based) forms of education and communication to help reduce the digital divide and allow communities to participate more in civic activities while simultaneously increasing social interaction.¹⁵ This is a novel way adopted by the government to help increase access to resources and create a sense of nationalistic unity, and manifested in the amendment of telecommunication laws and the creation of Multi-Purpose Community Centers, whose sole purpose is to integrate the government, people and technology.¹⁶

CONCLUSION

Social alienation and fragmentation is a potent weapon in the hands of the so-called politically superior, giving them a method to literally “divide and rule,” as it happened during the apartheid reign. When it is an issue as deeply interconnected with their identities, as exclusion, it’s only laws and state-sanctioned policies that can eradicate this phenomenon. Strengthening legal and political frameworks, increasing participation in decision making, and giving people access to education, for the sole purpose of giving them a chance to take an active role in cooperation, can help improve the situation for the deprived.¹⁷ Hence, since the ramifications of social exclusion are immense and wide-spread, by following the South Africa model of inter-mixing governmental policies, we can move towards a more inclusive and productive global community.

¹²“Extending social protection by anchoring rights in law”, *International Labour Office*, 2012. <https://www.social-protection.org/gimi/RessourcePDF.action?ressource.ressourceId=53853>

¹³National Health Insurance Act No. 61 of 2003.

¹⁴Social Assistance Act 13 of 2004.

¹⁵Lars Buur. (2005). “Sovereignty & Democratic Exclusion in the New South Africa.” *Review of African Political Economy*,32(104/105), 253-268. Retrieved from <http://www.jstor.org/stable/4007073>

¹⁶ Maldonado, Edgar & A. Pogrebnyakov, Nicolai & van Gorp, Annemijn. (2006). ICT Policies as a Means to Inhibit Social Exclusion: The South African Case. 10.1007/0-387-34588-4_10.

¹⁷Reducing poverty by tackling social exclusion, *Department for International Development*, 2005