

Indian Minorities

A Critical Study

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Edited by
Dr. Dipak Giri



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Dedicated
To
My Father
Late Sri Dinkar Giri
(1 January, 1950-25 June, 2025)

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Introduction

More than a numerical concept, a minority is a relational term that refers to a disadvantaged group of people with regard to power, status and resources, compared to the dominant group in a society. In India, there are religious, linguistic, ethnic, Dalit, tribal and sexual minorities. However, these minorities are not always static but sometimes negotiable in response to changing situations. For example, nationally identified religious and linguistic minorities like Muslims, Sikhs and Christians are identified as state majorities in Jammu and Kashmir, Punjab and Mizoram respectively, whereas nationally identified majority Hindus are state minorities there. Again, tribal minorities are majorities in many Northeast states. But, the condition of sexual minorities like people of LGBTQ community is more or less same, irrespective of place and situation. The diversity that produces out of the co-existence of such variety of people undoubtedly gives India a special charm but one cannot deny that this diversity sometimes also creates a complex web of social reality, giving rise to a conflict between majorities and minorities over the question of power and identity, exclusion and inclusion that bring many adverse and uninvited results, though the Constitution of India safeguards minorities with so many rights and provisions like Article 29 conserves the right to language, script, and culture and Article 15 prohibits discrimination on grounds of religion, race, caste, sex or place of birth. The National Commission for Minorities (NCM), the National Commission for Scheduled Castes (NCSC) and the National Commission for Scheduled Tribes (NCST) are also there to monitor these rights and provisions and address grievances but due to social prejudices, historical inequalities, political challenges and structural discrimination, minorities are often deprived of their minimum rights and provisions.

The present book, divided into four sections- “Indian Minorities: Religious and Linguistic Perspectives”, “Indian Minorities: Dalit and Tribal Perspectives”, “Indian Minorities: Gender and Sexual Perspectives” and “Indian Minorities: Intersectional Perspectives”, having nine, eight, eight and seven chapters respectively, is prepared in a way as it can give a detailed and comprehensive idea of Indian minorities to its readers. The opening chapter “Negotiating Identity: Muslim Women, Religion, and the Secular State in India” by Tahira Khatoon engages with the politicisation of Muslim women as political subjects in India. It explores the twin forces operating on the agency of Indian Muslim women: one, the sense of ownership claimed by religious groups over their day-to-day existence, and two, the overreach by the Indian State to protect them as rights-bearing citizens in a secular setup. The paper discusses how these developments are reflected upon by the Muslim community and how governing ideological regimes are working within the constitutional and secular framework to protect the identity of Muslim women as representatives of the largest religious minority in India. There is an assertion from feminist scholarship and women’s movements, both within the Muslim and progressive forces, which has thickened the debate as to how far the politicisation of Muslim Women has actually benefited them.

Next Monamie Mukherjee explores language and the politics of forced migration in reference to India’s treatment of Bengali minority Migrants. Marginalisation in the context of forced migration denotes the systematic relegation of displaced persons to the periphery of social, economic, and cultural life within receiving communities. It captures the ways in which their precarious displacement status—shaped by limited legal protection, socio-economic insecurity, and social stigma—intensifies barriers to meaningful participation and inclusion. As a result, forcibly displaced individuals often find themselves excluded from key institutions, opportunities, and decision-making processes, reinforcing their vulnerability and constraining their capacity to integrate fully into the host society. For instance, analysis of some current Indian situation reveals that migrant labourers from India who have been forcibly sent to Bangladesh in the recent past during the middle of 2025, endure a form of ‘structural marginalisation’, rooted in contested citizenship,

identity profiling, and the absence of secure legal status, dynamics that result in socio-economic exclusion, human rights abuses, and a systematic deprivation of legal protections. Recent evidence strongly supports such a characterisation. Migrant labourers originating from states such as West Bengal, Odisha, and Maharashtra have been subjected to large-scale detentions in which they are apprehended without adequate investigation and summarily expelled across the Bangladesh border. Such extra-legal “pushbacks” circumvent procedural safeguards, contravene constitutional and international human-rights norms, and leave those targeted effectively stateless or trapped in a condition of profound legal insecurity. This article seeks to examine selected dimensions of this troubling reality, critically analysing the gaps and vulnerabilities within fundamental human-rights protections.

The chapter “Muslim Politics in West Bengal (2006–2021): An Exploratory Study” by Dr. Chinmay Sar surfaces how the Indian Constitution safeguards the cultural rights of minorities, yet the political experience of Muslims continues to be marked by exclusion and marginalization. In West Bengal, these issues became more visible after the publication of the Sachar Committee Report (2006), which revealed deep socio-economic deprivation among Muslims. This chapter seeks to examine the trajectory of Muslim politics in West Bengal during 2006–2021, focusing on their participation, organizational dynamics, and influence on state politics. Using an explorative research methodology, the study draws on electoral data, government reports, and organizational records to analyze Muslim political mobilization, while interrogating the narrative of the “Muslim vote bank.”

Dr. Hemali Sanghavi’s “Theory of Middleman Minorities: Case Study of the Jains in Mumbai” explores the implications of the theory of Middleman minorities proposed by Sociologist Blalock in case of the Jains in Mumbai. The study probes into the limitations of the theory and a number of factors such as the migration, the dominant position and responses towards the position of the Jains in Mumbai.

Next Dr. Sana Farooqui explores how Muslim women in India face double marginalization- one for their gender and other for being a member of religious minority. The discourse on minorities in India

often foregrounds issues of religion, caste, and ethnicity, yet the intersection of gender and minority identity remains an area that requires deeper scholarly engagement. Muslim women in India experience a unique form of marginalization shaped simultaneously by their gender and religious identity. This chapter explores the concept of “double marginalization,” examining how Muslim women negotiate socio-cultural, political, and educational challenges within a predominantly patriarchal and majoritarian society. Drawing on feminist theory and minority discourse, the study analyzes how structural inequalities, cultural stereotypes, and limited access to opportunities shape the lived realities of Muslim women. The chapter also examines literary and socio-political narratives that reflect the struggles and agency of Muslim women in contemporary India. By situating Muslim women within broader debates on minority rights, gender justice, and social inclusion, this chapter argues that empowering minority women requires intersectional policies and inclusive social frameworks that recognize the complexity of their identities.

Next “Historical Roots of Marginalization — Colonial Policies and Postcolonial Realities” by Gargi Tyagi and Dr. Raf Raf Shakil Ansari examines the historical roots of minority marginalization in India by tracing how British colonial administrative practices constructed and institutionalized religious and linguistic identities. Drawing on scholarship by Sengupta (2017), Groff (2016), Bhattacharya (2023), Zaman (2024), and others, it argues that mechanisms such as the census, personal law codification, communal electorates, and linguistic standardization transformed fluid social identities into rigid categories that served colonial governance. These classificatory systems not only produced distinct “minority” communities but also generated competitive communalism that persisted into the postcolonial era. The chapter further analyzes how these colonial legacies continue to shape contemporary socio-political challenges, ranging from linguistic exclusion and spatial segregation to the politicization of religious identities. By highlighting the continuities between colonial and postcolonial structures, the study underscores the need to rethink minority policy frameworks beyond inherited colonial categories and towards more inclusive and equitable governance.

Priyal Srivastava's "Revisiting the Horrors of the Kashmiri Pandit Exodus" presents a historical re-examination of the displacement of Kashmiri Pandits from the Kashmir Valley in 1989–90, drawing exclusively on official reports, government documents, human rights records, parliamentary debates, newspaper archives, and demographic data. As a numerically small Hindu minority in the region, Kashmiri Pandits experienced targeted killings, intimidation, and severe insecurity during the rise of militancy in the late 1980s. The study revisits these events by analysing the political climate, administrative failures, and socio-economic shifts that contributed to the community's mass departure. Using archival sources such as records from the Jammu & Kashmir Legislative Assembly, Ministry of Home Affairs reports, National Human Rights Commission documents, and contemporaneous press coverage, the chapter reconstructs the chain of events that led to the exodus. It examines patterns of threats, assassinations of prominent Pandit officials and civilians, and the collapse of local governance that left minority households vulnerable. The chapter also traces the immediate aftermath, including refugee registration data, camp conditions in Jammu and Delhi, and state-led relief measures. Central to this reassessment is the question of how historical records document suffering, fear, and policy responses while also revealing silences, contradictions, and contested narratives. The study highlights how the lack of early intervention, inadequate protection, and administrative paralysis intensified the crisis for a community already demographically marginal in the Valley. By grounding the analysis solely in verifiable historical material, this chapter aims to separate documented events from later political interpretations. It argues that a historically informed understanding of the Kashmiri Pandit exodus is essential to discussions on minority rights, internal displacement, and the responsibilities of the state toward vulnerable communities.

Next chapter "Faith and Language as Identity: Negotiating Space for Religious and Linguistic Minorities in Modern India" by Chheang-khy Hok and Sona Thoeurn examines the intersection of faith and language as dual axes of minority identity in modern India. It argues that religion and language operate not merely as cultural expressions but as political instruments shaping inclusion, recognition, and be-

longing. Through qualitative analysis of constitutional frameworks, policy documents, and community narratives, the study reveals that India's pluralism is sustained by negotiation rather than harmony, where secularism remains contextual, and linguistic federalism unevenly realized. Case studies of Urdu-speaking Muslims, Tamil regional assertion, Christian educational institutions, and tribal language revival illustrate how minorities balance autonomy with integration. The findings highlight the coexistence of religious liberty and cultural nationalism as both creative and conflictual forces. The chapter concludes that authentic pluralism requires moving from protection to participation, where faith and language become shared authorship of India's collective identity.

The chapter "A Move towards 'Final Solution': Rejection of Communalism and Religious Fanaticism in Mahesh Dattani's *Final Solutions*" by Dr. Dipak Giri deals with Mahesh Dattani's award winning play *Final Solutions* which has framed its theme on communal disharmony as widely and commonly seen among people of the Hindus and Muslims in India against each others, right from the time of the post-partition riots to contemporary India. The psychosis that had been well-pervasive all over the country among the Hindus and the Muslims, after the partition of the country, still has not lost its continuous neurotic reactions to even the most inconsequential of events and happenings of present India. The chapter explores how the questions in the Dattani's *Final Solutions* raised about identity of Muslims in India draw attention to their feeling of suffocation as they are not assimilated into society, but the reason, as it is also pointed out in the play, is that they are not ready to blend-in into a massive society for fear of losing their identity to an amorphous mass. Feeling of belonging to the minority community forms the basis of their socio-cultural identity. This way, discrimination also leads to identity crisis. The chapter also studies how the play tries to find solution to end all unrest and violence happening in form of communalism giving us the message that religion is just something superficial as mask and ought to be donned or taken off at will.

Dr. Ashrafuzzaman Chowdhury discusses how Dalits undergo caste based atrocities in India, though they account for more than 200

million of total population of the country. Dalits have been deprived politically, culturally, economically, educationally and socially since millennia under the influence of Hindu orthodox laws. Dalits are the worst affected sections because of the perpetual social discrimination and caste based atrocities existing in the society. Dalits suffer from atrocities both from the wider Hindu society that ostracizes them and also from state authorities. They suffer from arson, attacks, rape, torture, stigmatization and ostracization, murder and mass killings. The main objective of the study is to highlight the various types of atrocities and finds out the legal measures available relating to atrocities on Dalits.

Dr. Girish Kousadikar's chapter "Dalit Women; Triple Minority" explores Dalit women as triply marginalized in terms of caste, gender and economic class. The chapter mainly deals with Baby Kamble's autobiographical work *The Prisons We Broke* and Baburao Bagul's story 'Mother'. Bagul's story "Mother" represents an individual hardship faced by the Dalit protagonist, whereas Kamble's literary work stands for collective psyche of a marginalized group. However, both works explore and express trajectory of the marginalized minority within minority, i.e. Dalit women.

Next chapter "Humanity on the Margins: A Critical Re-reading of *Untouchable* by Mulk Raj Anand" by Merry Baghwar studies Mulk Raj Anand's *Untouchable* (1935) and shows how this novel was the first book to portray the Dalits' suffering with rhetorical questions and an undisguised fury that foregrounds the socio-political realities of caste-based discrimination in colonial India. The chapter argues that it is Indians who are discriminating against Indians on grounds of caste, creed, colour, gender, etc. It delves into a critical study of Indian minorities through the lens of Mulk Raj Anand's narrative on Bakha, a young Dalit boy positioned at the lowest rank of the caste hierarchy. This chapter aims to expose the structural mechanisms of exclusion that regulate everyday life for marginalized communities. It does not depict Dalits as passive victims but as individuals desiring dignity. The research delves deeper into the ways that Anand's novel subverts hegemonic power, dynamics, and foreshadows current conversations about social justice, minority rights, and the politics of representation. The critical

analysis makes the case that untouchability is still a potent literary intervention that both records the historical suffering of Indian minorities and calls for a re-evaluation of caste inequality in contemporary India.

Dr. Rudrashis Datta's chapter explores how Indian tribal art, having been trapped between traditions and transition, is suffering existential question in today's globalized world. Indian tribal art represents one of the most vibrant and diverse expressions of indigenous creativity in the world. Rooted in ritual, mythology, and daily life, these forms articulate a deep connection between human communities and their natural environments. However, the rapid expansion of globalization, market commodification, and cultural homogenization has posed significant challenges to the survival and authenticity of these artistic traditions. Datta's chapter examines the complexities involved in preserving and conserving Indian tribal art in the twenty-first century. It investigates how traditional practices are being reinterpreted under the pressures of urbanization, tourism, and digitization while exploring community-based and institutional strategies for safeguarding cultural heritage. The study argues that the preservation of tribal art must move beyond the binaries of 'tradition' and 'modernity' to embrace dynamic models that respect cultural autonomy, promote sustainable livelihoods, and encourage ethical cross-cultural engagement. Drawing from anthropological, museological, and postcolonial frameworks, the chapter rethinks preservation as a living dialogue between past and present—a process where cultural continuity coexists with creative reinvention.

The chapter "Power, Identity, and Marginalisation: A Critical Study of the Banjara Community as a Tribal Minority in India" by Rathod Rajender and Prof. Nagendra Ambedkar Sole analyses the Banjara community as a tribal minority through the interconnected themes of power, identity, and structural exclusion. Despite being constitutionally recognized as a Scheduled Tribe in numerous states, the Banjaras continue to confront structural disadvantages caused by colonial criminalization, caste based hierarchies, landlessness, restricted public service access, and limited political participation. By contextualizing Banjara reality within broader discourses on minority rights, the study highlights the ongoing disparity between the constitutional aim

and daily governance, as well as the critical need for context-sensitive, community-centred initiatives.

Next chapter “Politics of Education and Liberation in the Dalit (Paraiyar) Christian Community: A Life Narrative of *Karukku*” by Roslin Longjam and Dr. Pallavi Thakur explores a Dalit (Paraiyar) Christian woman’s (Bama Faustina Soosairaj’s) life in Tamil Nadu, India, offering profound insights into her experiences and struggles. It examines how educational establishments, whether secular or religious, function as powerful centres of caste authority, discipline, and ideological control despite portraying themselves as places of intellectual and moral advancement. This chapter makes an attempt to understand the intricate link between education, politics, and liberation within marginalized communities. Education is often seen as a tool for empowerment, but it is also influenced by societal and political factors that nurture inequality. Bama’s *Karukku* vividly portrays how Dalit Christian women in Tamil Nadu confront both patriarchal dominance and caste-based persecution, thereby exemplifying this dichotomy.

Next chapter “Dr. Ambedkar’s Reinterpretation of Buddhism as a Path of Social Justice and Liberation for Dalits: A Sociological Perspective” by Karunarathne Rasika R A & Praveena D explores how B.R Ambedkar’s reformulated approach to Buddhism as Navayana represents a significant socio-religious change within Buddhism as a rational and equalitarian Buddhism to be used by Dalits to free themselves from the bonds of the caste structures (social systems) of India. This transformation and from Ambedkar’s personal experiences (the suffering of untouchability) and the critiques presented in the Annihilation of Caste, Ambedkar’s rejection of Hindu orthodoxy, and from the 1956 Deeksha Boomi mass-conversion (where Ambedkar had 500,000 followers take 22 vows to renounce Brahminical supremacy, and all the karma’s (doctrines that rationalize inequality) ritualism in favour of an ethical praxis (practice) of liberty, equality, and fraternity) Ambedkar’s socio-political Navayana (Buddhism) Closure); hence this study employed qualitative research that explores socio-political structures using documented (historical) data and various scholarly and empirical data. The findings depict Navayana as a -protest religion- and the building

of a Dalit identity through the performance of some significant ritual Deeksha Boomi collective offering, and the construction of a socio-educational and mobility hybrid practices of anti-caste activism in the Bhim Army (Dalit army) and other movements, Assembly Navedina activism, a Hindu (Deeksha Boomi) nationalistic refrain. It repositions and reframes the philosophy of dukkha (suffering) to dharma (suffering as caste injustice) and operationalizes dhamma (action) for the purpose of building social capital and active citizenship. Hence, the advocacy of Navayana (Buddhism) ethics is for the construction of educational (and policy) anti-discrimination practices, socio-economic upliftment of the marginalised, and global ethical adaptation. Empirical research is primarily oriented to contemporary multi-divisional (complex) conversion, Navayana Buddhism.

The chapter “The Margins Speak Back: Dalit Poetry against Caste Power” by Partha Haldar studies six seminal poems from contemporary Dalit literature. They are “Massacre of the Innocents” and “Facing the Music” by Meena Kandasamy, “The Natural Law Insist” by N.D. Rajkumar, “Thousands of Rivers” and “The Dalits are coming” by Siddalingaiah, and “Kamatipura” by Namdeo Laxman Dhasal to argue that Dalit poetry reveals minority status not as a numerical category but as a structural condition of powerlessness within the caste hierarchy. These poets use literary voice to contest Brahminical hegemony, challenge upper-caste-led Marxism, and reclaim agency in an oppressive majoritarian system. One may ask why Dalit Poetry? Why not any other forms of writing? Dalit aesthetics includes novels, short stories, autobiographies, drama and all of these are equally important. Nonetheless, poetry is closer to Dalit oral traditions. Dalit resistance has long been carried through songs, labor chants, and street performances that circulate in communities even without print or formal education. Unlike autobiographies or novels, the collective “we” represents a community-centred mode of expression. Sharatchandra Muktibodh states - “The nature of Dalit consciousness is obviously not subjective. It is true that pains and pleasures are lived and experienced by individuals alone but the sufferings of the Dalits are common and are attributable to common reasons” (Dangle, Arjun, editor. *Poisoned Bread: Translations from Modern Marathi Dalit Literature*. 1st ed., Orient BlackSwan, 1992. p. 267).

By grounding theory in lived experience and collective trauma, Dalit literature functions as counter-hegemonic consciousness, transforming spaces of silencing into arenas of resistance and liberation. Through the close analysis of these poems, this chapter argues how these writers expose the gap between constitutional promises and structural discrimination, contest Brahminical hegemony, and imagine liberation through the reclamation of voice, body, and ‘collective consciousness’.

Riya Virdi’s “From Silence to Assertion: A Critical Study of the Historical and Modern Landscape of Dalit Literature” seeks to trace the inception, growth, and contemporary status quo of Dalit literature, encompassing diverse genres, languages, and styles. The growth of this discipline is examined through the lens of historical, social, and political contexts, exploring key figures, movements, and milestones. It also aims to understand the challenges faced by Dalit writers even today, in terms of representation, critical reception, and institutional support. By highlighting the achievements and the ongoing struggles, this chapter gives a comprehensive overview of Dalit literature and its role in shaping contemporary Indian literary culture.

Dr. Abhisarika Prajapati’s “Ethics and Epistemologies in Transcinema: “Who Gets to Tell Whose Story?”- Contextualising Indian Cinema” examines the ethical and epistemological dimensions of transnational storytelling within Indian cinema, focusing on questions of narrative ownership, representation of marginalized communities, and power dynamics in the global film ecosystem. As Indian cinema increasingly circulates beyond national borders—through Bollywood blockbusters, regional and independent films, and diaspora-driven narratives—the question arises: who gets to tell whose story, and with what authority? The analysis interrogates how dominant narratives can either reinforce or resist hegemonic structures when they enter transnational circuits, particularly in relation to caste, gender, class, and regional identities. Drawing on a range of examples—from mainstream Bollywood productions to independent films supported by institutions like the National Film Development Corporation (NFDC) and platforms like Film Bazaar—the chapter explores how different modes of cinematic production and distribution shape representational ethics and epistemic

legitimacy. Methodologically, the study combines a critical literature review with selected case studies, guided by postcolonial and decolonial theoretical frameworks as well as theories on the ethics of representation. Ultimately, this research seeks to uncover how transnational Indian cinema can both challenge and replicate global hierarchies of knowledge and storytelling, raising crucial questions about voice, visibility, and the politics of cultural translation in contemporary media landscapes.

Camilla Diana B H's "Queer Discourses in Kerala: Exploring Texts and Performances" explores how various discourses in Kerala represent alternative identities within the dominant heteronormative ideological framework. This chapter emerges as a document that records and testifies to the evolving landscape of queer representation in Kerala.

Dr. Sananda Sen's "Disrupting the Ideal: Gender Performativity and the Trans Body in *Super Deluxe*" examines *Super Deluxe* (2019), directed by Thiagarajan Kumararaja, as a critical cinematic intervention that challenges dominant constructions of the "ideal body" in Indian society. Central to this analysis is the character of Shilpa, a transgender woman portrayed by Vijay Sethupathi, whose embodied presence disrupts the aesthetic, moral, and gendered norms that underpin cis-heteropatriarchal ideals. In contrast to the culturally sanctioned ideal body, imagined as biologically coherent, visually legible, morally pure, and heteronormatively aligned, Shilpa's body resists assimilation and undermines binary frameworks of gender and sexuality. Drawing on Judith Butler's theory of gender performativity, Susan Stryker's insights on trans embodiment, and critical approaches to cinematic representation, this chapter argues that *Super Deluxe* reconfigures the narrative and visual logics of the normative body. Shilpa's presence, marked by visibility, social rejection, and emotional complexity, offers a radical alternative to sanitized, commodified femininity. Her refusal to pass as cisgender and her affective depth foreground the precarity and agency of trans embodiment as a site of resistance. Furthermore, the film destabilizes the normative family structure and moral order through its unflinching portrayal of sexuality, desire, and kinship. Shilpa is not relegated to tragedy or comic relief but is positioned as an ethical and narrative center. Through a close reading of her character, this chapter

contends that *Super Deluxe* not only critiques bodily normativity but also reimagines cinematic space as a site for transgressive, diverse, and “non-ideal bodies” to inhabit with dignity and power.

Next Dr. A. Puvi Lakshmi surfaces problems of gender dysphoria as seen among transgender children. Nisha Sasikumar and Dr. Sethu S. Nath explore LGBTQ + Rights and Realities in Kerala. Shivanshi Rawat and Dr. Pallavi Thakur in their next two chapters (chapters 23 and 24) examines internal hierarchy within the hijra community especially focusing on the guru-chela relationship and how it often leads to economic, physical and emotional exploitation of the latter in reference to A. Revathi’s *The Truth About Me: A Hijra Life Story*.

The Objective of Naresh R.’s chapter “Invisibilized Minorities: A Critical Analysis of LGB+ Exclusion in Karnataka’s Policies” is to understand the current policy frameworks in Karnataka to find the specific cases of Legal Invisibility for the LGB+ community. Alongside, the chapter also analyzes how this policy of non-recognition manifests across essential social domains and recommends actionable Policy Imperatives to address these gaps and align state policy with constitutional mandates. Despite India’s progressive judicial rulings on LGBTQ+ rights and the fact that Karnataka has been at the forefront of recognizing transgender identities, the state’s gender and welfare policies reveal a significant policy gap. This has resulted in a structural exclusion where transgender persons are recognized, even if excluded in practice, but Lesbian, Gay, and Bisexual (LGB+) citizens are entirely legally invisible. This non-recognition prevents the state from addressing the distinct, systemic needs of the LGB+ community. Naresh R.’s chapter utilizes Qualitative Secondary Data Analysis (QSDA) design including official Government of Karnataka circulars, welfare scheme guidelines, and crucial qualitative narratives (case studies and quotes) from local LGBTQ+ advocacy, NGO reports, articles and journals to understand this non-recognition of LGB+ community in Karnataka. The study shows that the existing state policy framework is completely missing the explicit mention of sexual orientations, leading to cascading exclusion. LGB+ individuals face systemic denial in key areas like Welfare schemes, Property rights, Criminal laws and formal Grievance redressal mecha-

nisms. Exclusion is also prevalent in Health and Education policy and is exacerbated in Jobs and Labour laws where protection is often linked only to binaries. Furthermore, Gender surveys and data collection in Karnataka entirely ignore sexual orientation, making policy formulation difficult. This exclusion contradicts the constitutional spirit of Article 15, relegating sexual minorities to second-class citizenship despite judicial progress. The Implications of this study are profound. The chapter contends that policy design requires moving beyond singular identity focuses to be effective.

Next Dr. Joydeb Patra and Dr. Prodipta Barman's "Visual Arts and Minority Identity: Depictions in Contemporary Indian Painting" examines how artists from minority communities use symbolism, narrative, colour, and materiality to communicate lived experiences, challenge dominant cultural narratives, and assert agency. By analysing selected works from contemporary painters, the chapter explores the interplay of tradition and modernity, aesthetics and politics, and personal and collective memory. It also situates these artistic practices within broader socio-political contexts, emphasising the role of visual arts in cultural resistance, identity formation, and social critique.

Dr. Prajnajyoti Dutta's chapter examines the condition of Indian minorities through the ethical philosophy of Emmanuel Levinas, particularly his concept of the 'Other.' Moving beyond conventional legal and political frameworks, the study foregrounds ethics as the primary mode of engaging with marginality. Levinas's insistence on infinite responsibility toward the Other offers a critical lens to interrogate the processes of exclusion, stereotyping, and totalization that shape minority experiences in India. The chapter argues that minority marginalization is not only a structural or institutional issue but also an ethical failure embedded in everyday practices, representation, and discourse. By situating Levinasian thought within the socio-cultural realities of India, the chapter explores how minorities are constructed as 'Others' within dominant narratives, often reduced to fixed identities that deny their complexity and agency. It further engages with literary, visual, and philosophical discourses to highlight the violence of representation and the need for ethical reorientation. Drawing connections

with postcolonial theory and subaltern studies, the study demonstrates how Levinas's philosophy can complement existing frameworks while also challenging their limitations. Ultimately, the chapter proposes a shift from tolerance to responsibility, emphasizing hospitality, empathy, and ethical accountability as foundational principles for reimagining minority relations in India. Such an approach, it argues, is essential for fostering a more inclusive and humane society that recognizes the irreducible alterity of the Other.

Sovanna Huot's "The Politics of Power: Hierarchies, Hegemony, and Minority Voices in India's Public Sphere" portrays how, in India's democracy, the power of democracy presides over both the domination and the negotiation of the public sphere, determining who can and who cannot speak. Using the critical-interpretive approach to political discourse, media, and activism, the chapter shows that the neutral stance of the institutions is often a disguise to cover an insidious bias, while the culture of nationalism, as the dominant cultural narrative, transmutes the morally indefensible outcomes of social rationality into a morally defensible order. Nevertheless, the dominant structures make visible the systemic exclusion of a communality of the literate and the digitally active the social and civic public in the rupture of the hegemonic definition of democracy as a disorder of participation. The power of democracy is thus a social order that transacts freely through violence as the law, discourse, and affect, while social order is made visible through a denial of legitimacy. The chapter argues that social order can, and should, incorporate the public into a democracy, not through mere symbolic inclusion, but social order should incorporate the excluded as co-constructors of political signification and cultural remembrance.

Sovanna Loch, Phearun Tep and Sovanna Huot's "Margins within the Social Fabric: Understanding Minorities through Sociological and Cultural Lenses" examines the complexities of minority groups in India using socio-cultural perspectives and examines the dual role of social stratifications as structures and signs. The study employs qualitative, ethnographic, and documentary resources, using caste, religion, gender, and ethnicity as coalescing vertical and horizontal structures of inclusion and exclusion. The study demonstrates the paradox of social and

cultural economic life, where the minorities are socially dislocated and yet integral to the nation, and the dependent denial. Hybrid identities and intersectional alliances of community solidarities demonstrate systemic self-organization and resilience. The pluralism in the enquiry is seen as an unfinished narrative, where social inclusion is framed and articulated with the civil, legal, and social order transformations. The chapter posits that to build an inclusive democracy based on and integrated with justice, empathy, and acknowledgment, the minorities must be seen as ethical social subjects and not as passive, silent, and quiescent recipients.

Kimyut Phin and Chanthay Chay's "Frames of Resistance: Visual and Literary Portrayals of Minorities in Contemporary Indian Art and Cinema" analyses how contemporary Indian art, literature, and cinema turns out to be representation into a mode of resistance. The study employs a qualitative interpretive approach integrating semiotic, hermeneutic, and visual-textual analysis to investigate how minority creators, Dalit, tribal, feminist, and religious, utilize aesthetic frame to challenge hegemonic narratives. Testimonial writing, visual minimalism, and realist filmmaking come out as ethical master plans that destabilize hierarchy and reclaim voice. According to some works such as Gauri Gill, Nagraj Manjule, Bama, and Arundhati Roy, representation moves from being seen to seeing oneself, redefining aesthetics as activism and beauty as ethical revelation. The findings contend that art plays as a political pedagogy, growing empathy as democratic consciousness. Finally, minority aesthetics redeclares *darśan*, seeing as knowing, not as spiritual privilege yet as communal vision grounded in justice and recollection.

Sovannaroeth Chheang and Sovanna Huot's "Rewriting the Past: Historical Erasures and the Rediscovery of Indian Minority Narratives" investigates how Indian minority histories, religious, linguistic, and ethnic, have been erased, silenced, and subsequently rediscovered through archival critique and oral reclamation. Employing a qualitative textual-phenomenological method, it examines colonial and nationalist historiographies alongside community narratives, folk traditions, and artistic representations. The findings reveal a clear trajectory from

imposed silence to self-representation; wherein marginalized voices transform from objects of history into epistemic agents. Rewriting the past emerges as both an act of intellectual decolonization and moral restitution, bridging historical inquiry with social justice. The study concludes that historical inclusivity does not only enrich collective identity but also calls for national curricular reform that integrates minority voices and participatory knowledge systems into mainstream education.

Ran Rin and Kimsie Phan's "Surviving the Margins: Social Challenges and Everyday Struggles of Indian Minorities in the 21st Century" analyses both structural and experiential aspects of the marginality of minorities in India in the twenty-first century. It is based on secondary references, ethnographic narratives, and pursuing reviews of policies and demonstrates how inequalities in the systems of education and employment, as well as in justice, maintain a position even with constitutional safeguards. The Dalits, Adivasis, minorities, linguistic groups, and Muslims are affected by structural obstacles well veiled under meritocracy and neutrality, resulting in formal inclusion but informal exclusion. However, here the mass media allows us to find resilience as a kind of agency: grassroots educational movements, women's organizations facilitated and online community organizing make canon survival into an empowering action. The chapter suggests that justice has to go beyond institutional access to social empathy and participatory governance and include epistemic inclusion. It is only when the minorities are made to be co-authors of development that the Indian democracy can reach its moral and constitutional pledge.

The final chapter "The Saga of Minorities: A Study of *Felanee* by Arupa Patangia Kalita" by Chiranjita Borah attempts to study the saga of minorities in the North East by analysing *Felanee* by Arupa Patangia Kalita. The northeastern part of India is the homeland of diversity in terms of tribal identity, language, food, clothing patterns, and religious practices, which create complexities in both the social structure and the political environment of the region. The literary works of these convicts convey the historical accuracy of the picture of marginal identity and how it led to the conflicted journey of development through insurgency, in their quest for independence. These regions have always

been neglected geographically, politically and economically in India's growth targets. Therefore, the minorities in the region go through problems centered on an identity crisis, being the voiceless in the country, although providing so much for the economy. Borah's chapter not only talks about agency along with memory, highlighting the socio-cultural picture of the area but also adopts an inclusive approach to unfold the complexities of discourses along with the stereotypical structure of mindsets in changing dynamics of power and politics.

To sum up, Indian minorities, though numerically present as we have seen in above chapters, yet structurally excluded from power, dignity and cultural authority, often undergo a hard life, as a consequence of which, members from a linguistic minority find themselves pressured to abandon their language in order to be fully recognized; women belonging to an ethnic minority experience double marginalization, caught between gender-based discrimination and discrimination rooted in their origins; members of religious minorities are viewed as exceptional cases requiring "tolerance," rather than as ordinary citizens; and as for sexual and gender minorities, they often live in narrow spaces between fear and stigma, where their very existence becomes a topic of debate. Social research shows that societies that respect the rights of minorities tend to be less violent and more politically and economically stable. The reason is simple: when an individual feels they are part of a collective project, their participation becomes meaningful and responsible. But when they are pushed to the margins, feelings of alienation can turn into resistance, withdrawal, or social unrest. But a society that opens its doors to all, listens, learns, recognizes, and acts justly is a society capable of writing a future worthy of humanity—regardless of one's origin, language, religion, or gender identity. With this spirit, I along with my co-authors, hope that this book will prove an eye-opener to many and help academics and scholars for further research on minority studies in India.

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