

# Exclusion within the Excluded

## The Economic Divide within Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes

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An investigation into the trends in economic disparities within the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes for the past three decades (1983–2012) shows that the economic disparity ratio has increased substantially for both scs and sts. The increase is much more in the case of the scs. The economic inequality (Gini coefficient) has increased for both scs and sts in urban India. In rural areas, it has increased for the scs but has remained almost the same for the sts. In the post-economic reforms period (1993–2012), there is an unambiguous increase in inequality among both scs and sts, and in the interstate inequality within the scs and sts, for both rural and urban areas.

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Inequality in India has been the topic of debate in the development circles since Indian independence. This debate on Indian inequality can be categorised into two types based on whether it focuses on “vertical inequalities,” that is, inequality across classes based on income or consumption expenditure, or on “horizontal inequalities,” which is nothing but inequality between groups such as those between groups based on caste, religion, gender, etc. Within horizontal inequalities, the focus has been predominantly on inequality (economic or social) between caste groups, that is, between scheduled groups (Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes [scs/sts]) and non-scheduled groups (non-scs/sts). It is a known fact that the members of the scs/sts have suffered from severe discrimination—social exclusion in the case of scs, and physical exclusion in the case of sts, since historical times (Deshpande 2011).

scs are a constitutionally declared collection of castes that suffered from the practice of untouchability, whereas sts are identified on the basis of certain criteria, such as primitive traits, distinct culture, geographical isolation and general backwardness (Mutatkar 2005). However, the categories “Scheduled Caste” and “Scheduled Tribe” are nowhere defined in the Constitution of India and comprise within them more than four hundred castes and tribes, with large cultural heterogeneity (Mutatkar 2005: 3). The “untouchables,” also called Ati-Shudras (or Avarna) historically lay at the bottom of the Hindu social hierarchy and were not considered a part of the Varna system. The case of the tribals is slightly different as they were never part of the Hindu social

hierarchy. On the one hand, scs have suffered from untouchability and social exclusion (though physically being a part of mainstream society) from historical times. On the other, the case of sts is that of physical isolation and exclusion (but not of social stigma or social exclusion). While scs can be found in almost all villages and urban centres in India, sts are generally concentrated in a few geographical regions, which are relatively physically inaccessible, such as hilly areas and forests (Mutatkar 2005: 3). As such, there are separate provisions for their welfare in the Constitution of India, which form the basis of targeted development policies by the state to raise the socio-economic status of these groups in absolute terms, as well as relative to the rest of society (Mutatkar 2005). The disparity (economic and social) between scheduled and non-scheduled groups has captured the imagination of academicians, policymakers, thinkers, social reformers and civil society members alike, resulting in vast literature on inequalities between the groups. Yet, there is hardly any literature on economic or social exclusion within the historically excluded sc and st groups.

It is important to investigate the exclusion within the excluded because, first, it is well known that almost all social groups formed on the basis of certain identifiable social characteristics in India follow or practise some or the other kind of exclusion (Santhakumar 2013); and, second, there has been demand or provisions in recent times for special treatment of certain castes within the scheduled groups for their economic and social upliftment. These castes within the scheduled groups are claimed to have been lagging behind (compared to the other castes within scheduled groups) in the economic and social development process. An example of such a phenomenon can be seen in Bihar, where the state government has characterised 21 sub-castes within the scs as “Mahadalits,” and has launched the “Bihar Mahadalit Vikas Mission,” making separate provisions, including special economic

packages for their socio-economic development. The Mahadalits constitute 31% of the sc population in Bihar. Though the decision to construct a separate group of Mahadalits within the scs in Bihar is often considered to be a political decision aimed at winning votes, it is important to know whether such a decision is economically justifiable.

We, therefore, in this article investigate the exclusion within the excluded community (scheduled groups), that is, the trends and patterns of economic disparities within the scs and sts for the past three decades (1983–2012). The analysis has been performed at the all-India level as well as for the 17 major states of India. We use the nationally representative consumer expenditure surveys conducted by the National Sample Survey Office (NSSO) of India for the investigation.

The remainder of the article is organised as follows. Section 1 presents a brief description of the data and the measures used in the analysis. Section 2 presents the main findings of the article, and Section 3 concludes the article along with some discussion of the main results.

## 1 Data and Estimation

We use unit-level consumption expenditure data from five major (quinquennial) rounds—1983–84, 1987–88, 1993–94, 2004–05 and 2011–12—of the nationally representative National Consumer Expenditure surveys conducted by the NSSO for the analysis. These surveys record the socio-economic and demographic characteristics, consumption expenditure, and economic activity for each sampled household. Each household's actual economic status has been measured in terms of monthly and/or yearly consumer expenditure on 12 food items, consumer durables, medical care, education and services. We have used the uniform reference period (30 days) consumption expenditure data so as to compare the estimates over time. The details of the surveys can be obtained from the respective survey reports. We could not include the survey round 1999–2000 because the estimates are not comparable with the estimates of the other rounds as the method of collection

of consumer expenditure data in the 1999–2000 round was different from the other rounds. The main reason behind this is that the food consumption data was collected from 7-day and 30-day recall periods from the same households, at the same time. This results in simultaneity bias in the food consumption data (Datta 2006).

To capture the economic inequalities within the scs and sts, we have used two measures. The first one is the economic disparity ratio, that is, the ratio of monthly per capita consumption expenditure (MPCE) of the richest decile to the MPCE of the poorest decile; and, the second measure is the Gini coefficient, which is a commonly used measure of economic inequality. We have computed economic disparity ratios and Gini coefficients separately for the scs and sts. The analysis has been done, first for the all-India level (rural and urban separately), and then for 17 major states of India.

Also, for the state-level analysis, we have merged the states of Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand and Uttarakhand (which were carved out from Madhya Pradesh, Bihar and Uttar Pradesh, respectively, in 2000) into Madhya Pradesh, Bihar and Uttar Pradesh, respectively, for comparison purposes.

## 2 Results

The proportion of scs and sts in the Indian population is presented in Table 1. At the all-India level, the percentage of scs has increased from 16.8% in 1983–84 to 19% in 2011–12. However, the percentage

of sts has increased only marginally from 8.8% to 8.9% during the same period. The share in population of both scs and sts is substantially higher in rural areas as compared to urban areas. In rural areas, the proportion of scs has increased from 18% to 20.8%, whereas in urban areas it has increased from 12% to 14.6%. On the other hand, the proportion of sts in rural areas has increased from 10.3% to 11.1%, and in urban areas from 2.6% to 3.5%. Clearly, the proportion of sts in urban areas is very low.

### 2.1 All India Trends

The average MPCE by consumption expenditure deciles and the economic disparity ratio across the social groups for both rural and urban areas are presented in Table 2 (p 34). It can be seen from the table that the economic disparity ratio (the ratio of average MPCE of the richest decile to the average MPCE of the poorest decile) has increased for both scs and sts in both rural and urban areas. In rural areas, the economic disparity ratio for scs has increased by 23%, whereas for sts it has increased by 12.5%. Also, in urban areas the economic disparity ratio for scs has increased by 22.1%, whereas for sts it has increased by 10%. Two additional salient features that can be noted from the above results are that the economic disparity ratio has increased more in scs as compared to the sts, and that the increase in economic disparity ratio is higher in rural areas as compared to urban India.

Another trend, which might be interesting, is that the increase in economic disparity ratio in scs is similar to that of “others” in rural areas, but higher than “others” in urban areas. Whereas, the increase in economic disparity ratio in sts is lower than the “others” in both rural and urban areas.

If we see the post-economic reforms period (1993–2012), then the increase in economic disparity ratio is enormous for scs in both rural (33.8%) as well as urban (20.3%) areas. However, the increase in economic disparity ratio among sts is nil in rural areas, but is substantial (26.1%)

**Table 1: Composition of Total Population by Social Groups: All-India (Rural and Urban), 1983–84 to 2011–12** (%)

	1983–84	1987–88	1993–94	2004–05	2011–12
Social groups—Rural					
Scheduled Tribes (STs)	10.3	10.5	10.8	10.6	11.1
Scheduled Castes (SCs)	18.0	18.8	21.1	20.9	20.8
Others	71.8	70.7	68.1	68.5	68.1
Total	100	100	100	100	100
Social groups—Urban					
Scheduled Tribes (STs)	2.6	3.8	3.2	2.9	3.5
Scheduled Castes (SCs)	12.0	11.7	13.8	15.6	14.6
Others	85.4	84.5	83.0	81.4	81.9
Total	100	100	100	100	100
Social groups—All-India					
Scheduled Tribes (STs)	8.8	9.0	8.9	8.6	8.9
Scheduled Castes (SCs)	16.8	17.2	19.3	19.6	19.0
Others	74.4	73.8	71.8	71.8	72.0
Total	100	100	100	100	100

Source: Authors' computation based on NSSO data.

in urban areas. At the same time, the increase in economic disparity ratio among “others” is 30.4% in rural areas and 24.3% in urban areas.

The inequality estimates for all-India (rural and urban) based on the Gini coefficient have been reported in Table 3. The inequality in urban areas has increased substantially for both scs (from 0.292 to 0.336; 15.1%) and sts (from 0.316 to 0.370; 17.1%). Also, the increase in inequality is more for both scs and sts compared to the “others” (14.2%). In rural areas, the inequality has increased for the scs (from 0.280 to 0.287), but has reduced marginally for the sts (from 0.276 to 0.273).

If we see the post-economic reforms period (1993–2012), there is unambiguous increase in inequality among scs and sts for both rural and urban areas. In fact, the increase in inequality in rural areas among both scs and sts during the post-economic reforms period is much higher than during the whole period of 1983–2012. The same is true for sts in urban areas too.

## 2.2 State-level Trends

**Rural Areas:** We now present the trends in the economic divide within the scheduled groups for the 17 major states of India. Table 4 (p 35) documents the economic disparity ratios for scs and sts for rural areas during 1983–2012. It may be noted that for certain years and for certain groups the sample sizes were not large enough to compute the estimates; in such cases the trends are from the earliest year to the recent year for which data was sufficient for estimation.

It can be observed from the table that the economic disparity ratio has increased among the scs in rural areas for all but five states, namely, Jammu and Kashmir, Karnataka, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan and West Bengal. The states in which the economic disparity ratio has increased in rural areas include the poor states of Uttar Pradesh, Bihar and Odisha. Coming to the sts, the economic disparity

ratio has increased for nine states and has decreased or remained the same for eight states. It is interesting to note that the economic disparity ratio among the rural scs has increased for all states except for Jammu and Kashmir during the post-economic reforms period. The same is, however, not true for the sts.

Table 5 (p 35) presents the estimates of inequality (Gini coefficient) for the rural areas of the 17 states considered in this study. It can be seen from the table that the inequality among the rural scs has increased in all the states except for

**Table 3: Inequality (Gini Coefficient) of Consumption Expenditure among Social Groups: All-India (Rural and Urban), 1983–84 to 2011–12**

	1983–84	1987–88	1993–94	2004–05	2011–12
Social groups—Rural					
Scheduled Tribes (STs)	0.276	0.279	0.267	0.271	0.273
Scheduled Castes (SCs)	0.280	0.266	0.254	0.263	0.287
Others	0.304	0.301	0.288	0.309	0.315
Total	0.304	0.299	0.286	0.304	0.311
Social groups—Urban					
Scheduled Tribes (STs)	0.316	0.327	0.310	0.339	0.370
Scheduled Castes (SCs)	0.292	0.293	0.303	0.317	0.336
Others	0.344	0.352	0.344	0.379	0.393
Total	0.342	0.350	0.344	0.376	0.390

Source: Authors' computation based on NSSO data.

**Table 2: Average Monthly per Capita Consumption Expenditure (Rs, Current Prices) by Consumption Expenditure Deciles and Economic Disparity Ratio across Social Groups: All-India (Rural and Urban), 1983–84 to 2011–12**

	1983–84			1987–88			1993–94			2004–05			2011–12		
	ST	SC	Others	ST	SC	Others	ST	SC	Others	ST	SC	Others	ST	SC	Others
<b>All India—Rural</b>															
Deciles															
Q1(poorest)	42	43	44	62	64	66	119	120	123	225	239	244	510	533	540
Q2	60	60	60	88	88	88	162	162	163	313	315	316	710	710	711
Q3	71	72	72	103	103	103	189	189	189	366	367	368	839	838	841
Q4	82	82	82	117	117	117	215	215	215	419	419	420	954	959	959
Q5	93	93	93	131	131	132	243	243	244	476	475	477	1,091	1,094	1,098
Q6	105	106	106	149	149	149	275	275	275	541	542	543	1,266	1,259	1,259
Q7	120	121	121	171	171	171	314	315	315	629	630	628	1,469	1,467	1,470
Q8	143	142	142	203	202	203	371	370	371	754	758	756	1,761	1,767	1,773
Q9	177	178	179	254	256	257	463	465	469	975	981	986	2,275	2,276	2,298
Q10	303	319	321	440	448	473	963	811	854	2,076	1,965	2,038	4,127	4,854	4,845
Total	87	94	120	124	133	169	234	239	302	427	475	605	981	1,127	1,374
Economic Disparity Ratio (Q10/Q1)	7.2	7.4	7.3	7.1	7.0	7.2	8.1	6.8	6.9	9.2	8.2	8.4	8.1	9.1	9.0
<b>All India—Urban</b>															
Deciles															
Q1(poorest)	43	44	42	66	67	66	119	123	124	230	245	244	541	551	561
Q2	61	60	61	88	88	88	162	162	162	313	315	315	714	721	711
Q3	71	72	72	103	103	103	189	189	190	371	369	370	837	834	839
Q4	82	82	82	117	117	117	216	216	216	423	422	420	962	962	965
Q5	93	94	93	132	132	132	243	244	243	479	478	478	1,096	1,095	1,102
Q6	105	106	106	149	150	149	276	275	276	540	546	545	1,274	1,261	1,262
Q7	121	121	121	172	171	172	315	317	316	631	630	631	1,485	1,477	1,471
Q8	143	142	143	204	202	204	372	372	373	764	761	764	1,785	1,774	1,778
Q9	179	178	180	259	256	259	466	471	473	1,003	1,004	1,004	2,282	2,305	2,331
Q10	339	301	348	469	448	512	818	851	918	1,793	1,870	2,155	4,696	4,586	5,189
Total	139	129	176	202	185	256	381	343	481	858	759	1,116	1,941	1,816	2,523
Economic Disparity Ratio (Q10/Q1)	7.9	6.8	8.3	7.1	6.7	7.8	6.9	6.9	7.4	7.8	7.6	8.8	8.7	8.3	9.2

Source: Authors' computation based on NSSO data.

the states of Andhra Pradesh, Bihar, Jammu and Kashmir, Karnataka and Rajasthan. However, the inequality among the STs has decreased in 12 out of the 17 states considered in the study. If the post-economic reforms period is seen, then inequality among the scs has increased in all but the four states of Gujarat, Jammu and Kashmir, Karnataka and Rajasthan.

**Urban Areas:** We now turn to the trends in the economic divide within the scheduled groups in urban areas for the 17 states. Table 6 (p 36) documents the economic disparity ratios for scs and STs in urban areas during 1983–2012. Once again, it may be noted that for certain years, for

certain groups the sample sizes were not large enough to compute the estimates. In these cases, the trends are from the earliest year to the most recent year for which data was sufficient for estimation.

It can be observed from Table 6 that the economic disparity ratio has increased among the scs in urban areas for all but four states, namely, Andhra Pradesh, Gujarat, Punjab and Rajasthan. The states in which the economic disparity ratio has increased in urban areas include the poorest states of Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Madhya Pradesh, Odisha and West Bengal. Coming to the STs, the economic disparity ratio has increased for nine states and is not available (Assam) or has

decreased for the remaining eight states. Also, it is interesting to note that the economic disparity ratio among the rural scs has increased for all states, except for Madhya Pradesh and Tamil Nadu during the post-economic reforms period.

Table 7 (p 36) presents the estimates of inequality (Gini coefficient) for the urban areas of the 17 states considered in this study. It can be seen from the table that the inequality among the urban scs has increased in all the states except for three states, namely, Karnataka, Kerala and West Bengal. Similarly, the inequality within the STs has increased in 13 out of the 17 states considered in the study. The four states where it has decreased are the states of

**Table 4: Economic Disparity Ratio among Social Groups: By States—Rural, 1983–84 to 2011–12**

	1983–84			1987–88			1993–94			2004–05			2011–12		
	ST	SC	Others	ST	SC	Others	ST	SC	Others	ST	SC	Others	ST	SC	Others
Andhra Pradesh	6.9	7.1	6.9	7.3	7.1	7.5	8.1	6.4	7.5	10.5	8.2	8.3	7.3	12.0	7.0
Assam	6.7	4.5	5.9	6.0	5.3	5.9	4.6	4.7	5.5	5.8	6.8	6.1	10.4	8.8	
Bihar	6.3	6.3	6.9	6.6	6.4	7.0	7.8	6.7	5.9	6.4	5.3	6.8	8.1	7.5	
Gujarat	7.4	8.4	7.3	6.7	5.4	6.5	5.0	6.2	6.7	9.3	6.0	6.4	9.5	6.6	
Haryana		5.8	9.4		5.5	9.4	5.0	6.6	6.9		7.2	8.8	9.6	10.6	7.4
Himachal Pradesh		7.1	8.4	6.7	7.9	6.0	9.3	6.0	6.9	9.6	8.6	7.8	7.5	9.3	8.2
Jammu and Kashmir		5.9	6.2	9.4	8.1	7.2	10.6	5.8	6.6			6.1	9.2	5.6	6.6
Karnataka	5.4	8.1	7.3	7.5	6.1	7.3	6.0	6.0	6.7	0.0	8.4	9.6	6.8	5.6	6.8
Kerala	7.7	7.7	7.4	5.3	8.8	7.4	7.2	5.7	7.2	8.5	8.7	9.7	7.2	9.2	7.2
Madhya Pradesh	8.3	7.0	7.0	7.2	7.4	6.7	7.6	6.4	7.3	10.4	10.9	7.9	7.9	6.7	9.7
Maharashtra	7.0	8.7	6.6	6.7	9.4	8.5	7.6	6.8	7.5	12.7	6.5	7.8	7.3	8.8	7.9
Odisha	7.5	6.6	6.7	10.3	5.7	7.0	7.4	5.5	6.0	8.0	9.0	7.6	6.5	7.4	9.5
Punjab	7.5	8.2	8.5		6.7	10.4		7.8	6.2		8.0	6.9	8.2	12.0	8.3
Rajasthan	8.4	7.6	7.7	8.6	6.2	7.3	12.3	6.2	6.1	10.7	10.0	7.2	8.0	7.3	7.5
Tamil Nadu	6.3	7.2	9.8	6.7	6.4	7.7	7.2	6.8	8.1		8.4	10.3	6.1	9.7	12.1
Uttar Pradesh	6.3	7.1	6.9	5.1	7.1	6.6	6.8	6.8	6.4	5.5	8.2	8.3	6.1	9.6	12.1
West Bengal	7.0	7.8	7.7	10.4	8.0	7.0	7.9	6.2	7.5	7.1	7.5	8.5	10.9	7.3	8.6
All-India	7.2	7.4	7.3	7.1	7.0	7.2	8.1	6.8	6.9	9.2	8.2	8.4	8.1	9.1	9.0

Economic Disparity Ratio = Ratio of the average MPCE of richest decile to the average MPCE of the poorest decile.

Source: Authors' computation based on NSSO data.

**Table 5: Inequality (Gini Coefficient) of Consumption Expenditure among Social Groups: By States—Rural, 1983–84 to 2011–12**

	1983–84			1987–88			1993–94			2004–05			2011–12		
	ST	SC	Others	ST	SC	Others	ST	SC	Others	ST	SC	Others	ST	SC	Others
Andhra Pradesh	0.245	0.278	0.290	0.322	0.243	0.290	0.275	0.202	0.253	0.159	0.250	0.273	0.241	0.237	0.253
Assam	0.230	0.270	0.293	0.316	0.225	0.326	0.316	0.256	0.287	0.247	0.266	0.309	0.051	0.312	0.291
Bihar	0.191	0.422	0.278	0.255	0.247	0.291	0.300	0.262	0.263	0.103	0.227	0.286	0.334	0.271	0.338
Gujarat	0.350	0.233	0.287	0.275	0.253	0.308	0.266	0.276	0.240	0.224	0.243	0.342	0.092	0.264	0.260
Haryana	0.275	0.262	0.260	0.277	0.274	0.335	0.299	0.254	0.274	0.302	0.256	0.295	0.201	0.319	0.236
Himachal Pradesh	0.255	0.243	0.292	0.279	0.228	0.234	0.232	0.240	0.279	0.285	0.262	0.282	0.195	0.247	0.277
Jammu and Kashmir	0.250	0.232	0.258	0.235	0.257	0.254	0.221	0.207	0.222	0.242	0.251	0.275	0.198	0.193	0.240
Karnataka	0.252	0.273	0.205	0.265	0.261	0.261	0.239	0.259	0.188	0.173	0.262	0.208	0.243	0.248	0.227
Kerala	0.045	0.280	0.298	0.240	0.301	0.312	0.143	0.254	0.311	0.186	0.278	0.246	0.187	0.306	0.242
Madhya Pradesh	0.258	0.290	0.257	0.253	0.236	0.261	0.233	0.222	0.245	0.236	0.183	0.211	0.229	0.223	0.251
Maharashtra	0.277	0.261	0.305	0.227	0.264	0.290	0.205	0.240	0.289	0.210	0.207	0.275	0.256	0.269	0.293
Odisha	0.371	0.226	0.221	0.345	0.238	0.314	0.301	0.233	0.243	0.207	0.254	0.340	0.308	0.299	0.283
Punjab	0.186	0.315	0.336	0.182	0.230	0.296	0.330	0.254	0.286	0.279	0.232	0.250	0.267	0.402	0.310
Rajasthan	0.261	0.307	0.295	0.271	0.261	0.288	0.265	0.271	0.269	0.199	0.239	0.303	0.295	0.231	0.288
Tamil Nadu	0.304	0.233	0.377	0.235	0.269	0.296	0.264	0.156	0.291	0.205	0.195	0.290	0.249	0.264	0.297
Uttar Pradesh	0.265	0.178	0.320	0.293	0.326	0.275	0.266	0.271	0.305	0.348	0.319	0.381	0.168	0.347	0.447
West Bengal	0.267	0.278	0.304	0.204	0.228	0.262	0.207	0.207	0.323	0.264	0.219	0.292	0.296	0.278	0.316
All-India	0.276	0.280	0.304	0.279	0.266	0.301	0.267	0.254	0.288	0.271	0.263	0.309	0.273	0.287	0.315

Source: Authors' computation based on NSSO data.

Assam, Bihar, Karnataka and Tamil Nadu. If the post-economic reforms period is seen, then inequality among the scs has increased in all but the four states of Haryana, Maharashtra, Odisha and West Bengal. Similarly, inequality within the urban sts has increased in all the states but Assam, Karnataka and Rajasthan during the post-economic reforms period.

**2.3 Interstate Trends**

Figure 1 (p 37) presents the interstate inequality (Gini coefficient) in consumption expenditure within social groups (rural and urban) during 1983–2012. It can be seen from the table that the interstate inequality is higher among the scs

and sts as compared to the “others.” Between the scs and sts, interstate inequality is more among the sts. It was also higher among the sts during 1983–84. Also, the interstate inequality has increased among both scs and sts (also among “others”) during the past three decades. Further, the interstate inequality shows a continuous increase among both scs and sts during the post-economic reforms period.

Coming to rural areas, interstate inequality (Figure 2, p 37) shows a substantial increase among both scs and sts (also among “others”) during 1983–2012. Between scs and sts, the interstate inequality is more among the scs in rural

areas. Interestingly, the interstate inequality first increased, but then decreased among both the scs and sts during the post-economic reforms period. However, if we take the whole post-economic reforms period (1993–2012), then interstate inequality has clearly increased among all the social groups.

Turning next to urban India (Figure 3, p 37), the interstate inequality has once again increased among all the social groups during 1983–2012. The interstate inequality was highest among the sts in 1983, and so was the case during 2011–12. Also, the interstate inequality is higher among both the scs and sts compared to “others” in urban India. If we

**Table 6: Economic Disparity Ratio among Social Groups: By States—Urban, 1983–84 to 2011–12**

	1983–84			1987–88			1993–94			2004–05			2011–12		
	ST	SC	Others	ST	SC	Others	ST	SC	Others	ST	SC	Others	ST	SC	Others
Andhra Pradesh	8.8	9.2	8.0	5.9	5.9	8.4	6.7	7.2	7.2	10.4	6.3		7.5	7.2	
Assam			6.2		5.2			6.8	6.5		9.5		7.5	9.2	
Bihar	5.9	5.0	6.8	7.4	5.5	7.3	5.4	5.9	6.6	8.1	10.4		6.4		
Gujarat	8.4	8.8	11.4	5.9		6.5	6.2	5.7	6.8	7.2	10.8		6.0	11.0	
Haryana			8.8		6.7	5.7		4.8	6.2	8.1	8.7	9.5	11.8	10.4	7.9
Himachal Pradesh			9.9							9.8	7.0	8.7	8.2	9.2	10.6
Jammu and Kashmir			7.4		5.8	11.8				8.6	9.1	7.5	7.4	8.2	8.7
Karnataka	6.7	6.3	7.7	7.0	6.4	8.0	7.8	5.2	6.5	7.3	7.1	8.6	6.6	7.8	
Kerala	7.2	7.8	9.7		6.7	8.4		5.4	8.1	7.6	8.4	6.8	8.6	9.5	
Madhya Pradesh	11.4	5.8	7.0	7.7	7.0	7.5	8.0	9.5	6.9	6.1	11.8	7.9	14.0	7.4	7.4
Maharashtra	7.3	6.6	8.0	7.0	6.9	7.7	6.9	6.5	7.5	7.8	8.4	9.3	10.2	8.0	9.7
Odisha	6.8	5.6	6.9	6.9	5.5	6.3	7.3	6.2	6.1	7.4	9.4	7.7	7.0	6.5	7.3
Punjab		8.2	9.8		7.3	6.2		6.0		7.4	7.3	8.6	8.9	7.4	9.0
Rajasthan	10.8	9.4	8.2	7.3	8.5	7.7		6.1	6.9	8.3	7.5	10.4	9.0	7.3	8.5
Tamil Nadu	7.9	6.8	8.7	6.7	6.7	8.3		7.8	8.4	8.3	6.1	8.5	9.7	7.2	11.0
Uttar Pradesh		6.4	7.0	5.2	6.6	7.2		6.2	6.9		6.3	10.3	7.7	28.3	11.0
West Bengal	5.6	6.7	8.3	5.9	5.6	7.3		6.5	7.6	8.0	8.1	8.3	14.2	8.0	8.0
All-India	7.9	6.8	8.3	7.1	6.7	7.8	6.9	6.9	7.4	7.8	7.6	8.8	8.7	8.3	9.2

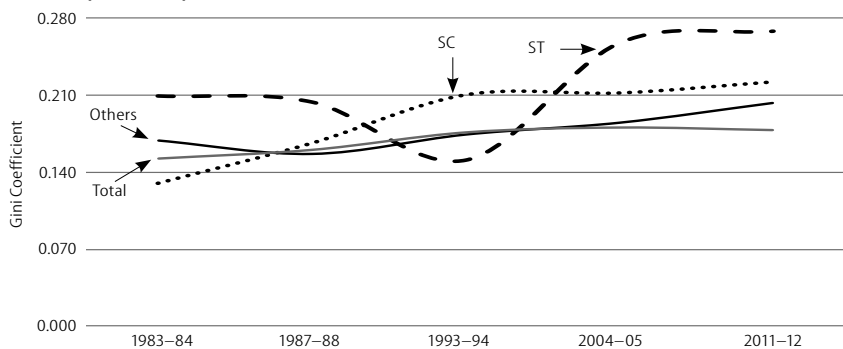
Economic Disparity Ratio = Ratio of the average MPCE of richest decile to the average MPCE of the poorest decile.  
Source: Authors’ computation based on NSSO data.

**Table 7: Inequality (Gini Coefficient) of Consumption Expenditure among Social Groups: By States—Urban, 1983–84 to 2011–12**

	1983–84			1987–88			1993–94			2004–05			2011–12		
	ST	SC	Others	ST	SC	Others	ST	SC	Others	ST	SC	Others	ST	SC	Others
Andhra Pradesh	0.272	0.280	0.287	0.364	0.318	0.338	0.219	0.188	0.347	0.332	0.346	0.312	0.327	0.293	0.314
Assam	0.222	0.251	0.336	0.281	0.282	0.344	0.263	0.233	0.291	0.172	0.264	0.412	0.198	0.362	0.408
Bihar	0.399	0.280	0.351	0.503	0.270	0.288	0.259	0.277	0.485	0.233	0.325	0.410	0.372	0.292	0.334
Gujarat	0.241	0.303	0.340	0.266	0.264	0.350	0.219	0.310	0.291	0.264	0.244	0.382	0.267	0.337	0.422
Haryana	0.241	0.244	0.337	0.305	0.257	0.315	0.260	0.286	0.345	0.253	0.260	0.371	0.295	0.279	0.338
Himachal Pradesh	0.240	0.256	0.290	0.358	0.285	0.308	0.308	0.261	0.290	0.359	0.280	0.381	0.359	0.314	0.436
Jammu and Kashmir	0.310	0.282	0.324	0.288	0.244	0.316	0.314	0.260	0.312	0.317	0.416	0.342	0.400	0.315	0.355
Karnataka	0.338	0.322	0.321	0.318	0.281	0.342	0.316	0.302	0.324	0.303	0.322	0.371	0.310	0.319	0.415
Kerala	0.242	0.345	0.290	0.252	0.220	0.278	0.258	0.263	0.303	0.280	0.322	0.382	0.361	0.280	0.327
Madhya Pradesh	0.244	0.299	0.337	0.259	0.311	0.343	0.248	0.252	0.326	0.317	0.312	0.342	0.347	0.365	0.347
Maharashtra	0.303	0.232	0.251	0.240	0.315	0.368	0.308	0.347	0.294	0.352	0.298	0.412	0.367	0.333	0.365
Odisha	0.301	0.298	0.341	0.320	0.239	0.359	0.316	0.328	0.337	0.305	0.264	0.246	0.344	0.317	0.378
Punjab	0.107	0.296	0.388	0.379	0.264	0.371	0.327	0.269	0.266	0.329	0.310	0.337	0.394	0.317	0.377
Rajasthan	0.295	0.230	0.359	0.316	0.258	0.280	0.337	0.266	0.322	0.411	0.288	0.369	0.304	0.334	0.294
Tamil Nadu	0.337	0.237	0.343	0.278	0.279	0.276	0.216	0.234	0.287	0.319	0.278	0.322	0.309	0.357	0.416
Uttar Pradesh	0.425	0.299	0.345	0.260	0.258	0.282	0.414	0.329	0.399	0.379	0.261	0.333	0.417	0.664	0.356
West Bengal	0.222	0.257	0.258	0.205	0.356	0.326	0.210	0.265	0.315	0.235	0.316	0.358	0.295	0.222	0.455
All-India	0.316	0.292	0.344	0.327	0.293	0.352	0.310	0.303	0.344	0.339	0.317	0.379	0.370	0.336	0.393

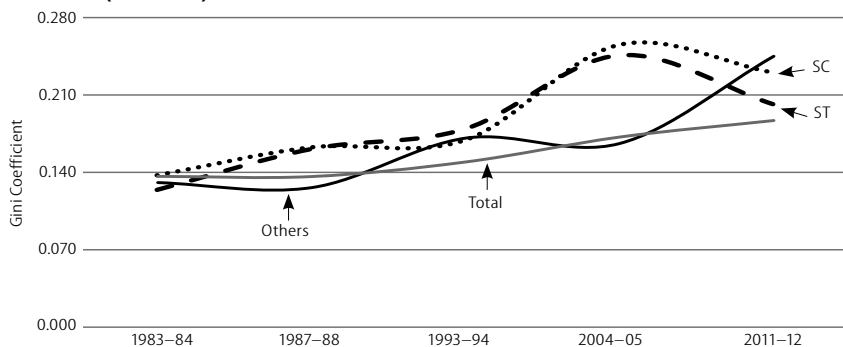
Source: Authors’ computation based on NSSO data.

**Figure 1: Interstate Inequality (Gini Coefficient) in Consumption Expenditure within Social Groups: All-India (1983–2012)**



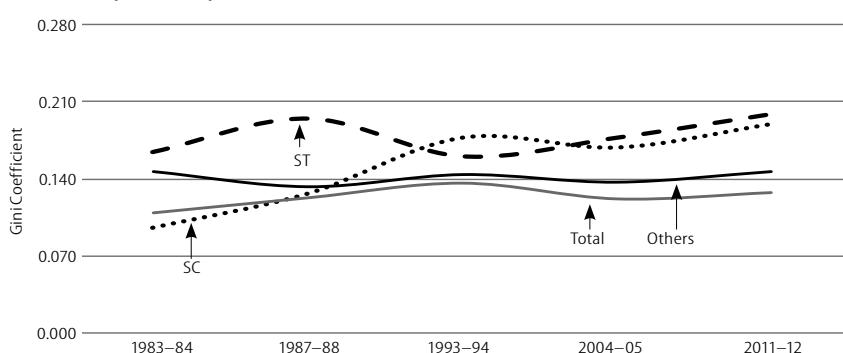
Source: Authors' computation based on NSSO data.

**Figure 2: Interstate Inequality (Gini Coefficient) in Consumption Expenditure within Social Groups: Rural India (1983–2012)**



Source: Authors' computation based on NSSO data.

**Figure 3: Interstate Inequality (Gini Coefficient) in Consumption Expenditure within Social Groups: Urban India (1983–2012)**



Source: Authors' computation based on NSSO data.

just see the post-economic reforms period, then interstate inequality has increased among all the social groups, but the increase is highest among the STs.

### 3 Conclusions

We, perhaps, for the first time use unit-level consumption expenditure data from five major (quinquennial) rounds—1983–84, 1987–88, 1993–94, 2004–05 and 2011–12—of the nationally representative National Consumer Expenditure surveys, conducted by the NSSO, to investigate the increasing economic disparities within the SCs and STs in India during the past three

decades. We have first performed the analysis at the national level and then for 17 major states of India.

Our results indicate that the economic disparity ratio has increased substantially for both SCs and STs in both rural and urban areas during the past 30-odd years. It has also increased for most of the 17 major states considered in this study. Also, the increase is much more in the case of SCs than STs. Further, the economic inequality, as measured by the Gini coefficient, has increased for both SCs and STs in urban India. In rural areas the economic inequality has increased

for the SCs, but has remained almost the same for the STs during the past three decades. However, if we just see the post-economic reforms period (1993–2012), there is unambiguous increase in inequality among both the SCs and STs, for both rural and urban areas. Moreover, the interstate inequality within the SCs and STs has also gone up enormously in both rural and urban areas.

In a sense, our results also support studies (Jayaraj and Subramanian 2013; Suryanarayana 2008; Vakulabharanam 2010; Weisskopf 2011) which claim that economic growth post the economic reforms in India has hardly been inclusive. Not only have the economic disparities between social groups (Jayaraj and Subramanian 2013) increased during this period, but the economic disparities within the social groups (based on caste) have gone up substantially.

Given the above, our study in a way supports the Government of Bihar's initiative of starting the "Bihar Mahadalit Vikas Mission" for a sub-caste socially and economically more backward within the SC category. We think it is time that other states of India consider this initiative of the Bihar government seriously and make separate provisions for the upliftment of those sub-castes within the SCs and STs that are socially and economically behind their peers within the scheduled groups.

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