Towards Financial Inclusion in India,
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‘Towards Financial Inclusion in India’ is
an analytical presentation of complex issues
involved with financial inclusion process and
social re-engineering. This book contains all
the valuable information from authentic
sources and helps in identifying the
knowledge and practice gaps that require
further research and study to prescribe
appropriate remedies in connection with
financial inclusion.

It appears that this book is one of the
best reference books on defining on attaining
hundred per cent Financial Inclusion, mapping
demand side requirements to attain the
inclusion process, gauging the innovations
available in the supply side and forecasting
the challenges to be faced in the future. Needless to add, this book is a must for every
micro-finance practitioner who accesses the
factor responsible for inclusion process in a
geographical region as well as vis-à-vis the
sector as a whole. The richness of the book
lies in its diversity of perspectives, sectorial
contents and breadth of issues covered as well
as the depth of analyses. It is a rare blending
of qualitative analysis with policy and action
relevance inputs for the micro-finance sector
in toto.

The book started with defining Financial
Inclusion process and ended with initiatives
to face the challenges of the future in the
micro-finance sector. In total, there are four
parts in the book containing 29 chapters in all,
each part redefining an important aspect of
the financial inclusion process. Some notable
points from some parts are illustrated below
reflecting the richness of the book.

For example in Part I, entitled as ‘Financial
Inclusion Analyised’, the authors have provided
practical suggestions for strengthening the
rural banking system which can be supported
in maximising its contribution to providing
financial services to low-income clients.
Similarly, in the last chapter of Part I on
‘Institutional Changes Required for Financial
Inclusion’, the authors critically analysed the
role of Regional Rural Banks and Cooperative
Credit Institutions and stated that consequent
to the amalgamation and reform process, these
institutions have lost touch with the original
objective of promoting these institutions as
low-cost instruments of financial inclusion for
the rural people.

In Part II on ‘Mapping Demand Side
Requirements’, the authors have aptly
suggested that small and marginal farmers
have very little access to institutional credit
and this needs to be addressed through
interventions and processes of innovative
schemes. In the fourteenth Chapter on
‘Inclusion Technique for Farmers’, the authors
have stated that there is a need to have
alternative sources of income by the farmers
like dairy, animal husbandry, fisheries, poultry
and so on, so that in case of natural calamities
in one sector, income from other sources is
available.

In Part III on ‘Supply Side Innovations,’
the authors have stressed that supply of raw
materials and marketing of products are major
problems for micro and small enterprises.
Hence, Joint Liability Groups can play a major
role and should be provided with adequate
working capital to run the activities as per the
laid down procedures. Further, it has been
highlighted that the main lesson from
formation of various groups and cooperatives
for capacity building of the poor, marginal and
small farmers cannot be simply seen as extension of routine departmental activity but experiences of already existed cooperatives should be utilised for organising marginal and small farmers into groups through a dedicated agency meant for their promotion and capacity building.

In Part IV on ‘Challenges for the Future’, the authors stated that the administrative issues and implementation issues are necessary to be addressed if innovations are to be grounded at the grassroots level for the benefit of the last mile client. The authors suggested that this has to be achieved at the earliest because ‘Financial Inclusion is not an option but a Compulsion’. In the twenty-ninth Chapter on ‘Initiatives for Financial Inclusion: The Road Map’, the authors recommended that notwithstanding the regulatory, operational and other aspects in focus, financial inclusion is a complex issue which cannot be solved single-handedly by any stakeholder in the system. Formal financial institutions such as banks, insurance companies, mutual funds, pension companies, and Central and state governments will have to join hands with small service providers to achieve total inclusion.

The book is a must reference for those who want to delve into the gamut of financial inclusion process as well as interested to know the status of various policy decisions taken by the Reserve Bank of India and NABARD in facilitating the growth and achievement of financial inclusion process in rural pockets of India. The authors should be highly appreciated as the book simplifies the most difficult and contentious issues in a most comprehensive manner and highlights the process in a most fascinating manner.

Dr. B.K. Swain


The book is of enormous thematic relevance to both policymakers and practitioners, more so in the present context wherein all efforts are made to reach the last man in the last deciles with developmental benefits. The author expresses his anguish that somewhere down the line a host of known reasons continue to hinder the desired impact and thus defeating the best of the universally acknowledged strategies adopted both in planning and implementation process. This volume is a collection of one such practitioner belonging to the prestigious administrative service and had the privilege of directly associating with organisation of economic planning process, implementation of development plans and role of administration in these processes.

The book is divided into five sections. The first section includes author’s association with UN institute of Training in Economic and Social Planning in the Middle East on administrative aspects of planning—Theory and Practice. Also, the section includes organisation of planning in France, India, Soviet Union and Yugoslavia.

Section two on Administration and Development Planning in India: Areas of Concern has ten chapters which includes a) Administrative Reforms and creation of small state 1947-2000; b) Area Development: Planning at District and Block levels; c) The Functioning and Duties of the Collector as a Leader; d) District Administration in Rajasthan in the 1960s: Reminiscences of a Former Collector; e) Training of Officers of the Indian Administrative Services; f) Panchayati Raj-The Promise and the Prospects; g) Decentralised District Planning under Economic Liberalisation; h) The Role of Technical Departments under Panchayati Raj; i) Regions for Planning and j) Changes in Political Culture between the 1950s and 1990s. Chapter Five has assumed great contemporary relevance in the light of the ongoing Telengana agitation and consequent demands for Statehood being