

Engaging Ethnic Enclaves as an Ensemble for Nation Building*

Lalit Kumar**

Planning Commission, Yojana Bhavan, New Delhi 110 001, India

Present Address: Centre for Development studies, University of Wales Swansea, Swansea, SAF2 8PP, Wales, UK

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ABSTRACT The strengths and weaknesses of the concept of ethnicity have been analyzed in the paper and a plea is made for careful and restricted use of the term on pragmatic grounds. Ethnic labels may be useful in some Western countries or in exceptional situations in plural societies, like rallying around a cluster of communities for 'schedulization' or for any other similar purpose in India. Otherwise ethnic group labels generally conceal more than they reveal, therefore a micro-vocabulary should be preferred by those who are working mostly at the micro and grassroots levels. Social scientists are urged to engage the emerging, so called, ethnic enclaves in the process of social cohesion and nation building.