

SOCIO-ECONOMIC CONDITIONS OF SCHEDULED CASTES IN HARYANA

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Abstract

Inequality in India has been the topic of debate in the development circles since independence. This debate on Indian inequality can be categorized 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 inequalities between caste groups i.e. between scheduled groups and non-scheduled groups. It is a well-known fact that members of the scheduled castes and scheduled tribes have suffered from severe discrimination- social exclusion in the case of scheduled castes and the physical exclusion in the case of scheduled tribes, since historical times. This paper deals with the socio-economic conditions of scheduled castes such as population size, sex ratio, literacy rate, unemployment rate, poverty and participation in MGNREGS in the state of Haryana. This study is purely based on secondary data.

Keywords: Inequality, Discrimination, Social exclusion, Physical exclusion.

Objectives

The central theme of the study is to evaluate the socio-economic conditions of scheduled castes in Haryana. Following are the main objectives of the study;

- To study the demographic composition of scheduled castes in Haryana.
- To study the literacy rate, sex ratio, poverty and unemployment among scheduled castes in Haryana.
- To examine the participation of scheduled castes in MGNREGS in Haryana.

Data Source

The present study is based on secondary data which has been collected from different published sources like Census reports, NSSO Reports, Human development reports, Statistical abstract of Haryana, Journal, Books and Newspapers etc.

Introduction

Inequality in India has been the topic of debate in the development circles since independence. This debate on Indian inequality can be categorized 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 inequalities between caste groups i.e. between scheduled groups and non-scheduled groups. It is a well-known fact that members of the scheduled castes and scheduled tribes have suffered from severe discrimination- social exclusion in the case of scheduled castes and the physical exclusion in the case of scheduled tribes, since historical times.

The area of this study is confined to Haryana state. There are 29 states in Indian union and Haryana is one of them. It falls in the north of India. It has Rajasthan in south, Uttar Pradesh and Delhi in the west. The capital of Haryana is Chandigarh, which is also the capital of Punjab. The state of Haryana came into existence on November 1, 1966 as a result of re-organization of the old Punjab state. It was formed as a linguistic state, on the pattern of other states in India (Ranga, 1994). The population of Haryana, was 2,53,53,081, out of this 51,13,615 (20.17 percent) persons belonged to scheduled castes. The scheduled caste population in Haryana constituted 2.5 percent of country’s total scheduled caste population. This scheduled caste population is contributed by 37 scheduled castes notified by the scheduled castes and scheduled tribes orders (Amendment) Act, 1976 (Census of India, 2011).

The analysis deals with the socio-economic conditions of scheduled castes such as population size, sex ratio, literacy rate, unemployment rate, poverty and participation in MGNREGS in the state of Haryana.

The table 1 shows that share of scheduled caste population was 18.89 percent in 1971, which increased to 19.75 percent in 1991 and further rose to 20.17 percent in 2011 in Haryana. The results clearly indicate that the proportion of scheduled caste population to total population has steadily increased in Haryana over the time period. About one-fifth population of Haryana belongs to the scheduled caste category but these marginalized people have low standard of living because of various socio-economic reasons as well as political reasons which requires the attention of policy makers. In the table 1, data related to population size of different social groups has been presented. The percentage increase in scheduled caste population was 30.0 percent in the decade 1971-1981 which increased to 32.0 percent in 1981-1991 but this rate has sharply declined to 25.8 percent during 1991-2001 and it was 25.0 percent in the decade of 2001-2011. Thus it is clear from the analysis that decadal growth rate of scheduled caste population has declined sharply during the last two decades because of various reasons such as increase in their literacy rate, awareness of family planning programmes etc.

Table 1: Population Size of Different Social Groups in Haryana (1971-2011)

Census Year	Total	Non-Scheduled Castes	Scheduled Castes	Percentage of Scheduled Castes to total population	Decadal Growth Rate
1971	10036808	8140881	1895927	18.89	
1981	12922618	10458606	2464012	19.06	30.0
1991	16463648	13212715	3250933	19.75	32.0
2001	21144564	17053454	4091110	19.35	25.8
2011	25351462	20237847	5113615	20.17	25.0

Source: Census of India, Various Issues.

Sex composition of the human population is one of the basic demographic characteristics, which is extremely vital for any meaningful demographic analysis. Changes in the sex composition largely reflect the underlying socio-economic and cultural patterns of a society in the different ways. Sex ratio defined here as the number of females per 1000 males in the population, is an important social indicator to measure the extent of prevailing equity between males and females in a society at a given point of time (Census of India, 2001). Less number of females in the state has become serious issue in the recent times. It is the one of the immense social problems of Haryana state.

Table 2 highlights the sex ratio and child sex ratio of scheduled castes in Haryana from 1971 to 2011. Overall sex ratio was 866 females per 1000 male in 1971 which increased to 870 in 1981 but it decreased from 865 in 1991 to 861 in 2001.

Table 2: Sex Ratio and Child Sex Ratio in Haryana (1971-2011)

Census Years	Sex Ratio		Child Sex Ratio	
	Total	Scheduled Castes	Total	Scheduled Castes
1971	866	870	N.A.	N.A.
1981	870	859	N.A.	N.A.
1991	865	860	879	917
2001	861	872	819	865
2011	879	887	834	876

Source: Census of India, Various Issues.

As per census 2011, overall sex ratio has been recorded 879 females per 1000 male whereas the sex ratio of scheduled caste was 887. The table clearly indicates that except for 1981 and 1991, sex ratio of scheduled castes was marginally higher than overall sex ratio in the state of Haryana. On the other hand, child sex ratio was also higher among scheduled castes as compared to overall child sex ratio of Haryana. In 1991, overall child sex ratio was 879 and it decreased to 819 and further it rose to 834 in 2011. Whereas child sex ratio of scheduled castes was 917 in 1991 and it decreased to 865 in 2001 but it rose to 876 in 2011. Table clearly indicate that child sex ratio of scheduled castes was higher than overall child sex ratio of Haryana. It is a general fact that despite being lower literacy among scheduled castes, sex ratio of scheduled caste is marginally better than overall sex ratio of Haryana because children are considered as source of income in these families. They are also less aware of family planning programmes and medical facilities. Therefore, sex ratio of scheduled castes is higher as compared to overall sex ratio in Haryana.

Rural urban distribution of population is presented in the table 3. The table clearly indicates that majority of the population of the state is living in the rural areas. The table shows that 82.33 percent of the total population was residing in the rural areas in 1971 which has decreased to 65.12 percent in 2011. The percentage increase in the urban population was 17.25 during 1971 to 2011. It is also a well-known fact that the scheduled castes are belonging to the poorest sections of the society.

They are mainly living in the rural areas due to their involvement in agricultural activities. The table clearly shows that majority of the scheduled caste population, i.e., 86.40 percent of the total scheduled caste population was residing in the rural areas in 1971 which has decreased to 72.80 percent in 2011. The percentage share of scheduled caste population

living in the urban areas is lower than the percentage share of total population living in the urban areas because of various reasons such as low level of literacy rate, lack of suitable employment opportunities, family bondage etc. It is clear from the table scheduled castes are less urbanized in Haryana.

Table 3: Rural-Urban Distribution of Population in Haryana (1971-2011)

Census Years	Percentage of Rural Population		Percentage of Urban population	
	Total Population	Scheduled Caste Population	Total Population	Scheduled Caste Population
1971	82.33	86.40	17.67	13.59
1981	78.12	84.93	21.88	15.07
1991	75.35	82.29	24.63	17.71
2001	71.00	78.49	29.00	21.51
2011	65.12	72.80	34.9	27.20

Source: Census of India, Various Issues.

Literacy rate is an important indicator of progress both for society as a whole in general and for individual communities in particular. In this context though there has been some improvement in the overall literacy rate in the post-independence period, but still, the gap in literacy rate among scheduled castes and non-scheduled castes, between rural and urban, and between male and female is very high. Table 4 presents the literacy rate among scheduled caste population in Haryana. The literacy rate among scheduled castes has increased from 12.60 percent in 1971 to 55.45 percent in 2001 and further it rose to 66.85 percent in 2011. But still 33.15 percent of scheduled caste population is deprived of this basic and essential need. Literacy rate among males and females also shows the significant difference. The literacy rate for males and females among scheduled castes was 20.88 and 3.09 percent in 1971 which increased to 75.92 and 56.64 percent in 2011 respectively.

On the other hand, overall literacy rate has increased from 26.89 percent in 1971 to 75.55 percent in 2011. Thus there is large gap between scheduled caste and others, males and females in the attainment of education. This is mainly due to low level of living, inadequate income and lack of educational opportunities for these poor households.

Table 4: Literacy Rate among Scheduled Caste Population in Haryana

(in percent)

Census Years	Total population			Scheduled Castes		
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
1971	37.29	14.89	26.89	20.88	03.09	12.60
1981	48.02	22.03	36.14	31.45	07.06	20.15
1991	69.10	40.47	55.85	52.06	24.15	39.22
2001	78.50	55.71	67.91	66.93	42.26	55.45

2011	84.05	65.94	75.55	75.92	56.64	66.85
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Source: Census of India, Various Issues.

The unemployment rate according to current daily status approach among different social groups in Haryana has been presented in table 5. Unemployment rate among scheduled castes in Haryana was 7.7 percent which was higher than other social groups. It clearly indicates that scheduled castes were more unemployed than other social groups.

Table 5: Unemployment Rate among Different Social Groups in Haryana in 2011-12
(in percent)

Social Groups	Rural Areas			Urban Areas			Total		
	Male	Female	Person	Male	Female	Person	Male	Female	Person
Scheduled Castes	8.4	6.5	8.0	5.7	10.7	6.3	7.8	7.0	7.7
Scheduled Tribes	-	-	-	1.8	58.2	14.2	0.6	15.2	4.6
Other Backward Classes	5.8	12.4	6.5	2.4	9.5	3.2	5.0	11.7	5.7
General	5.0	10.1	5.6	4.2	13.6	5.5	4.7	11.5	5.6
Total	6.4	8.5	6.7	4.1	12.8	5.3	5.7	9.6	6.3

Source: Report on Employment and Unemployment Survey 2011-12, Labour Bureau Chandigarh

Their condition in the rural areas was more vulnerable as unemployment rate stood at 8.0 percent whereas it was 6.3 percent in the urban areas. In urban areas, the unemployment rate was lower both for males and females among scheduled castes than their counterparts in the rural areas. The overall unemployment rate in Haryana was 6.3 percent whereas it was 7.7 percent for the scheduled castes. The unemployment rate of scheduled castes is higher than other social groups except scheduled tribes because of their higher concentration in the rural areas and lack of employment opportunities in the rural areas. Even those who have migrated to urban areas have been unable to get jobs in industries due to low level of literacy, poor skills and lack of technical education.

Poverty incidence among the different social groups in Haryana is given in the table 6. This table reveals that the poverty incidence among all groups and scheduled castes was 36.0 and 58.8 percent in 1993-94 respectively whereas it has declined to 19.9 and 37.8 percent in 2009-10 and further it declined to 11.2 and 24.1 percent in 2011-12 respectively. The poverty incidence was higher among the rural households as compared to the urban households for all groups except for year 2009-10. Poverty incidence among scheduled caste was higher in the rural areas till year 2004-05 after that this trend reversed and poverty incidence for scheduled caste in the urban areas became higher as compared to the rural areas.

Table 6: Extent of Poverty among Different Social Groups in Haryana (1993-1994 to 2011-12)

(in percent)

Years	Rural Areas	Urban Areas	Total
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	All groups	Scheduled castes	All groups	Scheduled castes	All groups	Scheduled castes
1993-94	40.2	62.7	24.2	41.8	36.0	58.8
2004-05	24.8	47.5	22.4	46.9	24.2	47.4
2009-10	18.6	33.6	23.0	48.3	19.9	37.8
2011-12	11.6	23.6	10.3	25.9	11.2	24.1

Arvind Panagariya, Poverty by Social, Religious and Economic groups in India and its largest states 1993-94 to 2011-12, working paper no. 2013-02.

The table further shows that over the period of time poverty ratio was higher among scheduled castes. Therefore, scheduled castes are worst sufferer among all groups in the case of poverty. They have been unable to break this vicious circle of poverty. Poverty affects their education, health as well as personality development. It further affects their income because due to lack of skills, they are not able to get gainful employment in the various sectors of the economy.

To provide 100 days wage employment to every rural household in a year to enhance livelihood security in rural areas, the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme was implemented in the Haryana w.e.f. 1st April, 2008. One third of the jobs are reserved for the women. Minimum wages of Rs. 251 per person day were being paid to the workers engaged under the scheme w.e.f. 1st April, 2015, which was the highest in the country. This programme was converged with schemes of other line departments like forests, Agriculture, Irrigation, School Education, Women & Child, Development & Panchayats, Fisheries, Public Health and Engineering, Marketing Board and PWD etc. to ensure creation of meaningful assets in the villages (Government of Haryana, 2016)

Table: 7: Participation of Different Social Groups in MGNREGS in Haryana

Financial Years	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16
Total person days (in lakhs)	128.87	117.88	61.65	48.48
Scheduled castes person days % as of total person days	50.71	48.48	43.8	49.66
Average days of employment provided per household	43.81	36.28	28.29	28.73
Average person days for scheduled caste households	42.29	36.64	26.73	26.47

% of scheduled caste worked	53.08	48.95	46.6	52.62
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Source: www.mgnrega.nic.in

Table 7 deals with the total person-days generated for different social groups under MGNREGS in Haryana during 2012-13 to 2015-2016. This table reveals that in 2012-13, total person days generated were 128.87 lakh in the financial year 2012-13 which decreased to 117.88 lakh in 2013-14. In 2014-15 and 2015-16 the person days generated further decreased to 61.65 lakh and 48.48 lakh respectively. The percentage of person days generated to scheduled castes to total person days was 50.71 percent in 2012-13 but it decreased to 43.8 percent in 2014-15 and further it increased to 49.66 percent in 2015-16. In 2012-13, average days of employment provided per household was 43.81 but it decreased to 36.28 in 2013-14 and further decreased to 28.76 in 2015-16. Average person days generated for scheduled caste households in MGNREGS was estimated 42.49 in 2012-13 and decreased to 26.73 and in 2014-15 and 26.46 in 2015-16. The percentage of scheduled castes worked in MGNREGS was estimated 53.08 in 2012-13 and it decreased to 46.6 percent in 2014-15 but it rose to 52.62 in 2015-16. In the recent times, overall person days generated has decreased due to various reasons mainly delayed payments of wages. The performance of MGNREGS depends on its implementation and employment demanded by people. The scheduled caste participation in MGNREGS has decreased due to poor implementation and delayed payment of wages in Haryana. Delayed payment of wage under MGNREGS is matter of debate at national and state level. Because majority of scheduled castes are casual workers and they don't have permanent source of income. Therefore, they are moving to other works where they are being paid instantly.

CONCLUSIONS AND POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

The state analysis indicates that the percentage share of scheduled caste population to total population has steadily increased in the Haryana over the time period. About one-fifth population of state belongs to the scheduled caste category but these marginalized people have low standard of living because of various socio-economic reasons. Sex ratio and child sex ratio of scheduled castes are higher than overall sex ratio of Haryana. It is a general fact that despite being lower literacy among scheduled castes, sex ratio of scheduled caste is always better than overall sex ratio of Haryana because children are considered as source of income in these families. They are also less aware of family planning programmes and medical facilities due to low level of education. The percentage share of scheduled caste population living in the urban areas is lower than total population areas because of various reasons such as low level of literacy rate, lack of suitable employment opportunities, family bondage etc. They are mainly living in the rural areas due to their involvement in agriculture and allied activities.

The literacy rate among scheduled castes has increased from 12.60 percent in 1971 to 66.85 percent in 2011. But still around 33 percent of scheduled castes are deprived of this basic and essential need. On the other hand, overall literacy rate of the state has increased from 26.89 percent in 1971 to 75.55 percent in 2011. The literacy rate among males and females also shows the significant gap due to male dominant society and orthodox mentality. Thus there is large gap between scheduled caste and non-scheduled caste and male and female in the attainment of education. This is mainly due to low level of living, income and lack of educational opportunities for these poor households. The overall unemployment rate in Haryana was 6.3 percent whereas it was 7.7 percent for the scheduled castes in 2011-12.

The unemployment rate of scheduled castes is higher than other social groups except scheduled tribes. The higher concentration of scheduled castes in the rural areas and lack of employment opportunities in the rural areas are factors behind the high unemployment rate among scheduled castes. Even those who have migrated to urban areas have been unable to get jobs in industries due to low level of literacy, poor skills and lack of technical education.

In the case of poverty, the incidence of poverty among scheduled caste was higher in rural areas till year 2004-05 after that this trend reversed and poverty incidence for scheduled caste in the urban areas became higher as compared to the rural areas. The study reveals that poverty among scheduled castes has been higher than other sections of the society in Haryana. They have been unable to break this vicious circle of poverty. Poverty affects their education, health facilities as well as personality development. It further affects their income because due to lack of skills, they are unable to get gainful employment.

The performance of MGNREGS depends on its implementation and employment demanded by people. The scheduled caste participation in MGNREGS has decreased due to poor implementation and delayed payment of wages in Haryana. Delayed payment of wage under MGNREGS is a matter of debate at national as well as at state level. Because majority of scheduled castes are casual workers and they don't have permanent source of income. Therefore, they are moving to other works where they are being paid instantly.

On the basis of the result of the present study, following measures may be suggested for improving the socio-economic conditions of scheduled castes in Haryana:

The results of the study reveal that the percentage of illiteracy is highest among scheduled castes as compared to non-scheduled castes in Haryana because of low level of income, irregular sources of income, ignorance of parents, social environment etc.. As per 2011 census, about 33 per cent of scheduled caste population is illiterate. Therefore appropriate measures should be taken by government to improve literacy rate of scheduled caste in Haryana.

The study further reveals that poverty is higher among scheduled castes than other sections of the society in Haryana. They have been unable to break this vicious circle of poverty. Poverty affects their education, health as well as personality development. It further affects their income because due to lack of skills, they are not able to get gainful employment. Thus, anti-poverty programmers mainly MGNREGS should be implemented properly for generating gainful employment in general and special component plan for scheduled castes should be implements with true spirit in particular.

In the case of MGNREGS, scheduled castes participation has been decreasing in the recent times. Delayed payment of wages is the main factor working behind decreasing person days. Delaying payment of wages is a matter of debate at national as well as at state level. Distressed workers are moving towards other jobs because most of scheduled castes are casual workers and they don't have permanent source of income. Direct benefit transfer is a good initiative to transfer payments to real workers directly but mere transfer is not important, it is the timely transfer of wages which is much required in present scenario.

The welfare schemes initiated by government for the scheduled castes need to be implemented in their true spirit with enthusiasm. Increase in the plan allocation and enlarging the scope of rural specific schemes to cover large proportion of scheduled caste population can go a long way in improving the social and economic conditions of scheduled castes in Haryana.

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