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Dr. Sunil Babu
Associate Professor,
Department of Economics,
Rajdhani College, New Delhi,
India

A study of poverty amongst the poor in Haryana

Dr. Sunil Babu

Abstract

Haryana emerged as a separate state with initially seven districts on first of November 1966. It was under the partition plan of the then east of Punjab. The partition was based on the linguistic demographics and was held after the recommendations of Sardar Hukam Singh, the then speaker of Lok Sabha parliamentary committee. Haryana state is in the northern region of India and is the Seventeenth most populous state of the country. It bordered with Punjab and Himachal Pradesh to the north and Rajasthan to the west and south. Haryana is also surrounded by Delhi on three sides, forming the northern, western and southern border Delhi. The structural composition of Haryana state has undergone significant changes since its formation in 1966. In agricultural sector it still continues to occupy a significant position, although, the share of this sector in the gross state domestic product is continuously declining.

Keywords: Poverty in Haryana, growth rate, economic growth of Haryana, primary data, scheduled castes, secondary data, welfare schemes

Introduction

In this research, specific problems of scheduled castes, based on questionnaire (see Appendix I), in Haryana, have been examined to understand the nature and extent of poverty in this region. Primary data have been collected (In the year 2012) on the basis of field work done by the present researcher in three districts, six villages and 240 households selected with the help of stratified random technique. The results derived on the basis of the analysis of primary data are significantly different as compared to the results of other studies.

Need for Primary Data

In the present research work, both primary and secondary data are used. Primary data are collected by the researcher while secondary data are collected from other sources. The major problem in using the secondary data is that it does not answer the specific research questions or contain specific information that the present researcher would like to have. Moreover, the secondary data may not have been collected in the geographic region desired, in the years desired, or the specific population that the researcher is interested in the present study. Another major disadvantage in the use of secondary data is that the researcher does not know exactly how the data collection process was done. Therefore, researcher has no information about how seriously the data are affected by problems such as, low response rate or respondent misunderstanding of a specific survey questions.

Moreover, secondary data are not always reliable, therefore, primary data in the present research work have been collected to understand the ground realities. With the help of primary data, we can focus, both on, qualitative and quantities issues of the problems of poverty among scheduled castes in Haryana. Primary data, in the present research work, are also required to control the research design and to fit the needs of people of this category. In the present study, the geographical regions and the time period as such are taken for which the availability of secondary data are at best limited. Therefore, primary data have been used for the study of poverty among scheduled castes in Haryana to go through their specific problems and aspects of poverty.

Field Work Technique and Difficulties

A field work was carried out to collect primary data from six villages of three districts (Gurgaon, Rewari and Fatehabad) of Haryana. Rewari is the district with the highest literacy rate while Fatehabad has the lowest literacy rate and it is thickly populated with scheduled caste population and also very far from the National Capital Region (NCR) of Delhi and another district selected was Gurgaon which is very close to NCR and has least scheduled caste population (census 2001) ^[8] in Haryana.

Corresponding Author:
Dr. Sunil Babu
Associate Professor,
Department of Economics,
Rajdhani College, New Delhi,
India

From these three districts, six villages were selected picking two villages from each of these districts. It was also kept in mind that out of the two villages, one village was close to the district headquarter and another was far from it so that an average can be achieved. During the survey, a total of 240 households were interviewed out of which 120 belong to scheduled castes and remaining 120 belonged to non-scheduled castes. All of the households were randomly selected by way of lottery (Voters list). Voters lists were collected from Panchayat offices/namberdar/sarpanch, etc. The scheduled castes and non-scheduled castes were identified with the help of the villagers. In case of non-availability of a selected household, the next household was interviewed.

Poverty Criteria

Poverty is generally measured with the help of calories intake or per capita consumption expenditure. However, in the present research study, neither of these measuring techniques of poverty are used. It is so because calories intake has its own limitations. Calories requirements differ from person to person and from region to region and from time to time. The problem with per capita consumption expenditure technique is that households, generally, do not keep expenditure data. Hence, it is difficult to collect primary data on the basis of this measuring rod of poverty. Under these circumstances, income per household has been taken as the criteria to measure poverty among scheduled castes.

In the present research work, all the households have been divided into three groups based on their monthly income in the questionnaire. Households earning less than Rs. 5000 per month are put in to the low income group and considered below the poverty line. Those households whose income is more than Rs. 5000 per month, are categorized as High Income Group and are considered above the poverty line. Since, the average family size is 6.2 for Low Income Group for Scheduled Castes, the per capita earning, on the basis of this income, comes to be less than Rs. 27 per day. Hence, all those households are considered as the people below the poverty line.

Scheduled castes in Haryana

Scheduled castes are disadvantaged people that are given recognition in the constitution of India. They were known as a depressed class during British rule in India. After independence, they were given the provision of reservation policy which has become an integral part of the constitution through the efforts of Dr. Bhimrao Ambedkar, father of modern India and architect of Constitution of India. The Constitution of India lays down general principles for the policy of affirmative action for scheduled castes. In order to improve the conditions of scheduled castes the Constitution of India provides a framework with a three pronged strategy.

1. Protective arrangements-Such measures as are required to enforce equality, to provide punitive measure for transgressions, and to eliminate established practices that perpetuate inequality. Consequently, a number of large work enacted including the untouchability Practices Act 1955, scheduled castes and scheduled tribes (prevention of Atrocities) Act, 1989, the employment of manual squanders and construction of dry latrines (Prohibition) Act, 1993. All such Acts have

helped the scheduled castes to get a respectable status in society.

2. Affirmative action-It provides positive preferential treatment in the allotment of jobs and access to higher education, as a means to accelerate the integration of scheduled caste people with mainstream society.
3. Development-It provides for resources and benefits to bridge the wide gap in social and economic conditions between the scheduled castes and other communities. Consequently, various schemes and welfare programs have been initiated by the central and state governments to provide economic incentives to scheduled castes.

In order to effectively implement, various safeguards provided by Constitution of India and other legislations, Article 338 and 338a of the Constitution of India provides for two statutory commissions also, namely, National Commission for Scheduled Castes and National Commission for scheduled castes. Initially, there was a single member commissioner for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes which was appointed on November 18, 1950 by the President of India. He was also known as a special officer who had to investigate the implementation of major programs intended to safeguard the interests of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes and to report to the President of India about the same. The President was required to see that such reports are placed on the table of each house of Parliament of India.

Single member commissioner was replaced by a multiple member commission in the year 1978 with the 46th amendment in the Constitution of India. It remained a national level advisory body to advise the government of India on broad policy issues and levels of development of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes. The statutory National Commission for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes came into being after the 65th amendment of the Constitution in 1965 and the first commission was constituted on March 12, 1992 with Shri Ramdhan as its chairman. Consequent upon the 89th Amendment Act of Constitution in 2003, the National Commission for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes was replaced by the National Commission for Scheduled Castes and the National Commission for Scheduled Tribes. The Rules of the National commission for Scheduled Castes were notified on February 2004 and National Commission for Scheduled Tribes was constituted under the chairmanship of Shri Suraj Bhan. The term of this commission is for three years. The main objective of this commission is not only to see the proper implementation of government schemes and programs but also to observe that the scheduled castes get all the safeguards provided in the Constitution of India. These safeguards are related to social, economic, educational, political and service aspects of their life. Social safeguards in the Constitution of India are provided in the Article 17, 23, 24 and 25 (2b). These safeguards are related to the abolition of untouchability, protection of civil rights and prevention of atrocities against scheduled castes.

Prohibition of traffic in human beings and forced labor has been provided as a punishable offence under this law. No child under the age of 14 year can be employed as a worker in any factory or mine and cannot be engaged in any hazardous employment moreover, it has also been provided under the law that Hindu religious institutions of the public character should be open to all classes and sections of Hindu society.

Economic safeguards are provided under Article 23, 24 and 46. According to the provisions under these Articles, the state government should promote with special care the educational and economic interests of weaker sections of the society in general and scheduled castes and scheduled tribes in particular. This law protects them from social injustice and all forms of exploitation. The cultural and educational safeguards are provided under the Article 15 (4), which empower the State to make special provisions for the advancement of any socially and educationally backward classes of citizens and for scheduled castes. This Act also enables the State to reserve seats for scheduled castes in educational institutions and professional courses.

The political safeguards are provided in the form of reservation of seats in the local bodies, legislative assemblies and in parliament. The seats are reserved for scheduled castes in every Panchayat under Article 243 D. The seats for scheduled castes in Panchayat area have to be in proportion to the total population of that area. Not less than 1/3 of the total number of seats reserved shall be reserved for women belonging to scheduled castes. The seats for scheduled castes are also reserved in Municipal areas under Article 243 T. In this case also not less than 1/3 of total number of seats reserved shall be reserved for women belonging to scheduled castes. The reservation of seats for scheduled castes in legislative Assemblies and houses of Parliament are also reserved under Article 330, 332 and 334. A number of seats reserved will be in the same proportion to the total number of seats in the assembly as the population of scheduled castes in the state.

Service safeguards are contained in Articles 16 (4), 16 (4A) and 335. The parliament under the 85 Amendment Acts 2001 also amended the provisions contained in the Article 16 (4A). Accordingly the amendment provided that scheduled castes should be promoted earlier than their counterpart in general category by virtue of reservation policy and thereby he will be senior to general category in the promoting post or scale.

Taking all the safeguards into consideration, the overall goal of state and central government has been to provide economic uplift to the scheduled castes and to have generalized improvement in agricultural production, sanitation, health care, schooling and other income generation schemes. However, the lack of resources, poor implementation of programs and schemes and capability deprivation have gone against the socio-economic and political interests of scheduled castes. A majority of the members of the scheduled castes have no access to basic resources of survival and growth and still remains in a deprived state of mind. Therefore, one of the objectives of the present research study is also to observe the extent to which scheduled castes are protected under these safeguards and what can further be done to improve their socio-economic conditions.

State of Haryana

Haryana, despite high growth rate, has highest disparity between social groups (Despande.2001) ^[59]. The fruits of growth and "Green Revolution" have not reached to the lower strata of society (Despande, 2001) ^[59]. The economic growth of a State does not necessarily reach all the sections of the society because of the exploitation of some by others. Louis (2003) ^[58] has tried to examine the socio-economic profile of dalits in India. In his observation he has said that there is no marked improvement in the social condition of

scheduled castes even after five decades of reservation policy.

Haryana emerged as a separate state with initially seven districts on first of November 1966. It was under the partition plan of the then east of Punjab. The partition was based on the linguistic demographics and was held after the recommendations of Sardar Hukam Singh, the then speaker of Lok Sabha parliamentary committee. Haryana state is in the northern region of India and is the seventeenth most populous state of the country. It bordered with Punjab and Himachal Pradesh to the north and Rajasthan to the west and south. Haryana is also surrounded by Delhi on three sides, forming the northern, western and southern border Delhi. Consequently, a large area of Haryana is included in the National Capital Region (NCR). The initial seven districts of Haryana are Ambala with present area of 1574 km square and population of 1136784, Gurgaon with area 1253 km square with population of 1514085, Hisar with area 3983 km square and population of 1742815, Jind with area of 2702 km square and population of 1332042, Karnal with area of 2520 km square and population of 1506323, Mahendergarh with area of 1859 and population of 921680 and Rohtak with present area 1745 km square and population 1058683 as per census of 2011. The other 14 districts were carved from the initial seven districts from time to time. Bhiwani and Sonapat came into existence in 1972, Kurukshetra in 1973, Sirsa in 1975, Faridabad in 1979, Kaithal, Panipat, Rewari and Yamunanagar in 1989, Panchkula in 1995, Fatehabad and Jhajjar in 1997, Mewat in 2005 and Palwal in 2008 came into existence as separate districts (Government of Haryana, Statistical Abstract Haryana, 2011).

Thus, there are four divisions, 21 districts, 54 sub-divisions, 74 tehsils, 44 sub-tehsils, 119 blocks, 106 towns and 6955 villages in Haryana. The total geographical area is 0.4 lakh square km. The average yield of wheat is 42.13 quintal (Qttl) per hectare and that of rice is 30.08 quintal per hectare. Thus Haryana is a granary in India and has a good agricultural productivity. Population density is 478 persons per square km. Birth rate and death rate are 23 and 6.9 per thousand. The state of Haryana has a faster economic growth rate as it was recorded at 9.9 percent during the year 2009-2010. Although, the growth rate in primary sector was only 0.7 percent, the growth rate in secondary sector was 10.3 percent and in the tertiary sector it was 12.9 percent for the same year.

The structural composition of Haryana state has undergone significant changes since its formation in 1966. In agricultural sector it still continues to occupy a significant position, although, the share of this sector in the gross state domestic product is continuously declining. The predominance of agriculture is also responsible for instability in the growth rate due to fluctuations in agricultural production. There is a substantial loss in crop production due to natural calamities and fluctuations. Moreover, rapidly increasing share of tertiary sector is also responsible for the decline in the share of agriculture sector. Tertiary sector includes services like trade, transport, banking, education, health and public administration etc. The share of this sector to Gross State Domestic Product (GSDP) has increased from 16.3 percent during 2004-05 to 20.5 percent during 2009-10 at constant prices. Haryana has remained a pioneer state in carrying out fiscal reforms. It experienced revenue deficit up to 2004-2005. However, the revenue deficit of Haryana was reduced from 3.5 percent in 1998-99 to 0.28

percent in 2004-05 in terms of the percentage of GSDP. Since then Haryana became a revenue surplus state till 2007-2008. But due to the impact of world recession and revision of pay/pension, Haryana again became a revenue deficit state. However, the notable feature of financial management of Haryana is that it has not availed any overdraft facility from RBI since June 2002. (Government of Haryana, Economic Survey of Haryana 2011, Department of Economic and Statistical Analysis, Haryana Yojana Bhawan, Panchkula, 2011, pp.1-7.)

Welfare Schemes for Scheduled Castes in Haryana

Haryana is a welfare oriented state. Government has made efforts to eliminate poverty. A scheme known as Swarna Jayanti Gram Swarajgar Yojana was implemented to generate employment opportunities in rural areas. This program includes all the aspects of self-employment including the organization of poor into Self Help Group, training, technology, marketing, infrastructure etc. Under this scheme 53 percent of scheduled castes beneficiaries and 84 percent of women beneficiaries has been covered. Another, significant program which has been implemented is the Mahatma Gandhi Rural Employment Guarantee Act. It has been extended to the entire state of Haryana w.e.f first of April, 2008. The main objective of the scheme is to enhance livelihood security in rural areas by providing at least 100 days of guaranteed wage employment in a financial year. The minimum wage in Haryana under this scheme has been declared at Rs.179 per day w.e.f January 1, 2011. And this is the highest wage paid by any state government in the country under this scheme. Besides, these programs, Haryana government has implemented Indra Awas Yojana to help in the construction of houses for the members of scheduled castes as well as for rural people below poverty line. Under, the program of Backward Regions Grant Fund, Mahendergarh and Sirsa districts have been covered and public utility works are completed by the government with the help of central finance assistance. In order to control draught and dissert conditions, the Integrated Wasteland Development Programs and Dessert Development Programs have been implemented to control this spread of desert and to increase the area of arable land. The Swarna Jayanti Shahri Rojgar Yojana, which was introduced by central government, is funded in the ratio of 75:25 by the Government of India and Haryana government. Under this scheme, the amount of subsidy is paid up to rupees 50 thousand per individuals and 3 lakhs rupees for urban women belonging to Self Help Group.

Conclusion

For the welfare of scheduled castes, Haryana government has implemented a number of schemes for their socio-economic and educational upliftment. In this respect Dr. Ambedkar Medhavi Chhatra Yojana was introduced in 2005-06, under which an incentive is given for meritorious students during their graduation and post-graduation classes. Haryana government has implemented a number of schemes applicable for public as general and scheduled castes as particular so that they may be uplifted financially and the level of poverty may be reduced. Central government also introduced Scheduled Caste Sub Plans for the welfare of scheduled castes in the Sixth Five Year Plan for channelizing these categories of people, their due share of plan benefits and outlays. Haryana government also implemented these plans for the benefits of scheduled

castes. Although, this sub plan is in place for more than 20 years, yet 3/4 of the SCs live in rural areas, where the main source of livelihood is either farming, wage labour some kind of non-farm business. Only 16 percent of scheduled castes households cultivate land as own cultivators in comparison to 41 percent non-scheduled caste households. Moreover, only 12 percent of the scheduled castes have some kind of business and among them also 28 percent rural households have got some access to capital assets as compared to 56 percent non-SC households in India (GOI 2006) [9].

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