

UNDERSTANDING SOCIO- ECONOMIC CONDITIONS OF RURAL HOUSEHOLDS

*Mukesh Kumar Pandey**
and
*Amit Bhushan Dwivedi***

ABSTRACT

Reflections of Indian economy expose paradoxical nature of Indian democracy. Rapid and steady growth with adverse socio-economic conditions has become an important attribute of Indian economy. A review of recently released Socio-Economic and Caste Census 2011 (SECC 2011) presents harsh realities of socio-economic conditions of the rural households. With an aim to understand socio-economic conditions of Empowered Actions Group of States (EAGS), this article, using SECC 2011, attempts to examine variations among States on the basis of income slab, income source and irrigated land ownership. Results suggest that a large number of EAGS households are engaged in subsistence work like manual casual labour and cultivation. SC households of rural India and particularly Bihar among EAG States are major social group relying greatly on subsistence wage labour. Severe lack of irrigated land ownership among SC/ST households leads them to engage in subsistence work and result is low income and social exclusion. Significance of SECC 2011 lies in the fact that it has reminded and reproduced an opportunity to rethink development strategies to ensure social justice in the country.

* Assistant Professor, Department of Economics, Government College, Ramanujganj- 497220, Dist -Balrampur, Chhattisgarh. E-mail : mpandey103206@gmail.com

** Doctoral Student, Govind Ballabh Pant Social Science Institute, Allahabad, Jubi - 211019, Uttar Pradesh

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Introduction

In post-reform period, the grand success of Indian economy is well-known. The country is now a more than two-trillion-dollar economy (World Bank 2015). Out of last 12 years, 8 years have seen more than 7 per cent gross national income growth rate (Ministry of Finance 2015). Globally, India is now ranked third in terms of Gross Domestic Product (GDP) calculated with purchasing power parity. Increasing share of foreign trade in GDP shows greater connectivity and openness of the Indian economy with rest of the world. Forecasts for years coming ahead show India will surge past China and capture the position of highest performer in terms of economic growth. Therefore, in the context of economic performance, Indian economy appears progressive. Nonetheless, socio-economic conditions of certain sections of Indian society reveal harsh reality of Indian economy as most of the people fail to enjoy the benefits of good economic performance of the country. A large part of the population, to begin with, has low purchasing power, poor access to pucca walls and roof, lack of ownership of irrigated land, inadequate transport facility, and low ability for employment in government or private organisations. These adverse socio-economic conditions are more prominent in rural India, especially among scheduled castes (SCs) and scheduled tribes (STs). For example, around 30.5 per cent of the rural population and 29.5 per cent of the total population were below poverty line in 2011-12 (Planning Commission 2014). Around 78 per cent of rural females and

56 per cent of rural males are either illiterate or have been educated up to the primary level. Only about 5 per cent of rural females and 13 per cent of rural males have attained higher secondary education and above (IGIDR 2015). Further, the analysis of 2001 and 2011 population census data shows that the benefits of development have gone most to the non-SCs and STs. As compared to other social groups, living conditions and asset ownership for SCs/STs is lowest in EAG¹ States. The gap between SCs/STs and other households has increased for all socio-economic indicators (Bhagat 2013).

These reflections of socio-economic conditions of rural poor expose paradoxical nature of Indian democracy. While investigating this paradox, it is said that between 1980 and 2004, the highest priorities have been given to middle class and corporate sector in the government policies while poor and rural households have been given second priority (Maiorano 2014). Besides, several studies have found that development programmes do not reach the targeted households, especially the ones that are economically and socially deprived, because of huge Exclusion and Inclusion Errors (Mahamalik and Sahu 2011). This means either the methodology to enumerate socio-economic conditions, applied in different round of surveys conducted by different government agencies, was not comprehensive or widespread corruption in selecting genuine beneficiaries of government subsidies led to exclusion and inclusion errors. Putting poor in

non-poor category is exclusion error, while putting non-poor in poor category is inclusion error. Estimates of working group of Planning Commission 1962 to Rangarajan Committee 2014, all failed to achieve consensus on actual number of poor in India because of inappropriate methodology and indicators adopted by them. Rather than focusing on socio-economic conditions of individuals or households, poverty rates are calculated on the basis of income/expenditure in our country. Centrality of multi-dimensional poverty based on socio-economic parameters makes income/expenditure poverty irrelevant. Therefore, it is strongly advocated to incorporate qualitative and quantitative variables both in the study of socio-economic conditions of poor in the country (Radhakrishna et.al. 2010).

Mitigating these errors was an important objective of SECC² 2011. Though other government data sources including Population Census, National Sample Survey (NSS), National Family Health Surveys (NFHS), Survey of Below Poverty Line (BPL) Households, and estimates of Planning Commission also provide national level database to expose socio-economic conditions of deprived and poor households, inclusion of SECC 2011 can make estimates more robust. Therefore, it is imperative to study the socio-economic conditions of rural households through the lense of latest socio-economic and caste census data 2011.

In this context, present article aims to critically examine and analyse summary data

about rural household profile, household income slab, and main source of income among different social groups of EAG States. This article also tries to explore linkages between different parameters of deprivation. The States included in EAGS are Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Madhya Pradesh, Odisha, Rajasthan, Jharkhand, Chhattisgarh and Uttarakhand. According to census 2011, these States constitute 45.9 per cent population of the country. They are at the bottom of the list of human development index (HDI) (Planning Commission 2011). Because of widespread economic and social backwardness, these States have been assigned highest priority for infrastructure development--economic and social. This priority status makes EAG States suitable for the study and analysis.

In some way, this study will provide an insight about the impact of recent better growth and good governance of EAG States on its rural households. Bihar, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan and Uttarakhand have registered impressive growth rate in terms of Net State Domestic Product (NSDP) in past several years, while, Chhattisgarh has been greatly admired for good governance and ensuring best PDS system in the country amidst serious naxal problem. This is also worthwhile to study the living conditions of rural ST households of Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, Odisha and Jharkhand because these four States along with Chhattisgarh have a major part of their households as ST households. And last but not least, Uttar Pradesh, a revenue surplus State, becomes obvious part of any study because it

directly affects the overall performance of the country.

Methodology

Study uses the recently available data of Socio-Economic and Caste Census, 2011. SECC 2011 was conducted in all the 640 districts of the country in 2011, 2012 and 2013. Around 24.4 crore households in 24 lakh enumeration blocks were covered. Out of total enumerated households, 17.9 crore were rural accounting for 73.4 per cent of the sample. SECC 2011 is supposed to provide comprehensive data for both rural and urban India. However, data are available at present for rural India only. Unlike census data, the SECC 2011 data are a revealed data--by the household to the enumerator. Like census, enumerators have visited door-to-door to every household of the country with structured questionnaires. In SECC 2011, care has been taken to include questions easy to answer and reduce the drawbacks of previous BPL censuses (Alkire and Seth 2013). Objective of this survey is to prepare comprehensive dataset on poverty and deprivations using socio-economic parameters such as income, asset ownership, housing status and material used, land ownership, transport facilities, etc., instead of presenting poverty rates in terms of income/expenditure poverty. This database constitutes summary data of different social groups categorised into overall households, SC households, ST households, disabled member households, female headed households and other households³. This summary data provide

information about monthly income slab, main source of income, different types of asset ownership and land ownership of rural households, etc. Monthly income has been divided into three slabs. Same income slabs, source of income, land and assets ownership data are available for all social groups. Further, State-wise, zone-wise and category-wise data are also available under SECC 2011. One important database which has a larger policy implication for Central/State governments is the number of automatically excluded and included households. There are 14 parameters⁴ for automatic exclusion of households. Falling into any of the 14 parameters will lead to automatic exclusion from government subsidy schemes. Similarly, there are five parameters⁵ of automatic inclusion. Falling into any of these five parameters will lead to automatic inclusion. In addition to this, there is broad list of deprived households in rural areas on the basis of seven indicators⁶. Those falling into any of these seven will be considered deprived. Such a categorisation, needless to say, presents new socio-economic parameters. Hitherto, no serious efforts have been made to identify deprived, excluded and included households. That is why this database differs significantly from Census, NFHS, NSS and other BPL Censuses.

For the purpose of analysis, this article is basically focused on identifying households of different social groups on the basis of income slabs. For this, three variables have been used.

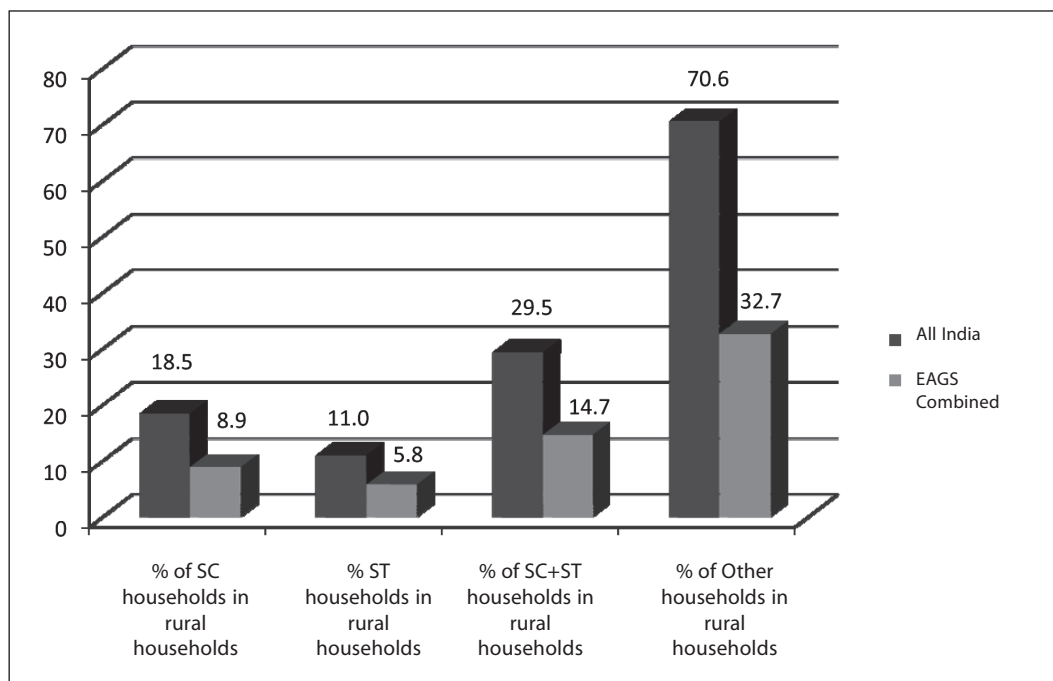
1. Households with monthly income of highest earning household member less than ₹ 5000 (Variable X i.e. Lower Income Slab)
2. Households with monthly income of highest earning household member between ₹ 5000-10000 (Variable Y i.e. Middle Income Slab).
3. Households with monthly income of highest earning household member greater than ₹ 10000 (Variable Z i.e. Upper Income Slab).

For simplicity of analysis, notations X, Y and Z are used at several places in the article. Further, source of income and land ownership are taken into account for all social groups among EAG States, and country as a whole. Social groups under consideration are SC households, ST households and other households. Accordingly, two more variables have been used. (I) Households with salaried job in government / public / private organisations (II) Households owning irrigated land.

For all variables used in this article, comparisons are done for all social groups of EAG States. Care has been taken to maintain uniformity of methods, while analysing Tables and Figures. Comparison of indicators used among different social groups for EAG States has been done with the help of simple percentage share. To explore linkages between variables, Karl Pearson correlation coefficient has been taken into account.

Results

An Overview of Rural Households: In rural India, there are 17.9 crore households which is 73.4 per cent of India as a whole. Out of total households, 18.5 per cent are SC households, 10.9 per cent ST households, 12.8 per cent female headed households, 6.1 per cent disabled member households and others are 70.6 per cent (See Table A in Appendix). Among EAG States, Uttar Pradesh (UP) has highest number and proportion of rural households for all social groups except STs. Madhya Pradesh followed by Odisha and Chhattisgarh have highest proportion of rural ST households among these eight States. Table A also shows that UP is the State where maximum proportions of rural deprived households of the country reside, since it accounts for 12.1 per cent of rural SC/ST households of the country followed by 8.7 per cent of Madhya Pradesh and 7 per cent of Rajasthan. Around 47.3 per cent households of rural India live in these eight States. Around 8.9 per cent SC, 5.8 per cent ST and 32.7 per cent other households of rural India live in EAG States. If we take SC/ST in a single group, figure 1 reflects that SC/ST households represent 29.4 per cent of rural India and SC/ST households of EAG States represent 14.7 per cent of rural India. Approximately 49.8 per cent rural SC/ST households of the country belong to EAG States. Further, in EAG States, share of SC/ST to other households is 44.9 per cent. Therefore, majority of rural SC/ST households belongs to EAG States.

Figure 1 : Percentage Share of SC/ST/Other Households for EAGS Combined

Source : See Appendix (Table A).

Comparison of Income Slab and Income Source of Rural Households of EAG States: The most controversial outcome of SECC 2011 data is related with identification of deprived households on the basis of monthly income slab. Comparison of monthly income slab of the EAG States has been presented in Table 1. For majority of households economic conditions are at very low levels. Income of the highest earning member of 74.5 per cent of rural households is less than ₹ 5000 per month. For income slab of ₹ 5000-10000, this ratio is 17.2 per cent. Only 8.3 per cent rural households of the country earn more than ₹ 10000 per month. Results show that more than 90 per cent rural households of Chhattisgarh earn less than

₹ 5000 per month followed by 87.9 per cent of Odisha and 83.5 per cent of Madhya Pradesh. Rural households of Uttarakhand are found at bottom of the list in this regard where 63.4 per cent households have monthly income of highest earning member less than ₹ 5000 per month. Further, in Chhattisgarh, only 3.2 per cent rural households have a family member whose income is more than ₹10,000 per month followed by Odisha. Last column of Table 1 estimates Karl Pearson Correlation Coefficient between variables X, W and variables X, Z. Conclusion drawn from this coefficient is that ST dominated States (W) constitute highest proportion of households earning less than ₹ 5000 per month (X) and lowest proportion

Table 1: Comparison of Monthly Income Slab of EAG States

S.No.	States	% of Monthly income of highest earning household member is < 5000	% of Monthly income of highest earning household member is 5000-10000	(Y)	(Z)	(W)	Karl Pearson Correlation Coefficient between
1	Uttar Pradesh	71.6 (6)	20.1	8.2 (3)	0.90 (7)	0.76 (X and W)	
2	Bihar	70.9 (7)	22.1	6.9(5)	1.5 (6)		
3	Madhya Pradesh	83.5 (3)	11.3	5.19(6)	14.5 (1)		
4	Rajasthan	73.1 (5)	17.2	9.6 (2)	9.16 (3)		
5	Odisha	87.9(2)	7.3	4.8 (7)	10.5 (2)		
6	Jharkhand	76.6 (4)	15.5	7.7 (4)	7.4 (5)		-0.60
7	Chhattisgarh	90.8 (1)	5.9	3.2 (8)	8.5 (4)		(Z and W)
8	Uttarakhand	63.4 (8)	21.9	14.7 (1)	0.2 (8)		
9	All India	74.5	17.2	8.3			
10	EAGS Combined	76.1	16.7	7.2			

Source: Compiled from SECC 2011(Summary Data).

Note: Figures in parentheses show ranking of States in terms of respective variables.

Table 2: Comparison of Monthly Income Slab for SC/ST/Other Households of EAG States

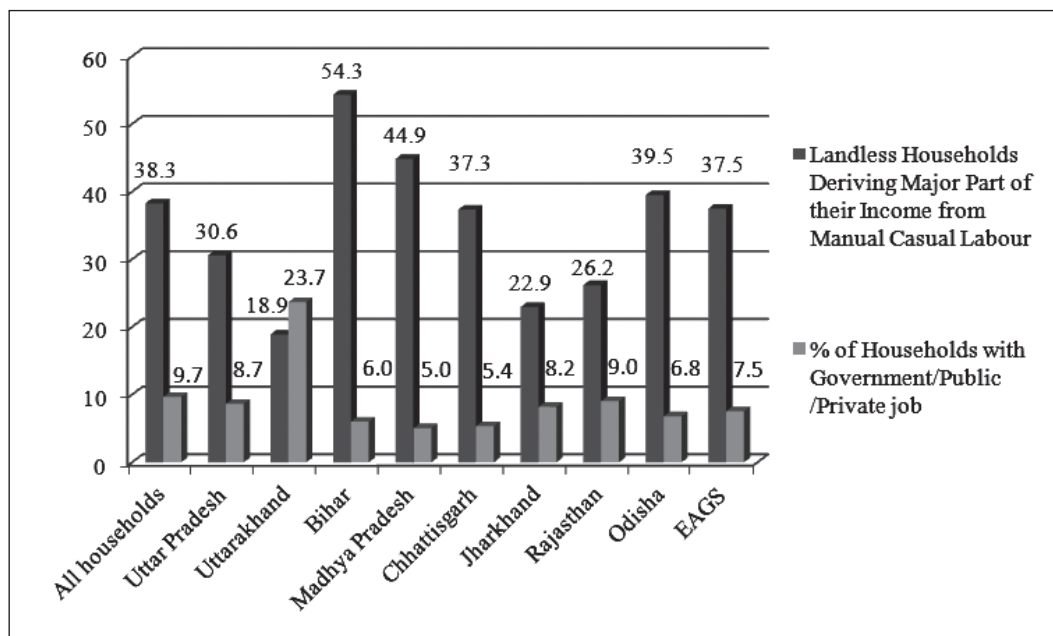
S.No.	States	% of SC Households			% of ST Households			% of other Households		
		Monthly Income of highest earning member is < ₹ 5000	Monthly Income of highest earning member is > ₹ 10000	(X)	Monthly Income of highest earning member is < ₹ 5000	Monthly Income of highest earning member is > ₹ 10000	(X)	Monthly Income of highest earning member is < ₹ 5000	Monthly Income of highest earning member is > ₹ 10000	(Z)
1	Uttar Pradesh	82.4	4.3	81.4	4.8	68.0	9.5			
2	Bihar	83.6	2.8	79.3	4.0	68.2	7.8			
3	Madhya Pradesh	90.1	2.8	92.7	1.9	77.9	7.2			
4	Rajasthan	82.9	5.1	87.4	5.2	66.4	12.1			
5	Odisha	92.2	2.7	95.7	1.6	83.3	6.7			
6	Jharkhand	81.7	7	80.7	5.1	73.4	9.2			
7	Chhattisgarh	92.5	2.6	93.3	2.4	68.2	4.0			
8	Uttarakhand	78.2	7.6	72.5	9.8	77.9	16.6			
9	India	83.6	4.7	86.6	4.5	66.4	9.8			
10	EAGS Combined	84.8	3.9	90.1	3.1	72.6	8.9			

Source: Compiled from SECC 2011 (Summary Data).

of households earning more than ₹ 10000 per month (Z).

Maximum proportion of rural households are having monthly income less than ₹ 5000 and minimum proportion of rural households are having monthly income more than ₹ 10000. Similarly, Odisha and Madhya Pradesh are placed at second and third positions, respectively. Therefore, in terms of household income level, rural households of Chhattisgarh, Odisha and Madhya Pradesh are the most vulnerable among EAG States. Comparison of monthly income slab for different social groups has been presented in Table 2. Around 83.6 per cent SC households and 86.6 per cent ST households of rural India do not have a single family member earning more than ₹ 5000 per month. Further, only 4.7 per cent SC households and 4.5 per cent ST households of rural India have a family member earning more than ₹ 10000 per month. For other households this ratio is 66.4 per cent (variable X) and 9.8 per cent (variable Z), respectively. No need to say that economic condition of rural other households is much better than SC/ST households. Rural Odisha is the worst hit State in this category where 92.2 per cent SC and 95.7 per cent ST households do not have a

family member earning more than ₹ 5000 per month. Similarly, in rural Chhattisgarh, 92.5 per cent SC households and 93.3 per cent ST households do not have a family member earning more than ₹ 5000 per month. In rural Madhya Pradesh, this ratio is 90.1 per cent for SC and 92.7 per cent for ST households, respectively. Results suggest that ST households of rural Odisha are most backward economically among EAG States and perhaps among all Indian States. That is why States having greater ratio of ST households have greater ratio for variable X. Taking SC and ST into one group, 84.7 per cent SC/ST households of rural India belong to variable X and only 4.6 per cent belong to variable Z. Further, UP constitutes highest number of SC households of the country in which only 4.3 per cent SC households are capable of earning more than ₹ 10000 per month. This is politically significant data because, since last 20 years UP has been many times ruled by a powerful dalit leader including the period of 2007-12 in full majority and SC households significantly influence politics of Uttar Pradesh. In rural Bihar, only 4.0 per cent ST and 2.8 per cent SC households have a family member earning more than ₹ 10000 per month. Uttarakhand is the best performer State again in this parameter.

Figure 2 : Comparison of Household Income Source of EAG States

Source: Compiled from SECC 2011 (Summary data).

In SECC 2011, four categories of households have been identified on the basis of their income profile. These are landless households deriving major part of their income from Manual Casual Labour (MCL), households with cultivation, households that have government/public/private job and non-agriculture own enterprise. But in this article, we have taken two variables viz., landless households with MCL and households with salaried job. Figure 2 demonstrates that 38.3 rural Indian households are landless, who depend on MCL for their living. Second highest source of income/living for rural India is

cultivation (30 per cent) (Highlights of SECC 2011). Therefore, 68.3 per cent rural households of the country are reliant on either landless manual casual labour or cultivation. Around 54.3 per cent rural households of Bihar, highest among EAG States, are landless and they are deployed in manual casual work followed by Madhya Pradesh (44.9 per cent) and Odisha (39.4 per cent). These three States perform worse than national average in this parameter. In all EAG States, 37.5 per cent households are landless with MCL. Out of total landless households with MCL of rural India, 46.4 per cent live in EAG States (Table 3).

Table 3 : Comparison of Landless HHs with MCL Among Different Social Groups of EAG States

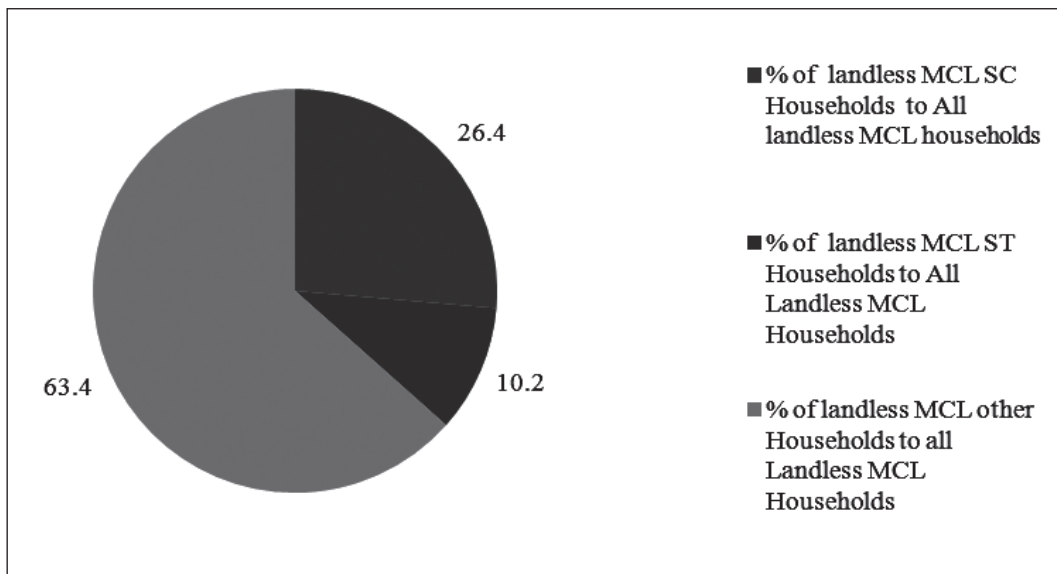
S.No.	States	Landless Households Deriving Major Part of their income from Manual Casual Labour	% of All landless SC Households with MCL	% of All landless ST Households with MCL	% of All other landless Households with MCL	% of All landless (SC+ST) Households with MCL
1.	All India	38.2	54.7	35.6	34.4	47.6
2.	Uttar Pradesh	30.6	42.0	35.3	26.9	41.8
3.	Uttarakhand	18.9	30.2	19.9	16.1	28.7
4.	Bihar	54.3	76.2	57.3	49.7	74.6
5.	Madhya Pradesh	44.8	60.9	48.8	39.1	53.3
6.	Chhattisgarh	37.3	53.0	28.4	39.6	35.1
7.						
8.	Jharkhand	22.9	34.6	17.9	22.8	23.1
	Rajasthan	26.1	41.9	24.4	22.1	33.4
9.	Odisha	39.5	56.1	39.1	34.5	46.5
10.	EAGS (MCL) to ALL EAGS	37.5	51.8	34.9	34.1	45.1
11.	EAGS (MCL) to ALL India MCL	46.3	45.6	51.9	45.9	47.3

Source: Compiled from SECC 2011 (Summary data) .

Out of total landless households with MCL, share of SC, ST and other households is 26.4, 10.2 and 63.4 per cent, respectively (Figure 3). Around 54.7 per cent SC households of rural

India are landless with MCL. For ST and other households this ratio is 35.6 and 34.4 per cent, respectively. Therefore, in all social groups, SCs have least access to land and decent work.

Figure 3 : Share of Social Groups in Landless MCL Households



Source: Compiled from SECC 2011.

Among EAG States, 76.2 per cent SC households of rural Bihar are landless with MCL followed by 60.9 per cent of Madhya Pradesh. Table 3 also demonstrates that 47.6 per cent SC/ST households of rural India are landless with MCL. Again this ratio is highest for Bihar (74.6 per cent) and Madhya Pradesh (53.3 per cent) respectively. Surprisingly, Jharkhand has less proportion of SC/ST landless households engaged in MCL. Only 23.1 per cent households are landless with MCL in rural Jharkhand.

Further, only 9.7 per cent households of rural India have any job—government, public or private. Among EAG States, this ratio is 7.5 per cent, which is below national average.

Again, rural Uttarakhand is much better than national average where 23.7 per cent households enjoy salary income. EAG States, except Uttarakhand, are performing below national average in this parameter.

Table 4 : Comparison of Households with Salaried Job Among Different Social Groups of EAG States

S.No.	States	% of Households with Salaried job in Government/ Public/Private	% of SC Households with Salaried job in Government/ Public/ Private	% of ST Households with Salaried job in Government/ Public/ Private	% of All other households with salaried job in Government/ Public/ Private
1	All India	9.7	7.3	6.4	10.8
2	Uttar Pradesh	8.7	6.0	8.1	9.5
3	Uttarakhand	23.7	15.9	14.9	25.9
4	Bihar	6.0	3.5	4.1	6.6
5	Madhya Pradesh	5.1	4.5	3.1	6.0
6	Chhattisgarh	5.4	5.1	4.6	6.0
7	Jharkhand	8.2	8.2	6.1	9.3
8	Rajasthan	9.1	6.4	5.9	10.7
9	Odisha	6.8	4.5	2.7	9.2
10	EAGS with Job to All EAGS	7.6	5.5	4.3	8.7
11	EAGS Job to All India rural Job	36.9	36.2	35.5	37.2

Source: Compiled from SECC 2011 (Summary data).

Out of total households of rural India which enjoys salary income, 36.9 per cent households belong to EAG States. Since approximately 48 per cent households of rural India live in EAG States, it can be inferred that EAG States drastically fall below national level in providing salary job to their rural households. This is not an astonishing fact because these States were in the category of BIMARU States for a long time. Among EAG States, rural Madhya Pradesh (5.1 per cent) and rural Chhattisgarh (5.4 per cent) are ranked lowest in this category. Column 4 of Table 4 explains that only 3.5 per cent SC households of Bihar are salaried, followed by Odisha (4.5 per cent) and Madhya Pradesh (4.5 per cent). Similarly, for ST households, Odisha (2.7 per cent), Madhya Pradesh (3.1 per cent) and Bihar (4.1 per cent) are low performing States in this category. Further, for country as a whole, only 7.3 per cent SC and 6.4 per cent ST households enjoy salary income.

Comparison of Land Ownership of Rural Households of EAG States: In this section, an important variable viz. irrigated land ownership is taken up for discussion. Land is not only a major source of income of rural households, but, it is closely linked with the social status of the individuals and households in whole South Asian region. Land is an important means to get rid of multiple-deprivations and empower the most deprived including women. Only 44 per cent households own any type of land in rural India. Rajasthan and Jharkhand (both 62 per cent) are at top of the list while

Bihar (35 per cent) is at the bottom among EAG States. Around 25.6 per cent households of rural India own irrigated land. Around 17.5 per cent SC, 18.1 per cent ST and 28.9 per cent other households own irrigated land in India. Uttar Pradesh (50.3 per cent) has highest proportion of rural households with irrigated land ownership followed by Rajasthan (33.1 per cent), Uttarakhand (31.8 per cent), Jharkhand (28.9 per cent) and Bihar (28.6 per cent). Chhattisgarh (6.1 per cent) is placed at the lowest position followed by Odisha (10 per cent) and Madhya Pradesh (25.3 per cent). Households of Chhattisgarh and Odisha are most vulnerable among EAG States in terms of irrigated land ownership. Table 5 also reflects that Bihar performs worst in providing land ownership to its rural households as compared to other States. It also confirms that SC households of rural Bihar are in a very low possession of irrigated land as compared to other social groups. This finding clearly indicates about failure of successive governments of Bihar in fair and just distribution of land to their dalit households. For example, only 10.9 per cent SC households own irrigated land; as a result, share of landless with MCL for SC households is highest in Bihar. However, EAG States are performing better than national average in providing irrigated land ownership to its rural households except Bihar. For example, 59.7 per cent total, 68.4 per cent SC, 52 per cent ST and 59.1 per cent other households of EAG States own irrigated land. In ensuring land ownership to SC households, Uttar Pradesh tops the list where 42.1 per cent SC households own irrigated land.

Table 5 : Comparison of Irrigated Land Ownership Among Different Social Groups of EAG States

S.No.	States	% of households with any type of land ownership		% of total irrigated land ownership		% of total SC households with irrigated land ownership		% of total ST households with irrigated land ownership		% of All other households with irrigated land ownership		% of all (SC+ST) irrigated land ownership	
		with any type of land ownership	irrigated land ownership	irrigated land ownership	irrigated land ownership	irrigated land ownership	irrigated land ownership	irrigated land ownership	irrigated land ownership	irrigated land ownership	irrigated land ownership	irrigated land ownership	irrigated land ownership
1	Uttar Pradesh	55.0	50.3	42.1	39.3	42.1	39.3	53.0	42.0	53.0	42.0	53.0	42.0
2	Uttarakhand	57.0	31.8	25.7	42.8	25.7	42.8	32.9	28.2	32.9	28.2	32.9	28.2
3	Bihar	35.0	28.6	10.9	26.1	10.9	26.1	32.4	12.3	32.4	12.3	32.4	12.3
4	Madhya Pradesh	45.0	25.3	16.2	15.0	16.2	15.0	31.9	15.4	31.9	15.4	31.9	15.4
5	Chhattisgarh	53.0	6.1	4.5	4.6	4.5	4.6	7.7	4.5	7.7	4.5	7.7	4.5
6	Jharkhand	62.0	28.9	22.9	28.3	22.9	28.3	30.5	26.6	30.5	26.6	30.5	26.6
7	Rajasthan	62.0	33.1	20.2	35.9	20.2	35.9	36.1	27.8	36.1	27.8	36.1	27.8
8	Odisha	46.0	10.0	6.7	5.9	6.7	5.9	12.7	6.3	12.7	6.3	12.7	6.3
9	EAGS Combined	49.9	32.3	24.8	17.9	24.8	17.9	37.0	22.1	37.0	22.1	37.0	22.1
10	EAGS land to all India land	49.5	59.7	68.4	52.0	68.4	52.0	59.1	62.1	59.1	62.1	59.1	62.1
11	All India	44.0	25.6	17.5	18.1	17.5	18.1	28.9	17.7	28.9	17.7	28.9	17.7

Source: Compiled from SECC 2011.

Discussion and Policy Implication

Before concluding, we briefly discuss the insights coming from the results of this paper and some important policy implications. Among these eight States it is visible that States with greater proportion of ST households have greater proportion of households earning less than ₹ 5000 per month. Likewise, States with greater proportion of ST households have lower proportion of households earning monthly income more than ₹ 10000. This is quiet feasible because STs are the most poor and deprived section of the society. Therefore, there is direct relationship between ST household and low level of income. This can also be judged with the help of Karl-Pearson correlation coefficient between percentage of ST households (variable W) and monthly income of highest earning member is less than 5000 (variable X). There is strong positive correlation (0.76) between X and W and strong (-0.60) negative correlation between Z and W. Among EAG States, Uttarakhand, Rajasthan, Bihar and Uttar Pradesh are in better place as compared to national average of 74.5 per cent for variable X. Household income level of particular social group of EAG States depends on the type of household income source. There is close inverse linkage between household accesses to salaried income and income level of households. This means, lesser the ratio of households with access to salaried income, greater the ratio of households for variable X, and vice-versa. For example, in Chhattisgarh, more than 90 per cent of rural households and 93 per cent ST households are sustaining their

life below ₹ 5000 per month, second highest in EAG States, while ratio of salaried income households in Chhattisgarh is second lowest among EAG States. SC of Bihar and ST of Odisha are most vulnerable group among EAG States in availing of salary income. In Uttar Pradesh and Bihar, SC households are seriously delineated from any type of job opportunity viz. government, public or private. As compared to ST households, SC households of Bihar are in slightly better position in this regard.

In terms of irrigated land ownership, SC households are most marginalised group of rural India. That is why SC households constitute highest proportion of landless MCL among all social groups. Even in the category of landless MCL, share of SC households is much greater than ST households for all EAG States. One outstanding finding of this analysis is that SC households of Bihar are most deprived in comparison to those of other Indian States. Bihar is the single State of India, where a large section of SC community has been put in *Maha Dalit*⁷ category. Severe lack of land ownership of SC households in India forces them to resort to wage labour, bonded labour, manual scavenging, or household service which further results in acute poverty and social exclusion. Though ST households fall back to other households in land ownership, they are ahead of SC households. In all ST populous States--Chhattisgarh, Odisha, Madhya Pradesh and Jharkhand--share of households with any type of land ownership is better than national average. Land and forest rights of ST households are preserved through

Acts and laws but their share of irrigated land in comparison to total land ownership is low in these States. That is why in ST populous States, number of households with income of highest earning member less than ₹ 5000 is very high. This is to say that ST households own land but they do not have enough irrigated and productive land to generate substantial income. This finding is in consistence with our close observation that in Palamu region of Jharkhand and Sarguja region of Chhattisgarh, production of foodgrains is limited because of geographical features but there is big scope for tribes to generate income through the production of macca (maize) and mahua (madhuka), and of course they do this but the surplus money value of these products goes in the hands of market agents.

Further, if, for instance, household income (variable X) is taken as indicator of poverty, the order of greatest rural poor States is Chhattisgarh, Odisha, Madhya Pradesh, Jharkhand, Rajasthan, Bihar, Uttar Pradesh and Uttarakhand (Table 1). According to Planning Commission (2014) estimates, the order of greatest rural poverty ratio is Chhattisgarh (49.2 per cent), Odisha (47.8 per cent), Jharkhand (45.9 per cent), MP (45.2 per cent) and Bihar (40.1 per cent) among EAG States. On these two estimates, more or less, order of States remains same but there is huge gap for poverty ratio. Further, results clarify that around 91.7 per cent households of rural India do not have a single family member earning more than ₹ 10000 per month and for EAG States this ratio is 92.8 per cent. Definitely these two

estimates are not equivalent on the ground of parameters and methodology used for poverty estimation. But important point is that it provides an insight about existence of much greater poverty in India than estimated by Planning Commission earlier.

Therefore, results obtained from this analysis clearly and strongly hold the outcomes of literature discussed in introductory part of this paper. Essence of this analysis is that EAG States are performing below national level in all socio-economic parameters. Better NSDP growth rate of past 10 years has not been able to renovate the living conditions of SC/ST households of EAG States. Political instability along with naxal hindrance has set aside Jharkhand away from realisation of development. Widespread corruption in public works, destructive law and order, massive illiteracy and poor health facilities in rural areas forced the people of Jharkhand at risk. Outcome of good governance and better NSDP growth rate is still underutilised in rural Bihar. Surplus Revenue of Uttar Pradesh does not seem to be used for inclusive development of the State. Chhattisgarh has ensured enough food to all rural households but not enough income and income source. The model of ensuring food security without income and employment generation will no longer work for inclusive development of the State. Similarly, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan and Odisha failed to generate adequate income and work opportunity to its rural households. Uttarakhand is exception in this regard. In last 10 years, Uttarakhand achieved more than 17

per cent NSDP growth rate at market price many times. Analysis shows that Uttarakhand performs much better than nation in all parameters. Definitely, high NSDP growth rate has trickled down to rural households of Uttarakhand.

Now, it is essential to throw light on reliability and authenticity of data source. Although this article is basically not proposed to examine and analyse the methodology adopted and indicators used in SECC 2011, one needs to keep in mind chances of error. Former Secretary of Ministry of Rural Development, NC Saxena (2015), in a commentary of Economic and Political Weekly has raised logical questions on the indicators used for deprived households and data obtained through this census. In our analysis too, we have found some disturbing and surprising data. For example, in rural Rajasthan, households with an income of less than ₹ 5000 are 73.1 per cent, while only 21.4 per cent population is below poverty line. Compare this with rural Bihar, where percentage of households with an income of less than ₹ 5000 is 70.1, but poverty ratio is 40.1 approximately. For the purpose of assessment of household income in SECC 2011, since income of highest earner in the family has been taken into consideration instead of total household income, that is why inconsistencies have crept in the data.

Despite these errors, this is a huge database and it has important policy implications. For example, with the use of exclusion and inclusion criteria of SECC 2011,

inefficient use of government subsidies can be minimised. Recent check in leakages in public distribution system of Bihar is a good example for other States to follow. After applying Exclusion criteria of SECC, now 75 per cent people of rural Bihar have access to heavy subsidised foodgrains (Dreze and Khera 2015). Now, it is viable to identify beneficiary households on the basis of socio-economic parameters rather than caste parameter. However, before release of SECC 2011, subsidies are distributed on the basis of BPL list, not caste, but now, errors will be minimised. On the other hand, the new database suggests that even though deeper deprivations are found in rural India, numerous households will be excluded from government subsidy benefits. Hence, it is going to be interesting to examine the conditions of those households which will be excluded from government subsidy benefits in the future.

Conclusion

Undoubtedly, rapid economic growth (2004 to 2011) has not been able to change the hardships of rural India. Rapid and steady growth with multiple-deprivations has become an important attribute of Indian economy. The results obtained from SECC 2011 are strengthening the impression of harsh realities of rural India. Strong linkages between various socio-economic variables have been found while analysing the new data. Except Uttarakhand, social and economical conditions of EAG States are not up to the standard of national average. Performance of some States

is seriously questionable. A large portion of the EAGS households are engaged in subsistence work like MCL and cultivation. Most SC households derive their income from employment in subsistence sector. Historically, strategies of development, around the world, prove that employment in subsistence sector does not bring prosperity in the society as it fails to devastate numerous social-economic barriers, institutional and economic structures.

In twenty first century, story of grand transformation of Indian Economy has been widely acknowledged in development world, but the identification in the form of driver of Inclusive development is still awaited. Significance of SECC 2011 lies in the fact that it has reminded and reproduced an opportunity to rethink development strategies to ensure social justice in the country.

Notes

1. The classification of States into EAGS is based on Annual Health Survey conducted by the Census of India and Former Planning Commission of India. See press release of Census of India for detailed information. (http://censusindia.gov.in/vital_statistics/AHSBulletins/files/AHSpr.pdf)
2. In 2009, Ministry of Rural Development (MoRD) set up an expert group which had to recommend a suitable methodology for conducting BPL survey. The committee submitted its report in 2009 to the ministry. With some major changes, recommended methodology was accepted. Later on, it was decided to accommodate home ministry's suggestion of combining caste census with data on deprivations in a single survey, and the scheme was named Socio-economic Caste Census (See Saxena 2015).
3. Other households refer to other than SC/ST households. It may be General/OBC households.
4. A set of 14 questions, viz, whether households having (i). 2/3/4 wheeler, (ii) 3/4 agricultural equipment, (iii) Kisan credit of over ₹ 50,000, (IV) Government employee (v) Non-agricultural enterprises registered with government (VI) Any member of household earning more than ₹10,000 per month, (vii) Paying income tax, (viii) Paying Professional tax, (ix) Three or more rooms with pucca walls and roof, (x) Owns a refrigerator, (xi) Owns landline phone, (xii) Owns more than 2.5 acres of irrigated land with one irrigation equipment, (xiii) Five acres or more of irrigated land for two or more crop seasons, (xiv) Owning at least 7.5 acres of land or more with at least one irrigation equipment –were asked to each household in the village. Household with any one of these variables declared is automatically excluded.

5. Five Inclusion Parameters are (I) Households without shelter. (Ii) Destitute, living on alms. (Iii) Manual scavenger families. (iv) Primitive tribal groups and (V) Legally released bonded labour.
6. Seven Deprivation Indicators are (i) Households with only one room, kuchha walls and kuchha roof, (ii) No adult member between the ages of 16 and 59, (iii) Female headed households with no adult member between 16 and 59, (iv) Households with disabled member and notable bodied adult member, (v) SC/ST households, (vi) Households with no literate adult above the age of 25 (vii) Landless households deriving a major part of their income from manual casual labour.
7. Maha Dalit: Dalits constitute nearly 15 per cent of Bihar's population. The poorest Dalits were declared Maha Dalits in Bihar. A government commission has identified 18 of the 22 Dalit sub-castes, including Musahar, Bhuiyan, Dabgar, Dom, and Nat as Maha Dalits. They constitute 31 per cent of the Dalit population in the State. The Commission has not included four Dalit castes - Paswan, Pasi, Dhobi and Chamar - in the Maha Dalit category. These four constitute 69 per cent of the Dalit population in the State. 18 Maha Dalits of Bihar -Bantar, Bauri, Bhogta, Bhuiyan, Chaupal, Dabgar, Dom, Ghasi, Halalkhor, Hadi, Kanjar, Kuraria, Lalbegi, Mushar, Nat, Pan, Rajwar and Turi. (http://www.ssvk.org/pdf_doc_files/mahadalits18_dalits_of_bihar_no.pdf) retrieved on 07.08.2015.

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