

Socio-Economic Conditions in Rural Areas: A Field Survey of Nerti Panchayat of Kangra District in Himachal Pradesh

¹Shakir Hussain Malik, ²Abnish Kumar

*Research Scholar¹, Department of Economics & Public Policy,
Central University of Himachal Pradesh, Dharamshala (India)*

*Research Scholar², Department of Social Work,
Central University of Himachal Pradesh, Dharamshala (India)*

Abstract: *Rural development implies bringing the economic betterment of people as well as greater social transformation/equity. The main objectives of the rural development programmes are poverty alleviation, employment generation, area development and the implementation of other developmental programmes in the rural areas. Agriculture is the main occupation of the people of Himachal Pradesh. It has an important place in the economy of the State. Wheat, paddy and maize are the important cereal crops, whereas potato, peas, garlic, cauliflower etc are the cash crops. Efforts are on to diversify agricultural activities in the rural areas to increase production and productivity through improvement of inputs, transfer of appropriate technology and managerial practices.*

Keywords: *Socio-economic, rural area, poverty, rural development.*

1. Introduction

The state of Himachal Pradesh is the only state in the country whose 89.96 percent, as per 2011 census, of population lives in rural areas (Economic Survey, 2012-13). The incidence of poverty in Himachal Pradesh is lower than the national average. The percentage of population living BPL was 9.5 in 2009-10 (Planning Commission, 2012). In rural areas of Himachal Pradesh, 30.34% persons were living below the poverty line against 37.27% for rural India. The incidence of poverty in urban areas of the state was only 9.18% as against 32.36% urban population of India below the poverty line. However, the percentage of Schedule Tribes population in rural areas of Himachal Pradesh at 63.94% was higher than the all India percentage at 51.94% of scheduled Tribes below poverty line in rural areas (Govt of India, 2000). There are various studies which reveal the various issues of rural areas but they mainly focus on aggregate data rather than household data and various fields were ignored by their studies. Therefore, a field survey is conducted to cover the whole aspects of the study area like their agriculture, cropping patterns, consumption pattern, sources of income, etc., and also the problems they face.

2. Objectives

- To analyse the socio-economic profile and major economic activities of the sample population;
- To study the sources of household income and physical assets.

3. Methodology

A baseline survey was conducted in Nerti panchayat. The main object of the survey was to understand socio-economic conditions as well as major economic activities of the rural areas. There were six villages in the panchayat and one village is excluded from the survey whose size is very small, i.e., 12. The total number of households in these five villages is 741. One hundred and seventy-five households were then randomly selected (using a process of systematic random selection from the list of households) from 5 villages. On average about 23 percent households per village were interviewed using the interview schedule. The sample was divided proportionately among five villages. Following table 2.1 gives information on number of households in five villages and village-wise size of sample.

Table 1 Village Wise Sampling Distribution of Households

Serial No.	Name of Village	Total number of households	Sample size
1	Nerti	225	53
2	Bahru	116	29
3	YolJahred	147	34
4	Churtha	163	38
5	Thirdi	90	21
6	Total	741	175

Source: Field survey

The data is collected by using the interview schedules. The various sections of the schedule include questions related to demographic features, education, occupations, land inventory, cropping pattern, inputs used in agriculture, labour use in production, consumption pattern, consumer durables, production problems, sources of information, sources of income, etc.

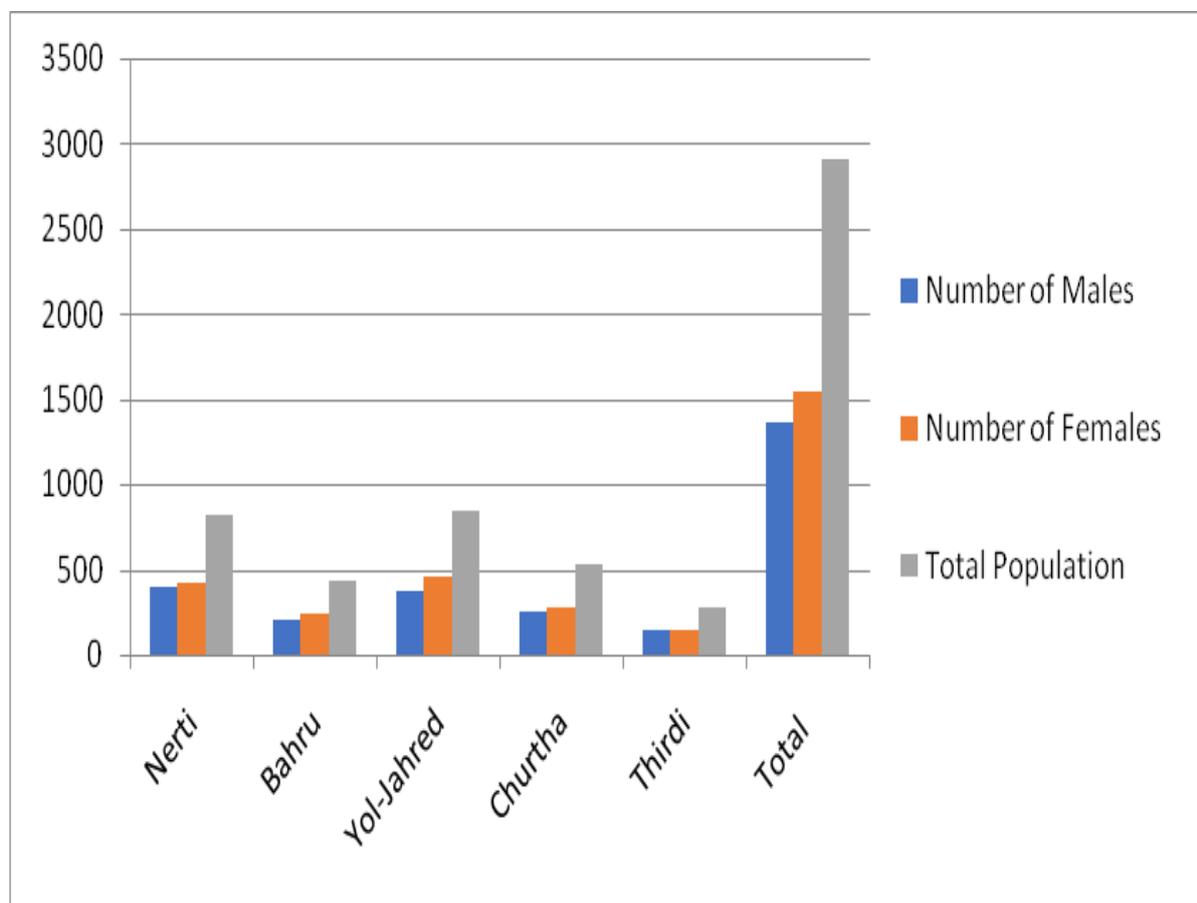
The data entry process started with manual editing of the completed interview schedule. This was followed by data entry into computers. SPSS 15 was used to analyse the data collected through the quantitative interview schedule.

Households are divided into two categories; APL and BPL. According to Planning Commission of India, the poverty line for the urban and rural areas could be provisionally placed at Rs.965 per capita per month (around Rs.32 per day) and Rs.781 per capita per month (around Rs.26 per day), respectively. Also, the estimates of poverty in India are made on the basis of the per capita availability of food. That person is said to be BPL who fails to obtain 2400 calories of food in rural areas and 2100 calories of food in urban area.

4. General Information

a. Demography

Figure 1. Village Wise Total Population



The total population in these villages are 2911 in which proportion of females are larger than males. The total population of males and females in these villages are 1316 and 1543. Village Yol-Jahred has highest population i.e., 843 followed by Nerti 822, Churtha has 526. While as Thirdi has lowest population, i.e., 280 persons only.

Table 2 Caste-Wise Status of Education of Sample Population (Percentage)

Caste Category	Illiterate	Can Read and Right	Below Primary	Primary/Middle	Matric	Higher Secondary	Diploma/Certificate Course	Graduation	PG and Above	Total
General	6.06	2.27	0.76	18.94	29.17	23.48	0.38	12.50	6.44	100.00
SC	10.34	1.72	3.45	32.76	27.59	15.52	0.00	3.45	5.17	100.00
ST	20.00	0.00	0.00	30.00	30.00	20.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	100.00
OBC	10.43	0.61	3.07	31.90	26.38	21.47	0.00	5.21	0.92	100.00
Total	8.81	1.37	2.13	26.75	27.66	21.73	0.15	7.90	3.50	100.00

Notes: i. The figures in parentheses give the total number of people in different categories on the basis of which percentages have been calculated.

ii. SC-Scheduled Caste, ST-Scheduled Tribe, OBC-Other Backward Classes

Source: Field survey.

b. Education

It is indicated from the Table 2 that the proportion of general category is very large in higher education as compared to other categories. Similarly, the ST's are more illiterate and the general population has less illiteracy. SC population are more in below primary category followed by OBC whose proportion in below primary is 3.07 %. In case of matriculation level ST's are more.

5. Household Income and Assets

In this section we will discuss caste category and education wise occupation, income and physical assets.

a. OCCUPATION

The results emanating from the Table 3 area summarised as. It is indicated that regular salaried workers are more in all categories, while the proportion of cultivators are small and is zero in ST category. The percentage of Rentiers/pensioner is more in general category and zero in ST. The percentage of house wife in ST category comprises more than others, i.e., 50 %. Students formed the highest portion in general category followed by OBC, while as there is no student in ST category.

4th International Conference on Multidisciplinary Research

Osmania University Centre for International Program, Osmania University Campus, Hyderabad (India) (ICMR-2019) 

2nd February 2019, www.conferenceworld.in

ISBN:978-93-87793-67-5

Table3 Caste Category Wise Occupational Profile of Sample Population (%)

Occupation	General	SC	ST	OBC	Total
Cultivator	0.77	1.82	0.00	0.31	0.62
Agricultural labour	1.15	0.00	0.00	2.49	1.70
Regular salaried worker	21.84	23.64	20.00	16.20	19.17
Contract labour	0.38	1.82	10.00	0.93	0.93
Daily wage labour	3.45	14.55	0.00	8.41	6.80
Piece rate labour	0.00	0.00	10.00	0.62	0.46
Self-employed	7.28	3.64	0.00	8.41	7.42
Rentiers/pensioner/remittance receiver	16.86	9.09	0.00	6.85	10.97
Student	20.69	16.36	0.00	19.94	19.63
House wife	25.29	27.27	50.00	29.28	27.82
Unemployed and seeking work	0.38	0.00	0.00	1.56	0.93
Unemployed but not seeking work	0.38	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.15
Do not work due to old age	0.38	1.82	10.00	2.80	1.85
Do not work due to sickness or other physical problem	0.77	0.00	0.00	1.87	1.24
Others	0.38	0.00	0.00	0.31	0.31
Total	100 (261)	100 (55)	100 (10)	100 (321)	100 (647)

Note: The figures in the parenthesis are actual sum

Source: Field survey.

Contract labours are high in ST category and less in general category. In the case of daily wage labour, it is high in SC category and nil in ST. The percentage of self-employed is high in OBC as compared to other categories.

Only ST category formed the highest percentage in piece rate labour.

b. Annual Income

Table 4 Income and caste category wise household income (Rs/household)

Category	Income category	Actual Income Main (Rs)
GENERAL	APL	1,49,462
	BPL	80,917
	Total	2,30,379

SC	APL	78,541
	BPL	56,727
	Total	1,35,268
ST	APL	11,000
	BPL	76,000
	Total	87,000
OBC	APL	55,119
	BPL	31,136
	Total	86,255
Total	APL	2,94,122
	BPL	2,44,780
	Total	5,38,902

Note: APL-Above Poverty line, BPL-Below Poverty Line.

Source: Field survey.

The income of APL population of general category is highest as compared to others other categories. The ST category has the lowest income. From the table there is little variation of actual income between APL and BPL categories of the total income.

5.1 Physical Assets

Table5 Income Category Wise Percentage of Households Possessing Consumer Durables

ASSETS	APL	BPL	Total
Television	100.00	86.89	95.43
Washing Machine	38.60	4.92	26.86
Mobile	96.49	88.52	93.71
Ac	1.75	0.00	1.14
Scooter	14.91	6.56	12.00
Motorcycle	27.19	4.92	19.43
Car	10.53	0.00	6.86
Transport Vehicle	0.88	1.64	1.14
Telephone	23.68	11.48	19.43
Cooking Gas Connection	93.86	78.69	88.57
Refrigerator	77.19	44.26	65.71
Commercial Vehicle	2.63	0.00	1.71
Computer	14.91	1.64	10.29

Source- Field survey.

6. Consumption Pattern

Table6 Category wise percentage distribution of expenditure on different goods

Category	General	SC	ST	OBC	Total
Fruits	3.90	5.06	3.31	3.51	3.81
Pulses	7.63	12.24	8.14	5.10	7.02
Meat	4.78	3.11	1.53	3.53	4.30
Dry fruits	2.64	0.61	5.58	1.21	2.21
Eggs	0.42	1.16	0.00	0.28	0.39
Vegetable	9.62	12.41	9.30	6.38	8.73
Milk	14.33	9.03	12.79	8.56	12.43
Wheat	7.00	8.82	7.73	3.97	6.17
Rice	6.40	6.21	7.69	4.50	5.85
Oil	9.32	10.07	7.26	5.23	8.09
Education	10.23	1.37	6.97	34.96	17.26
Health	10.54	16.31	17.44	13.34	11.68
Electricity	5.96	8.95	5.06	4.79	5.68
Communication	7.23	4.67	7.21	4.64	6.38
Total	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00

Source- Field survey.

7. Summary and Conclusion

The survey results quite clearly show the socio-economic profile and economic activities of the study area. The total population of the study area is 788 out of which males are 407 (51.65%) and females are 381 (48.35%). Most of the sample population are students (19.63%), followed by regular salaried workers (19.17%); daily wage labour (6.82%), Rentiers/pensioners (10.97) and agricultural labourers are only 1.70%. According to survey, only 10.53% of the sample population are illiterate.

The average income of the sample households is Rs 86,627 per annum. The income from salary formed the most part of average annual income, i.e., Rs 2, 30,379. The average income from MNREGA is only Rs 13,678, because either people are unwilling to participate in the scheme or due to lack of work.

4th International Conference on Multidisciplinary Research

Osmania University Centre for International Program, Osmania University Campus, Hyderabad (India) (ICMR-2019)  Conference World

2nd February 2019, www.conferenceworld.in

ISBN:978-93-87793-67-5

Most of the sample households belong to marginal farmers. Among the major crops, paddy has the highest productivity (21.5 qt/ha). There are various production problems in the studied area like lack of irrigation, lack of seeds, credit, etc. In addition to these problems, there are other problems related to agriculture like monkeys and pigs that damage their crops. There are other problems like lack of road, lack of market, medical facility, etc.

8. References

[1] Economic Survey of Himachal Pradesh, 2012-13.

[2] Planning Commission, Govt of India, 2000.

[3] "Rural Development in India: State Level Experiences" The Associated Chambers of Commerce and Industry of India, New Delhi, (2012).