

SOCIO ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT OF BACKWARD COMMUNITIES AND TRIBAL AREAS OF HIMACHAL PRADESH: A SYSTEMATIC CRITIQUE OF FACTS AND EVIDENCE

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Abstract-Generally, socio –economic conditions are defined in terms of social, cultural and economic resources, the extent to which individuals and groups have access to these resources and the relative value ascribed to the resources held by different individuals and groups. It is an individual's or group's position within a hierarchical social structure. It comes all under it that how societies progress or stagnate because of their local, regional or global economy. The present study is an effort to systematically understand the concept of socio-economic development and its parameters in tribal communities and backward areas of Himachal Pradesh. This study brings together the extant, vast literature available on socio economic studies in Himachal Pradesh. The study also highlights the parameters of socio economic development in some selected states of India.

1. Introduction

1.1 Socio Economic Profile

Socio –economic profile means that how economic activity affects and is shaped by social processes. Socio-economic development is the process of social and economic development in a society. Socio –economic development is measured with indicators such as GDP, life expectancy, literacy, levels of living and levels of employment. Changes in less tangible factors are also considered as the indicators of socio-economic profile such as personal dignity, freedom of association, personal safety, freedom from fear of physical harm and extent of participation in civil societies. Definition of socio-economic profile varies across time and place. It is possible for the same nomenclature to be ascribed different meanings and to be measured differently across education sectors, policy arenas and state and national jurisdictions. Socio- economic profile is a complex and relative concept. It is reasonable to expect that it will mean different things in different contexts. Broadly, socio-economic profile is defined in terms of social, cultural, and economic resources, the extent to which individuals and groups have access to these resources and the relative value ascribed to the resources held by different individuals and groups.

Socio-economic set up has been defined by different organizations differently. The Central Statistical Office (CSO) brought out a publication which is a collection of selected indicators titled "Socio-Economic Indicators for India". For the first time in 1987 it was recognized to present socio-economic scenario in figures. As the first publication was found quite useful by the users, CSO started bringing it out regularly with revised title namely 'Socio-Economic Statistics for India' with effect from 1993. Socio-economic profile is the tool that provided the bird eye view of the groups of community in order to ensure sustainable development in the economy. Government of India collected some important information regarding socio-economic profile of people of India in 2011 population census. It has included under socio-economic profile population, education, disability, religion, SC's/ST's status, employment, income and sources of income, asset, housing and land etc. and collected data regarding these.

There are a variety of issues relating to socio-economic profile which have produced considerable debate. These include the explicit or implicit theoretical approach, whether continuous or categorical measures are used, the assignment of occupations and occupational groups to measure socio-economic profile of an individual. Socio-economic conditions no matter how it is defined, importantly influences the livelihood of laborers as well as other people. It is important to examine the relationship between particular dimensions of socio-economic conditions and its effect on the labour force working in a society.

2. Objectives of the study:

1. To systematically review the literature available on socio-economic development of tribal and backward areas of Himachal Pradesh
2. To relate socio-economic development of tribal and backward areas of Himachal Pradesh with other states.

3. Research Methodology

The present study is descriptive in nature. The method employed in the study is systematic literature review. Data was collected from various secondary sources. The previous studies on socio economic development in tribal and backward areas were thoroughly reviewed, studied and analyzed to understand the current landscape of the concept. Evidence and facts have also been picked up from studies not only in Himachal Pradesh but also from other states of India.

4. Systematic Literature Review

4.1 Literature, Facts and Evidence

Singh, Kumar (2014) conducted a study to understand the geographic and socio-economic realities of Himachal Pradesh. They inferred that Himachal Pradesh is primarily an agrarian state. Most of the people in rural areas are dependent on agricultural produce. However, growth rate of the state is higher than the growth rate at the national level. **Kumar (2007)** conducted a study to sketch out different levels of socio-economic development in the state of Himachal Pradesh during the decade of 1990s. Secondary data were used at a disaggregated level of districts, the study concluded that the district of Lahaul Spiti, Solan, Shimla, Kinnaur, Sirmour and Kullu were more developed as compared to Chamba, Una, Mandi, Hamirpur, Kangra, and Bilaspur, both in 1991 as well as in 2001. The study further revealed that disparities in the economic sector appeared to have increased with respect to industrial development and urbanization but, declined with respect to per capita income, secondary sector contribution in the district domestic product and the work participation rate. It was also found that disparities in case of human resource development were markedly down for literacy rate and availability of schools but got aggravated for the health facilities during the decade 1991-2001. The study suggested the attention of policy makers to design and implement suitable alternative development strategies for the less endowed and mild hill districts so that the skewness in development is narrowed down to possible extent. **Mehta (2006)** studied socio-economic impact of agricultural diversification in Theog tehsil of Shimla district. The sample constituted of 141 households and 97 per cent of the respondents were males. It was found that agriculture was their ancestral occupation whereas, 77 per cent of the respondents were engaged in horticulture. Most of the respondents (35%) were illiterate and among the educated ones, most of the respondents (26%) had received education up to matric level only. **Jharta (2006)** studied socio-economic status of Gaddis of Rulehd panchayat in Shahpur tehsil of Kangra district. Study of 165 households of Gaddis living in different villages of Shahpur tehsil revealed that majority of them (27.17%) were engaged in sheep rearing and agricultural work. Most of them (83.13%) were married. Vast majority of respondents (74.7%) live in kuchha houses. The study concluded that many changes have occurred in various aspects of socio-economic lives of Gaddis, for example, preferring modern jobs than traditional and disintegration of joint family system into nuclear set up. **Patnaik and Singh (2005)** conducted a survey to know socio-economic conditions of Gaddis in Kangra district of H.P. survey was conducted in four blocks of Kangra district and it was found that 93 per cent of the gaddis had access to piped drinking water, 92 per cent had access to electricity and 90 per cent were well connected by roads. Male literacy was 80 per cent and that of females was 63per cent. The study concluded that poverty is higher among SC Gaddis as compared to non-SC Gaddis. **Kumari (2003)** conducted a socio-economic study of Mebar panchayat in district Kinnaur. The sample size of the study was 58 heads of the households. Agriculture and horticulture were the main source of income generation. It was found that 41 per cent of the people were agriculturists, 27.59 per cent were government employees and the rest were engaged in other occupations. Out of the total households, 37.93 per cent were primary educated. 31.04 per cent were illiterate and 13.79 per cent had passed matric and only 3.45 per cent had passed their +2 examinations. 36.71 per cent of the people joint family system. 48.28 per cent lived in kuchha houses and 10.34 per cent in pucca houses. The study emphasized over effective implementations of government welfare policies to improve the socio-economic profile of residents of Mebar panchayat. **Bala (2001)** too did a village level analysis of socio-economic development of Chamba district. Density of Chamba is 71 persons per square kilometer against the state average of 109 persons per square kilometer. Proportion of females in rural areas (967) is higher than that of females in urban areas (866). Sex ratio was 959 females per thousand males. Overall literacy rate was 62.9 per cent. Male and female literacy were 76.4 per cent and 48.8 per cent respectively. Literacy rate of rural areas as 60.6 per cent and that of urban areas was 89.5 per cent. 75.04 per cent of the villages had educational facility and 26.83 per cent had medical facility. The study concluded that the socio-economic life of people in the hills of Chamba is very peculiar in comparison with other districts. **Ram (1996)** studied the socio-economic impact of ACC plant on four villages surrounding the cement factory site in district Bilaspur. Primary as well as secondary data was collected and samples were selected randomly. The study found that over the years the cement factory had benefitted quite a few families of Barmana and the surrounding villages. People had changed their homes from kachha to pucca. Employment among youth had also increased. The study has also revealed that many employees had also migrated from nearby states to get employment in this cement factory. **Thakur (1991)** conducted a study on 137 household of Bilaspur district of Himachal Pradesh to examine socio-economic status of economically weaker sections which constituted small farmers and laborers. Households in rural areas with uneconomic size of holding supplemented their income by working as laborers on daily wage basis. Per capita value of household assets was lower among households falling on marginal size of holdings. Households having marginal size of holdings had higher percentage of unemployment. It was revealed that size of expenditure on food items decreased with the increase in the level of income. All the households belonged to below poverty line. **Manohar (1991)** conducted a study on socio-economic upliftment of Gujjar tribe of Himachal Pradesh. He studied that illiteracy was common feature among Gujjars. Most of them were under debt because of unawareness about modern techniques of dairy farming. He concluded that legal measures for promotion of welfare of Gujjars were slow and majority of Gujjars lived below subsistence level. Main reason for unsatisfactory performance was small allocation of funds coupled with poor implementation of various welfare schemes and policies.

Dogra (1990) analyzed the relationship between socio-economic factors and the size of the family. The field study was conducted in the Kumarsain town of Shimla district of Himachal Pradesh. For collection of data, personal interview method was used. The study revealed that as compared to economic factors, socio-cultural factors turned out to be more important in determining the family size. Education status has direct bearing on family size. Formal education of females significantly affected the family size. **Shikha and Saraswat (1990)** studied the socio-economic structure of Kairi village of Shimla district. The concluded that horticulture was the main occupation of the households and every one owned a livestock for milk and dung purposes. The study also pointed out that per capita income of the village was `12,284. No family was found below poverty line and the village was well organized socially as well as politically. **Verma (1989)** conducted a study with a view to examine the socio-economic conditions of the economically weaker sections in Bilaspur district. A sample of 137 households was selected for the study. The sample constituted both marginal and small farmers, agriculture laborers and backward classes in rural areas. She concluded that the

households in rural areas with small size of holdings supplemented their income by working as laborers. The percentage share of agricultural income to the total household income increased with an increase in the size of holdings. The weaker sections were confronted with a number of socio-economic problems such as high dependency ratio, low literacy percentage, low income, high consumption expenditure, unemployment and a high incidence of indebtedness in the rural areas of district Bilaspur.

4.2 Studies from Directorate of Economics and Statistics of Different Districts of Himachal Pradesh

District Statistical Office, Reckongpeo (1985) conducted a socio-economic survey of the economy, the possibility of development in Kinnaur district. The study was carried out in 8 villages of three blocks and covered 120 households spread all over the three blocks of the district. According to 1981 census, the literacy percentage of Kinnaur district stood at 36.84 per cent against 42.40 per cent of the state as a whole. The average household income varied from ` 565 to ` 13000. The main source of household income in the sample area was agriculture, animal husbandry, poultry, fisheries and horticulture.

Directorate of Economics and Statistics, Himachal Pradesh (1985) conducted a socio-economic survey in slum area of Ladakhi Mohalla in Shimla town. A sample of 240 household including both scheduled and non-scheduled caste was selected. The study revealed that about 34 per cent of the people in the mohalla were illiterate and major portion of households income come from wages which contribute 94.45 per cent of total household income. About 57.78 per cent of total consumption expenditure was made on food grain, 10.39 per cent on clothes, 10.52 per cent on fuel and electricity and 4.16 per cent on education. It was observed that students studying in Government middle school were mainly children of scavengers and belonged to scheduled class tribe. Health and sanitation conditions were found to be poor.

Directorate of Economics and Statistics, Government of Himachal Pradesh (1984) conducted a survey of Bharmour in Chamba district with a view to study the socio – economic conditions of the inhabitants of Bharmour tribal area. One of the objectives of the survey was to know the impact of various developmental programmes on the people. A sample of 147 households was selected. The study revealed that poor inhabitants earned their livelihood mainly through agriculture and rearing of sheep. About 76 per cent of the selected population was illiterate. Out of 24 literate persons, 19.4 per cent were below matric. About 55.2 per cent of total sample population was living below poverty line.

4.3 Studies on Socio Economic Development of Other States of India

Table 1: Socio- Economic Development Related Studies in Other States of India

S.No.	Study (Year)	District/State	Communities/ Areas of study	Results
1.	Sharma (1992)	Punjab	Socio economic conditions of Scheduled Castes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kuchha Floor • Thatched roofs • No separate kitchen • No water supply
2.	Singh (1997)	Uttar Pradesh	Socio economic status of Scheduled Castes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Half of them landless • Engaged in low paid and low skilled jobs • Low literacy levels
3.	Bendapudi et al. (2005)	Kurnool, Andhra Pradesh	Household members of watershed villages	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Average size of the family was 5-6 members • Average educational qualification was class V.
4.	Vishvanath (2008)	Kerala	Migrant Labourers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Very poor educational status • Being paid either on daily basis or weekly basis
5.	Piscal (2009)	Pune, Maharashtra	Nomadic Vadar Community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nomadic and hardworking people • Half of the respondents were illiterate
6.	Khan Et. Al. (2009)	Srinagar, Jammu and Kashmir	Silk Weavers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Low income but higher productivity at work • Worked for 11-15 hours per day • Suffered from health ailments like back pain
7.	Vimla (2010)	Trissur, Kerala	Domestic women servants	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 42% married, 33% widows or divorcees • Very less women domestic servants got nutritious food • Suffered from skin diseases and other health ailments
8.	Siddapajji et al. (2011)	Karnataka	People employed in sericulture	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Diverse self -employment opportunities • Low investment with higher returns
9.	Akhtar (2012)	Assam	Handloom Cottage Industry Workers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 90% workers highly literate • High standard of living • Most of them lived in pucca houses
10.	Madhur (2013)	Mandi Gobindgarh, Punjab	Migrant steel workers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 100% workers from rural areas • Most of the workers have primary level education
11.	Venkateswaram (2014)	Tirunelveli, Tamil Nadu	Handloom weavers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Illiteracy • Low income • Health issues like knee and back pain
12.	Ansari et.al (2015)	Bundelkhand, Uttar Pradesh	Women Beedi Workers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Barred from basic facilities • Dissatisfied from jobs
13.	Singh et. al. (2016)	Maharashtra	Farmers in drought prone areas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Most of them belong to Below Poverty Line • No source of irrigation

Findings

Systematic evidence and review from the study reveals that most backward communities and tribal areas of Himachal Pradesh have very limited access to basic amenities of life. Most of the statistical and economic survey reports infer that there is a vast scope to bring people of tribal areas and backward communities into mainstream economy. Agriculture is the prime source of income and most of these communities stick to their roots rather than exploring opportunities outside their towns or districts. Apart from agriculture, horticulture and sheep rearing are other important occupations. It has been observed that the socio economic conditions have improved over years. The studies conducted in 1980s suggest that majority of tribal and backward population of Himachal were illiterates and had very little access to clean drinking water, sanitation and electricity. However, studies, post 1995, suggest that road connectivity, electricity connections and piped drinking water facilities were available. The literacy rate has also gone up after 1995 and people from tribal communities started getting government jobs. Few people from backward communities who did not have land for agriculture worked as labourers. Welfare schemes very prevalent but their implementation was not proper. As far as family size is concerned, it is not the economic condition but the socio economic condition that determined the family size. The Scheduled Caste (SC) community was the most affected. Most of the children of SCs studied in government schools. The health and sanitation conditions of these communities were also poor.

Scope for Future Research

The present study is an effort to systematically analyze and present the literature available of socio economic development of backward communities of tribal areas of Himachal Pradesh. However, this study is limited only to the state of Himachal Pradesh. There is a vast scope to extend the study to other states of India. A survey can be done on specific backward and tribal communities to empirically test the conceptual discussion. The parameters of socio economic development also keep evolving with different societies in different times. Hence, some more factors can be taken into consideration in future studies.

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