

SOCIO-ECONOMIC DEPRIVATION AMONG MGNREGS BENEFICIARY HOUSEHOLDS IN PUNJAB

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The present paper is an attempt to analyse the socio-economic deprivation among MGNREGS beneficiary households in the rural areas of Punjab. To analyse the results, a sample of 440 MGNREGS beneficiary households has been selected with multi-stage random sampling. The analysis reveals that majority of the MGNREGS beneficiary households, i.e., 81.59 per cent are belonging to scheduled caste households. The analysis reveals that overall in Punjab 36.25 per cent persons are illiterate, whereas 22.27, 14.61, 14.04 and 10.07 per cent persons have education up to the primary, middle, matric and higher secondary level respectively. This analysis brought out the fact that due to their low income, poverty and lack of scholarships, the children belonging to these poor people are able to obtain only formal education up to middle/matric level. Majority of the beneficiary households, i.e., 85.00 per cent are working as wage labourers. The results also show that 53.86 and 56.69 per cent of sampled households have toilet and bathroom facility respectively and still 71.36 per cent of households are using dung cake and wood as a major source of fuel in kitchen. The socio-economic status of MGNREGS beneficiary households shows that lack of access to equal opportunities and productive assets as well as social exclusion strategies, they are lagging behind in development outcomes- access to education, health, housing, sanitation and other basic amenities of life.

Keywords: MGNREGS, Literacy, Sex Ratio, Housing Conditions, Sanitation Facilities

INTRODUCTION

The socio-economic status of a society is a composition of various factors such as population, housing, education, economic activities and availability of basic amenities of life. It is a well known fact that education, employment opportunities and land has been distributed unequally among different sections of the society. Lack of skill, access to productive assets and employment opportunities pose challenge for livelihood security for privileged sections of the society.

In India, majority of the workers are dependent on informal sector for their livelihood. Most of the workers are either casual in nature or self-dependent. These workers have no security, no legal contract, no health benefits and other benefits extended to the worker of the formal sector. Their vulnerability is extended by the necessity to remain mobile due to the saturation and lack of demand in the agriculture sector. They generally have to work outside the native place and face uncertainties due to unfamiliar conditions, work expectation and job profile. Further they are, by and large, paid less than the nominal wage for any particular work owing to basic limitations like lower education, poor skills and dearth of capital (Kanan, 2010 and Viswanathan et al., 2014).

A major weakness in the economy is that the growth is not perceived as being sufficiently inclusive for many groups, especially Scheduled Castes (SCs), Scheduled Tribes (STs), and minorities. So, inclusive growth strategy which has been followed sincerely after 2004 has attracted much attention of policy makers because under new liberal policies, decreasing public investment is creating a number of issues in which social, economic as well as political inclusion of all in general and for weaker sections, i.e., SC, ST, landless and small marginal farmers in particular is one of the most important.

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The Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (MGNREGS) is a historic legislation passed by the government of India. It was enacted to address the crucial issues of unemployment and poverty in rural India. This scheme guarantees a hundred day of unskilled employment to each household in every financial year at an equal wage rate for males and females workers (Ministry of Law and Justice, 2005 and Nair et al., 2009). The most important change MGNREGS represents is that it gives rise to programme that spring not from its willful benevolence, but as a legally binding response by the states to a right to work.

Punjab, an agriculturally developed state, is facing the problem of unemployment in general and in the rural areas particular. Modernisation and declining productivity has decreased the ability of absorption of more labour force in this sector. Industry is also not well-established in Punjab. This has created the livelihood problems for unskilled landless, marginal and small farmers (Department of Planning, Punjab, 2009). So in the present situation of misery, public works like MGNREGS can be become source of their livelihood. MGNREGS operation in Punjab was introduced in phase manner. In the first phase, it was launched in one of districts (Hoshiarpur) of Punjab since February 02, 2006. In the second phase, it was extended to three more districts, namely, Amritsar, Nawanshahar and Jalandhar during 2007-08. And, the scheme was further extended to all districts of Punjab with effect from April 3, 2008.

LITERATURE REVIEW

A large number of studies have been conducted to assess the various aspects like implementation, impact, problems, importance and effectiveness of MGNREGS. Many studies analysed that MGNREGS is playing a key role in improving the socio-economic conditions of rural beneficiaries both directly as well as indirectly. A large number of SC/ST families benefited under this scheme. MGNREGS has an ability to lead the economy towards a labour intensive growth path, especially in the light of low and declining growth rate of productive employment (ILO and Government of Bihar, 2009, Reddy and Upendranadh, 2010, Gupta, 2010, Shobha and Gopal, 2012, Liu and Barrett, 2012).

Studies conducted by (Jha, Raghav & Shylashi, 2008, Mehrotra, 2008, Bhagwan, 2009, ILO & Government of Bihar, 2009 & Biswas, 2011) revealed that due to lack of assets poor or weaker sections of the society particularly those are unskilled and working in hard as well as low wage rate areas largely dependent upon public works. MGNREGS provided them an opportunity for employment and direct participation in economic as well as in political decisions which would result in increment in social status of these vulnerable sections.

A study conducted on socio-economic characteristic of MGNREGS beneficiary households in Punjab by Singh, Singh & Singh (2015) regarding ownership of land holdings pointed out that the percentage share of landless people is highest among scheduled caste, i.e., 98.86 followed by backward caste (93.92) and general caste (45.31) households whereas as a whole, 94.32 per cent beneficiary households are landless in the rural areas of Punjab.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The present paper is an attempt to analyse the demographic and socio-economic status of sampled MGNREGS beneficiary households in the rural areas of Punjab. It takes into consideration the following specific objectives:

1. To examine the social, educational, occupational and economics status of MGNREGS beneficiary households.
2. To study the housing, sanitation and availability basic amenities of MGNREGS beneficiary households in rural Punjab.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The present study is based on the primary as well as secondary data. The primary data has been collected through a well-structured schedule /questionnaire. The selected MGNREGS beneficiary households have provided the first-hand information about the scheme in the rural areas of Punjab. In the present study, a sample of 440 MGNREGS beneficiary households has been selected with the help of multi-stage random sampling method at the district, development block and village level.

On the basis of average persondays generated under MGNREGS in 2013-14, all districts have been categorised into three categories, i.e., high participation districts, moderate participation districts and low participation districts. At the first stage, three districts, i.e., Fatehgarh Sahib (high participation district), Fazilka (moderate participation district) and Hoshiarpur (low participation district) have been selected purposively. At the second stage, nine developmental blocks, three from each district have been selected. At the third stage, three villages from each selected block have been selected. Thus, a total of 27 villages have been selected. Finally, a sample of 440 MGNREGS beneficiary households consisting of 106 from Fatehgarh Sahib, 229 from Fazilka and 105 from Hoshiarpur district has been selected.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

A society is composition of various social, economic and political institutions. Any evaluation of the status of particular sections of the society can be done on the basis of social framework, social structure, cultural norms, religious beliefs and value judgements.

Social Status of Households

Indian society is primarily an identity-based society. This identity of an individual stems from caste, ethnic, religious or even regional belongings amongst others. These identities unfortunately are still entrenched in caste and religious hierarchal institutions, governing social conduct and market transactions. This is seen to be more prevalent in the rural areas, where poverty is also high. Though the strict one to one correspondence of the broad caste categories with class has eroded substantially over time, there still remain strong linkages between the two, which have been strengthened by persistent cultural, social and religious ideas and their practice. India, therefore, suffers from its unique problems with their implications for livelihood outcomes, somewhat different from societies stratified only on class lines (Thorat, 2010).

The data relating to social status of MGNREGS beneficiary sampled households in the rural areas of Punjab is given in Table 1. The table shows that overall, majority of beneficiary households, i.e., 67.73 per cent are from Sikh community whereas 32.05 per cent are from the Hindu community and only 0.22 per cent from Christian community. The district-wise religious status reveals that 93.40 per cent households of Fatehgarh Sahib district, 65.07 per cent households of Fazilka district and 47.62 per cent households of Hoshiarpur districts are belonging to the Sikh community whereas, the percentage share of Hindu community for respective districts is 6.60, 34.93 and 51.43 respectively.

Table 1: Social Status of Beneficiary Sampled Households in Rural Punjab

S. No.	Social Indicators	Fatehgarh Sahib	Fazilka	Hoshiarpur	Rural Punjab
1.	Religion				
	Sikhism	99 (93.40)	149 (65.07)	50 (47.62)	298 (67.73)
	Hinduism	7 (6.60)	80 (34.93)	54 (51.43)	141 (32.05)
	Christian	0 (0.00)	0 (0.00)	1 (0.95)	1 (0.22)
	Total	106 (100.00)	229 (100.00)	105 (100.00)	440 (100.00)
2.	Caste				
	Scheduled caste	88 (83.02)	179 (78.17)	92 (87.62)	359 (81.59)
	Backward caste	12 (11.32)	38 (16.59)	6 (5.71)	56 (12.73)
	General caste	6 (5.66)	12 (5.24)	7 (6.67)	25 (5.68)
	Total	106 (100.00)	229 (100.00)	105 (100.00)	440 (100.00)
3.	Type of family				
	Joint	28 (26.42)	89 (38.86)	36 (34.29)	153 (34.77)
	Nuclear	78 (73.58)	140 (61.14)	69 (65.71)	287 (65.23)
	Total	106 (100.00)	229 (100.00)	105 (100.00)	440 (100.00)
4.	Head of family				
	Male	93 (87.74)	212 (92.58)	94 (89.52)	399 (90.68)
	Female	13 (12.26)	17 (7.42)	11 (10.48)	41 (9.32)
	Total	106 (100.00)	229 (100.00)	105 (100.00)	440 (100.00)
5.	Marital status				
	Married	236 (49.79)	508 (50.75)	206 (43.64)	950 (48.79)
	Unmarried	90 (18.99)	185 (18.48)	168 (35.59)	443 (22.75)
	Others*	148 (31.22)	308 (30.77)	98 (20.77)	554 (28.46)
	Total	474 (100.00)	1001 (100.00)	472 (100.00)	1947 (100.00)

Source: Field Survey, 2014-15.

Figures given in parentheses indicate the percentages.

* Divorcee, Widow, Widower, Children, below marriageable age etc.

The caste wise analysis shows that majority of the households, i.e., 81.59 per cent belong to scheduled caste category, 12.73 per cent are from backward caste and the remaining 5.68 per cent belong to general caste categories. The studies conducted by Jha, Gaiha & Shankar, 2008; Liu & Barrett, 2012 revealed that majority of the MGNREGS beneficiary households are belonging to weaker sections such as scheduled castes and scheduled tribes of the society.

The table further reveals that majority of the beneficiary sampled households, i.e., 65.23 per cent households are a part of the nuclear family system whereas 34.77 per cent are living in joint family system in the rural areas of Punjab. The percentage share of nuclear family system is the highest (73.58) in Fatehgarh Sahib district followed by Hoshiarpur district (65.71) and the lowest (61.14) in Fazilka district. The classification of the beneficiary sampled households according to headship of families reveals that majority of the households, i.e., 90.68 per cent households have male head whereas only 9.32 per cent households have female head because of death of their husband and having no male member in their families. The district-wise percentage share of male headed families is 87.74, 92.58 and 89.52 in Fatehgarh Sahib, Fazilka and Hoshiarpur districts respectively. The marital status of beneficiary households reveals that 48.79 per cent persons are married, 22.75 per cent are unmarried and 28.46 per cent persons represent the category of others (widow, widower, divorce and children). The percentage share of unmarried persons is higher in Hoshiarpur district because of higher level of literacy.

Educational Levels of Households

Education is the most important instrument for social, economic and political transformation. A well educated population, equipped with the relevant knowledge, attitudes and skills is essential for economic and social development in the twenty-first century. Education is the most potent tool for socio-economic mobility and a key instrument for building an equitable and just society. Education provides skills and competencies for economic well-being. Education strengthens democracy by imparting to citizens the tools needed to fully participate in the governance process. Education also acts as an integrative force in society, imparting values that foster social cohesion and national identity (Planning Commission, 2013).

The educational levels of beneficiary sampled households has presented in Table 2. The results highlighted that overall in Punjab 36.25 per cent persons are illiterate, whereas 22.27, 14.61, 14.04 and 10.07 per cent persons have obtained education up to the primary, middle, matric and higher secondary levels respectively. There have been very few persons who have obtained the graduation and post-graduation (1.90 per cent) as well as professional and technical (0.86 per cent) education.

The percentage share of illiterate persons is the highest (48.30) in Fazilka, followed by Fatehgarh Sahib (31.94) and the lowest (17.66) in Hoshiarpur district. This analysis brought out that the fact that due to their low income and higher incidence of poverty as well as lack of financial assistance and lack of awareness, majority of the children belonging to these poor people are able to obtain lower levels of education. Their share in professional and technical education is negligible because they are unable to bear the high cost of these courses. The level of illiteracy is higher in Fazilka district as compared to Fatehgarh Sahib and Hoshiarpur districts due to various reasons such as border area, backwardness of people, low level of income, lack of employment opportunities and lack of public as well as private institutions. These results are supported by the studies conducted by Singh, Singh & Singh, 2015; Hirway, Saluja & Yadav, 2010 on demographic and socio-economic conditions of MGNREGS beneficiary households.

Table 2: Educational Levels of MGNREGS Beneficiary Sampled Households in Rural Punjab

S. No.	Education Level	Fatehgarh Sahib	Fazilka	Hoshiarpur	Rural Punjab
1.	Illiterate	138 (31.94)	412 (48.30)	80 (17.66)	630 (36.25)
2.	Primary	110 (25.46)	181 (21.22)	96 (21.19)	387 (22.27)
3.	Middle	74 (17.13)	83 (9.73)	97 (21.41)	254 (14.61)
4.	Matric	64 (14.81)	81 (9.50)	99 (21.85)	244 (14.04)
5.	Secondary	39 (9.03)	79 (9.26)	57 (12.58)	175 (10.07)
6.	Graduation and Post Graduation	7 (1.63)	14 (1.64)	12 (2.66)	33 (1.90)
7.	Professional and Technical	0 (0.00)	3 (0.35)	12 (2.65)	15 (0.86)
8.	Total	432 (100.00)	853 (100.00)	453 (100.00)	1738 (100.00)

Source: Field Survey, 2014-15.

Figures given in parentheses indicate the percentages.

Note: 0-7 years children have been excluded.

Occupational Status of Sample Households

Unorganised or informal sector constitutes a pivotal part of the Indian economy. More than 90 per cent of workforce and about 50 per cent of the national product are accounted by the informal economy. A high proportion of socially and economically underprivileged sections of society are concentrated in the informal economic activities. The high levels of growth of the Indian economy during the past two decades are accompanied by increasing informalisation. There has been new dynamism of the informal economy in terms of output, employment and earnings. Faster and inclusive growth needs special attention to informal economy. Sustaining high levels of growth are also intertwined with improving domestic demand of those engaged in informal economy, and addressing the needs of the sector in terms of credit, skills, technology, marketing and infrastructure (Government of India, 2012).

Table 3 reflects the primary occupation of sampled households in the rural areas of Punjab. The table clearly shows that majority of the beneficiary households, i.e., 85.00 per cent are working as wage labourers. Among these, 67.50 per cent are engaged in non-farm activities, 15.23 per cent are casual labourers or agricultural labourers on daily wage in agriculture and 2.27 per cent are working

as permanent or yearly basis agricultural labourers in agriculture. The percentage share of non-farm workers is 75.47, 58.95 and 78.10 in Fatehgarh Sahib, Fazilka and Hoshiarpur districts respectively whereas the percentage share of casual labourers in agriculture for respective districts is 7.55, 23.58 and 4.76 respectively. Due to lack of employment opportunities, poverty and landlessness, agricultural labour is major source of livelihood for majority of the households in Fazilka district.

Table 3: Primary Occupation of MGNREGS Beneficiary Sampled Households in Rural Punjab

S. No.	Occupational Category	Fatehgarh Sahib	Fazilka	Hoshiarpur	Rural Punjab
1.	Wage Worker				
	(a) Non-farm wage workers	80 (75.47)	135 (58.95)	82 (78.10)	297 (67.50)
	(b) Agricultural Labourers (Casual labour in agriculture)	8 (7.55)	54 (23.58)	5 (4.76)	67 (15.23)
	(c) Agricultural Labourers (permanent or yearly basis)	0 (0.00)	10 (4.37)	0 (0.00)	10 (2.27)
	Sub-total (a+b+c)	88 (83.02)	199 (86.90)	87 (82.86)	374 (85.00)
2.	Self-employed in Agriculture	0 (0.00)	4 (1.75)	1 (0.95)	5 (1.14)
3.	Government Employees	5 (4.72)	4 (1.75)	2 (1.90)	11 (2.50)
4.	Private Employees	5 (4.72)	10 (4.37)	5 (4.76)	20 (4.55)
5.	Artisans	2 (1.89)	3 (1.31)	6 (5.71)	11 (2.50)
6.	Others*	6 (5.66)	9 (3.92)	4 (3.82)	19 (4.31)
7.	Total (1-6)	106 (100.00)	229 (100.00)	105 (100.00)	440 (100.00)

Source: Field Survey, 2014-15.

Figures given in parentheses indicate percentages.

* Self-employed in household's industrial units, shopkeepers, drivers etc.

Due to higher incidence of landlessness among these households, the percentage share of self-employed in agriculture is negligible. The share of government employees is 4.72, 1.75 and 1.90 per cent in Fatehgarh Sahib, Fazilka and Hoshiarpur districts respectively, while as a whole, this is only 2.50 per cent. This is mainly due to their lower level of education as well as lack of employment opportunities in the government sector. The percentage share of private sector employees is 4.72, 4.37 and 4.76 per cent respectively, whereas as a whole, this is 4.55 per cent among all the beneficiary sampled households. The table further show that 1.89, 1.31 and 5.71 per cent households in Fatehgarh Sahib, Fazilka and Hoshiarpur districts are artisans respectively. The percentage share of those belonging to the other such as shopkeepers, drivers is 4.31 among the beneficiary households in rural Punjab.

Economic and Employment Status of Households

Economic attainment refers to access to or command over resources by households and individuals, which enhances their capabilities. At the most elementary level, the status of employment of household members and ownership of assets determine a household's income, which to a very large extent determines the individual's command over resources. The most important indicator reflecting lack of economic attainment is the incidence of poverty (Government of India, 2011). It is a well known fact that majority of the weaker sections in the rural areas are landless and they are dependent upon daily wage work for their livelihood security.

The data regarding economic and employment status of MGNREGS beneficiary sampled households is given in the Table 4. As per classification of beneficiary sampled households according to ration cards held by them, 68.64 per cent of the households fall in the category of below poverty line (BPL) and 31.36 per cent in the above poverty line (APL) category.

The data regarding ownership of landholdings points out that 96.59 per cent of the beneficiary sampled households are landless. The district-wise analysis shows that the percentage share of landless households is 99.06, 94.32 and 99.05 in Fatehgarh Sahib, Fazilka and Hoshiarpur districts respectively. The study conducted by Singh, Singh & Singh (2015) also highlighted that 94.32 per cent of the beneficiary households are landless in the rural areas of Punjab.

The table further reflects that 27.32 per cent are earners, 42.58 per cent are earning dependents, and 30.10 per cent are dependents. The percentage share of earners is 27.22, 27.87 and 26.27 in Fatehgarh Sahib, Fazilka and Hoshiarpur districts respectively, whereas the share of dependents is 31.64, 32.77 and 22.88 per cent for respective districts in Punjab. The employment status of MGNREGS beneficiary sampled households reveals that 3.64 per cent are working on regular basis, 7.73 per cent are self-employed and 88.63 per cent are casual workers. The district wise analysis reveals that the percentage share of households working on regular or permanent basis is 5.66, 2.62 and 3.81 in Fatehgarh Sahib, Fazilka and Hoshiarpur districts respectively, whereas the share of self-employed is 6.60, 6.99 and 10.48 per cent respectively and the share of casual workers is 87.74, 90.3.9 and 85.71 per cent respectively.

The sector-wise employment status points out that 97.27 per cent of the sampled households are working in informal sector whereas the percentage share of households working in formal sector is only 2.73. The district-wise percentage share of households working in informal sector is 94.34, 98.25 and 98.10 in Fatehgarh Sahib, Fazilka and Hoshiarpur districts respectively whereas the share of households working in formal sector in respective districts is 5.66, 1.75 and 1.90 per cent in the rural areas of Punjab.

**Table 4: Economic and Employment Status of MGNREGS Beneficiary
Sampled Households in Rural Punjab**

S. No.	Economic status	Fatehgarh Sahib	Fazilka	Hoshiarpur	Rural Punjab
1.	Household category				
	BPL	62 (58.49)	169 (73.80)	71 (67.62)	302 (68.64)
	APL	44 (41.51)	60 (26.20)	34 (32.38)	138 (31.36)
	Total	106 (100.00)	229 (100.00)	105 (100.00)	440 (100.00)
2.	Land ownership				
	Land Owner	1 (0.94)	13 (5.68)	1 (0.95)	15 (3.41)
	Landless	105 (99.06)	216 (94.32)	104 (99.05)	425 (96.59)
	Total	106 (100.00)	229 (100.00)	105 (100.00)	440 (100.00)
3.	Economic status				
	Earning	129 (27.22)	279 (27.87)	124 (26.27)	532 (27.32)
	Earning Dependent	195 (41.14)	394 (39.36)	240 (50.85)	829 (42.58)
	Dependent	150 (31.64)	328 (32.77)	108 (22.88)	586 (30.10)
	Total	474 (100.00)	1001 (100.00)	472 (100.00)	1947 (100.00)
4.	Employment status				
	Regular	6 (5.66)	6 (2.62)	4 (3.81)	16 (3.64)
	Self-employed	7 (6.60)	16 (6.99)	11 (10.48)	34 (7.73)
	Casual	93 (87.74)	207 (90.39)	90 (85.71)	390 (88.63)
	Total	106 (100.00)	229 (100.00)	105 (100.00)	440 (100.00)
5.	Sector				
	Formal	6 (5.66)	4 (1.75)	2 (1.90)	12 (2.73)
	Informal	100 (94.34)	225 (98.25)	103 (98.10)	428 (97.27)
	Total	106 (100.00)	229 (100.00)	105 (100.00)	440 (100.00)

Source: Field Survey, 2014-15.

Figures given in parentheses indicate the percentages,

* have little children, have no children, above schooling age, nobody is going school etc.

Housing Conditions of Sample Households

Housing is one of the basic requirements for the survival of human beings. Ownership of a house provides significant economic security and social status for a citizen in the society. Stable, affordable and accessible housing is directly and indirectly linked to human well-being. One can easily understand the socio-economic status of a family just by watching physical attributes of their housing. Good housing and its surroundings indicate the better standard of living of the family. Good housing provides facilities for education, recreation and many other facets of life. Housing provides the foundation for a home where a human being becomes human and cultivates his/her personality. A person deprived of this basic need faces all odds of life and remains discriminated and marginalised in the society. The situation of the scheduled tribes, scheduled castes and the other socially and economically backward class families are worst affected by poor housing conditions. Shelter is a basic need of a citizen which is critical for determining the quality of human life. A roof over the head endows a shelter-less person, with an essential asset and improves her/his physical and mental well being (Planning Commission, 2013).

The type of dwelling house and housing conditions of sampled households are presented in Table 5. The table reveals that among all the beneficiary households taken together, 74.55, 14.77 and 10.68 per cent households own *semi-pucca*, *pucca* and *kutchha* houses respectively. The district-wise analysis reveals that the percentage share of *pucca* houses is the highest (22.64) in Fatehgarh Sahib district followed by Hoshiarpur district (17.14) and the lowest (10.04) in Fazilka district. The reverse trend has been noticed in the case of *kutchha* type of households which is the highest (11.35 per cent) in Fazilka district, followed by Hoshiarpur district (10.48 per cent) and the lowest (9.43 per cent) in Fatehgarh Sahib district. The conditions of dwelling houses reveal that the percentage share of good condition houses is only 12.26, 5.24 and 8.57 in Fatehgarh Sahib, Fazilka and Hoshiarpur districts respectively whereas, among all the households taken together, the percentage share of good condition houses is 7.73. The table clearly shows that majority of the beneficiary sampled households have average condition houses.

The percentage share of average condition houses is 73.58, 69.43 and 71.43 in Fatehgarh Sahib, Fazilka and Hoshiarpur districts whereas, among all the households taken together, this share is 70.91 per cent. The percentage share of households living in dilapidated houses is the highest (25.33) in Fazilka district followed by Hoshiarpur (20.00) and Fatehgarh Sahib (14.16) districts. Among all the households taken together, the percentage share of households living in dilapidated houses is 21.36. This is mainly because of low levels of income, higher incidence of poverty, lack of gainful employment opportunities etc.

The analysis further provides that as much as, 65.68 per cent have two rooms, while the remaining 18.41, 13.64 and 2.27 per cent households are having one room, three rooms and more than three rooms respectively. The analysis also highlights that overall only 30.00 per cent of the beneficiary sampled households have a separate kitchen whereas the 70.00 per cent have not a separate kitchen. The percentage share of households having separate kitchen in their houses is the highest (41.51) in Fatehgarh Sahib, followed by Hoshiarpur (38.10) and the lowest (20.96) in Fazilka district. This is mainly due to the reason that these poor households cannot afford a separate kitchen in their premises because of higher cost of construction.

Table 5: Types of Dwelling House and Housing Conditions of Beneficiary Sampled Households in Rural Punjab

S. No.	Housing Conditions	Fatehgarh Sahib	Fazilka	Hoshiarpur	Rural Punjab
1.	Type of dwelling house				
	Pucca	24 (22.64)	23 (10.04)	18 (17.14)	65 (14.77)
	Semi-Pucca	72 (67.92)	180 (78.60)	76 (72.38)	328 (74.55)
	Kutchra	10 (9.43)	26 (11.35)	11 (10.48)	47 (10.68)
	Total	106 (100.00)	229 (100.00)	105 (100.00)	440 (100.00)
2.	Condition of dwelling house				
	Good	13 (12.26)	12 (5.24)	9 (8.57)	34 (7.73)
	Average	78 (73.58)	159 (69.43)	75 (71.43)	312 (70.91)
	Dilapidated	15 (14.16)	58 (25.33)	21 (20.00)	94 (21.36)
	Total	106 (100.00)	229 (100.00)	105 (100.00)	440 (100.00)
3.	No. of rooms				
	One	22 (20.75)	50 (21.83)	9 (8.57)	81 (18.41)
	Two	69 (65.09)	145 (63.32)	75 (71.43)	289 (65.68)
	Three	13 (12.27)	28 (12.23)	19 (18.10)	60 (13.64)
	More than three	2 (1.89)	6 (2.62)	2 (1.90)	10 (2.27)
	Total	106 (100.00)	229 (100.00)	105 (100.00)	440 (100.00)
4.	Separate kitchen				
	Yes	44 (41.51)	48 (20.96)	40 (38.10)	132 (30.00)
	No	62 (58.49)	181 (79.04)	65 (61.90)	308 (70.00)
	Total	106 (100.00)	229 (100.00)	105 (100.00)	440 (100.00)

Source: Field Survey, 2014-15.

Figures given in parentheses indicate the percentages

(Good: Walls with Plaster, Average: Walls without Plaster, Dilapidated: Without plaster and doors)

Availability of Sanitation Facilities and Basic Amenities among Sample Households

Individual health and hygiene is largely dependent on adequate availability of drinking water and proper sanitation facilities. Proper sanitation is important not only from the general health point of view but it has a vital role to play in our individual and social life too. Sanitation is one of the basic determinants of quality of life and human development. The consumption of unsafe drinking water, improper disposal of human excreta, improper environmental sanitation and lack of personal and food hygiene have been major causes of many diseases in developing countries like India. In India, large sections of the population are living in the rural areas. Majority of the weaker sections in the rural areas have limited access to safe drinking water and sanitation facilities (Ministry of Rural Development, 2004).

The availability of sanitation facilities among sampled households in the rural areas of Punjab has been demonstrated in Table 6. The table reveals that overall only 53.86 per cent households have toilet facility whereas the percentage share of beneficiary households having toilet facility is 61.32, 48.03 and 59.05 in Fatehgarh Sahib, Fazilka and Hoshiarpur districts respectively. The analysis shows that very few households have good conditions of their toilets. The percentage share of households having average condition toilets is 67.69, 47.27 and 66.13 in Fatehgarh Sahib, Fazilka and Hoshiarpur districts respectively whereas among all the households taken together, this share is 57.81 per cent. The percentage share of households have dilapidated conditions of their toilets is the highest, i.e., 43.64 in Fazilka district followed by Hoshiarpur (20.97) and Fatehgarh Sahib (16.92) districts whereas, among all the households taken together, this share is 30.38.

This analysis points out that only 62.26, 52.40 and 60.00 per cent households have bathroom facility in Fatehgarh Sahib, Fazilka and Hoshiarpur districts respectively, whereas among all the sampled households taken together, it is 56.69. While analysing the condition of their bathrooms, it has been observed that only 15.15, 8.33 and 12.70 per cent households have good conditions of bathrooms in Fatehgarh Sahib, Fazilka and Hoshiarpur districts respectively whereas the percentage share of dilapidated condition of bathrooms for respective districts is 15.15, 41.67 and 19.05.

A person staying in a healthy and sustainable environment can naturally contribute much more to the development process than his counterpart who stays in an unhealthy environment. The availability of basic living facilities like drinking water, bathroom, latrine, housing, availability of electricity and fuel used in kitchen of an individual of a nation is thus a priori requirement for growth and development. At the same time with rapidly growing population, it is perhaps the most difficult task of the respective governments, especially in the developing countries, to create sustainable infrastructure for ensuring decent living of its inhabitants (Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation, 2014).

The data pertaining to the basic amenities of life availed by sampled households is presented in Table 7. The table shows that tap is a major source of drinking water for 75.91 per cent households whereas 14.55 per cent are using hand pump and only 1.36 per cent households have submersible pump. However, the remaining 8.18 per cent households have no source of drinking water in their houses and they are dependent upon others for meeting their water requirements. The district-wise analysis reveals that 89.62 per cent of households in Fatehgarh Sahib, 68.12 per cent of households in Fazilka district and 79.05 per cent of households in Hoshiarpur district use tap for drinking water. The percentage share of households using hand pump is 4.72, 18.34 and 16.19 and submersible pump is 2.83, 0.88 and 0.95 in Fatehgarh Sahib, Fazilka and Hoshiarpur districts respectively whereas the percentage share of households have no own source of water for respective districts is 2.83, 12.66 and 3.81.

Table 6: Sanitation Facilities of MGNREGS Beneficiary Sampled Households in Rural Punjab

S. No.	Sanitation facilities	Fatehgarh Sahib	Fazilka	Hoshiarpur	Rural Punjab
1.	Toilet facility				
	Yes	65 (61.32)	110 (48.03)	62 (59.05)	237 (53.86)
	No	41 (38.68)	119 (51.97)	43 (40.95)	203 (46.14)
	Total	106 (100.00)	229 (100.00)	105 (100.00)	440 (100.00)
2.	Condition of toilets				
	Good	10 (15.39)	10 (9.09)	8 (12.90)	28 (11.81)
	Average	44 (67.69)	52 (47.27)	41 (66.13)	137 (57.81)
	Dilapidated	11 (16.92)	48 (43.64)	13 (20.97)	72 (30.38)
	Total	65 (100.00)	110 (100.00)	62 (100.00)	237 (100.00)
3.	Bathroom facility				
	Yes	66 (62.26)	120 (52.40)	63 (60.00)	249 (56.69)
	No	40 (37.74)	109 (47.60)	42 (40.00)	191 (43.41)
	Total	106 (100.00)	229 (100.00)	105 (100.00)	440 (100.00)
4.	Condition of Bathrooms				
	Good	10 (15.15)	10 (8.33)	8 (12.70)	28 (11.24)
	Average	46 (69.70)	60 (50.00)	43 (68.25)	149 (59.84)
	Dilapidated	10 (15.15)	50 (41.67)	12 (19.05)	72 (28.92)
	Total	66 (100.00)	120 (100.00)	63 (100.00)	249 (100.00)

Source: Field Survey, 2014-15.

Figures given in parentheses indicate the percentages.

The table also shows that only 17.92, 9.61 and 16.19 per cent of sampled households in Fatehgarh Sahib, Fazilka and Hoshiarpur districts respectively have water filters/ R.O. in their houses whereas among all the households taken together, this percentage share is only 13.18 in the rural areas of Punjab. The analysis also shows that only 39.77 per cent of beneficiary sampled households have LPG facility whereas remaining 60.23 are dependent upon others sources. The percentage share of households having LPG facility is 55.66, 27.51 and 50.48 in Fatehgarh Sahib, Fazilka and Hoshiarpur districts respectively.

Table 7: Availability of Basic Amenities of Life among Beneficiary Households in Rural Punjab

S. No.	Basic Amenities	Fatehgarh Sahib	Fazilka	Hoshiarpur	Rural Punjab
1.	Major source of drinking water				
	Hand pump	5 (4.72)	42 (18.34)	17 (16.19)	64 (14.55)
	Tap	95 (89.62)	156 (68.12)	83 (79.05)	334 (75.91)
	Submersible pump	3 (2.83)	2 (0.88)	1 (0.95)	6 (1.36)
	Others*	3 (2.83)	29 (12.66)	4 (3.81)	36 (8.18)
	Total	106 (100.00)	229 (100.00)	105 (100.00)	440 (100.00)
2.	Water Filter or R.O.				
	Yes	19 (17.92)	22 (9.61)	17 (16.19)	58 (13.18)
	No	87 (82.08)	207 (90.39)	88 (83.81)	382 (86.82)
	Total	106 (100.00)	229 (100.00)	105 (100.00)	440 (100.00)
3.	Gas				
	Yes	59 (55.66)	63 (27.51)	53 (50.48)	175 (39.77)
	No	47 (44.34)	166 (72.49)	52 (49.52)	265 (60.23)
	Total	106 (100.00)	229 (100.00)	105 (100.00)	440 (100.00)
4.	Major fuel used in kitchen				
	LPG	43 (40.57)	40 (17.47)	43 (40.95)	126 (28.64)
	Dung Cake & Wood	63 (59.43)	189 (82.53)	62 (59.05)	314 (71.36)
	Total	106 (100.00)	229 (100.00)	105 (100.00)	440 (100.00)
5.	Mobile phone				
	Yes	103 (97.17)	180 (78.60)	99 (94.29)	382 (86.82)
	No	3 (2.83)	49 (21.40)	6 (5.71)	58 (13.18)
	Total	106 (100.00)	229 (100.00)	105 (100.00)	440 (100.00)

Source: Field Survey, 2014-15.

Figures given in parentheses indicate the percentages.

* community motor, neighbours etc.

The analysis also highlights that majority of the beneficiary households in the rural areas of Punjab, i.e., 71.36 per cent use dung cake and wood as a major fuel in their kitchens and remaining 28.64 per cent use Liquid Petroleum Gas (LPG). The percentage share of households using dung cake and wood as a major fuel in their kitchen is 59.43, 82.53 and 59.05 in Fatehgarh Sahib, Fazilka and Hoshiarpur districts respectively. The access to LPG as a major fuel for respective districts has been worked out as 40.57, 17.47 and 40.95 per cent in the rural areas of Punjab.

The data regarding accessibility to mobile phones reveals that majority of the sampled households, i.e., 97.17, 78.60 and 94.29 per cent households in Fatehgarh Sahib, Fazilka and Hoshiarpur districts respectively have mobile phones, but the quality of their mobile set is not good because of their low level of income. As a whole, 86.82 per cent MGNREGS beneficiary sampled households have mobile phones in the rural areas of Punjab.

CONCLUSION

It is clear from above analysis that majority of the beneficiary households are belonging to scheduled caste category (81.59 per cent) and are from the Sikh community (67.73 per cent). The education status of beneficiary households reveals that the percentage share of illiterate persons is the highest (48.30) in Fazilka, followed by Fatehgarh sahib (31.94) and the lowest (17.66) in Hoshiarpur district whereas overall, 36.25 per cent persons are illiterate. This analysis brought out that the fact that due to their low level income, higher incidence of poverty and lack of financial assistance, the children belonging to these poor people are able to obtain education up to middle/matric level. Therefore, various incentives such as scholarships, hostel accommodation and other financial assistance should be given to these poor beneficiary households for encouraging them to continue the education of their wards.

The housing conditions reveal that 21.36 per cent households have dilapidated conditions of their houses. About 45 per cent beneficiary households have not toilet and bathroom facility. The analysis highlighted that 8.18 per cent households have no source of drinking water in their homes and 60.23 per cent households are still using wood and dung cake as a major fuel in their kitchens. Thus, the basic facilities like safe drinking water, bathroom and toilet facilities should be provided to these poor beneficiary households on the priority basis.

It is clear from above analysis that a significant proportion of beneficiary households are lagging behind in education, health, housing, sanitation and other basic amenities of life because of low levels of income, higher incidence of poverty, lack of gainful employment opportunities, lack of awareness etc. Thus MGNREGS should implement properly in the rural areas of Punjab. Without a doubt, MGNREGS has a potential to change the socio-economic scenario in rural areas.

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