SOCIO-ECONOMIC AND DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS OF NON-AGRICULTURAL HOUSEHOLDS IN RURAL PUNJAB

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Abstract

The present study provides socio-economic characteristics of non-agricultural households in Ludhiana and Muktsar districts based on the primary data collected from the 200 rural households pertaining to the year 2016. The results of the study noted that rural non-agricultural sector has failed to uplift living standards of the sample households in the sample districts. Poor progress of industrialisation and deteriorating health conditions among non-agricultural households particularly in Muktsar district retarded employment opportunities for rural non-agricultural workers. Consequent to it, rural workers remained unemployed for large number of months in a year which is reflected by smaller number of mandays available to them in the studied districts. Due to the lower level of earnings, non-agricultural households cannot afford spending on higher level of education which leads to poor participation in high remunerative non-agricultural activities.

Key Words: Living Conditions, Non-Agricultural sector, Socio-Economic Conditions

JEL Classification: I31, R33, B55

I

The transformation of rural economies as agricultural base to non-agricultural base is regarded as the premier objective of the development planning around the globe. Such transformation generates ample employment opportunities along with reducing population pressure on agricultural sector. The experience around the world has pointed towards reduction of agricultural sector capacity to provide sustainable livelihood opportunities as a result of which both unemployment and poverty is on the rise particularly in the rural areas. (E. James Foster, 2008). There is mounting evidence in village level studies to show that a fairly big proportion of the landless, marginal and small farming households, who, amongst themselves constitute a preponderant majority of world's rural poor, do pursue numerous non-agricultural activities to sustain their livelihood. The rural non-agricultural sector holds various production, expenditure and investment linkages with the other sectors of the economy. (H.P. Binswanger, 2012).These inter-linkages can be observed both from supply as well as demand side. From the supply side, non-agricultural sector provides various kinds of inputs, fertilizers, machinery etc. to be utilized in agricultural sector and thus facilitates the growth of other sectors of the economy. Whereas, on the demand side, rural non-agricultural sector provides market to the products produced in the farm sector. The rural non-agricultural sector can facilitate structural transformation in employment and enhance the living standards of rural masses. (V. Krishnan, Betts, Shea and Wang, Xian, 2012).

The study of demographic and socio-economic profile of the sample households holds immense importance in order to have better insight of major features of households such as age, sex, population, literacy, level of

education, work force participation rate, level of employment and consumption etc. The study of socio-economic profile of households provides useful information for further analysis. (Economic Census, 2013). Keeping in view, this paper is a detailed and comprehensive analysis of demographic and socio-economic characteristics of sample households in the studied areas. The main objectives of the paper are:
1.   To study the demographic and socio-economic characteristics of the sample households.
2.   To analyse the housing and civic amenities among the sampaple households in the selected districts.

II
Material and Database

The present study has utilised both primary and secondary data sources. The primary data has been collected with the help of a pre-structured schedule by conducting personal interviews of the sample households. The secondary data has been collected from various sources such as different issues of Statistical Abstract of Punjab, governmental and non-governmental reports, books, journals etc. For the selection of the study sample, multi-stage random sampling procedure has been followed. At the first stage, the state of Punjab has been classified into 3 regions based on rural non-agricultural employment intensity. A total of two districts viz. Ludhiana and Muktsar have been selected for the present study. At the second stage, 4 out of 12 blocks from Ludhiana district and 4 out of 4 blocks from Muktsar district have been selected randomly. From each selected block one town is selected randomly. From each block one village is selected randomly. Thus total of 8 villages 4 from Ludhiana district and 4 from Muktsar district have been selected randomly. At the third stage, 25 households have been picked randomly from each of the selected village making sample of 200 rural households. In order to collect the first hand information pertaining to various households and local economic characteristics, face to face meetings with the households and village level authorities have been conducted.

III
Demographic Profile of Sample Rural Households

The study of demographic and socio-economic characteristics of households facilitates evaluation of the impact of participation in any social and economic activity. The demographic profile of the sample households has been presented in table 1. The level of age and sex composition significantly impacts ability to work in any economic activity. The study of age composition also helps to determine number of dependents and longevity of sample households. The age composition has been divided into five age groups in the present study. Among the different age groups, the persons under the first age group of 0-9 years comprise of infants and children. The individuals under this age group highly depend on working population for their basic needs. Second age group of 9-15 years comprises of individuals who are mostly school going children. Among these family members some of the girl children who along with their schooling contribute to the household activities like cooking, collecting fuel and maintenance of livestock. Thus some of the individuals under this age group along with their schooling are also participating in some productive activities. The third age group is of 15-59 years. This population includes both employed and unemployed family members. This age group determines labour force participation rate and work force participation rate among sample households. Fourth category of age group includes persons between the age group of 59-65 years who have contribution mainly to household activities. The households under the fifth age group of 65 years and above are too old to perform any economic activity and thus can be considered as dependents.

Table 1

Family Composition (Age & sex Wise) of Sample Households

(In numbers)

Sr. No.	Age groups	Ludhiana	Muktsar	Overall
1.	0-9 Years			
	Male	48	39	87
	Female	59	48	107
	Total	107	87	194
2.	9-15 Years			
	Male	14	17	31
	Female	17	18	35
	Total	31	35	66
3.	15-59 Years			
	Male	165	173	338
	Female	147	145	292
	Total	312	318	630
4.	59-65 Years			
	Male	3	5	8
	Female	3	4	7
	Total	6	9	15
5.	65 Years and above			
	Male	9	7	16
	Female	1	6	7
	Total	10	13	23
6.	Total Population			
	Male	239	241	480
	Female	227	221	448
	Total	466	462	928
7.	Sex ratio per thousand males	950	917	933
8.	Total standard Mandays	352.5	384	736.5
9.	Total Households	106	94	200
10.	Per household average standard Mandays (8/9)	3.33	4.09	3.68
Field Survey, 2016				

Table 1 reflected that among non-agricultural households, there are 194 persons, with 87 males and 107 females under the age group of 0-9 years. Overall, the total number of family members in the age group of 15-59 years is 630 persons among non-agricultural households with 338 males and 292 females in the sample districts taken together. Under the age group of 59-65 years there are 15 members among non-agricultural households with 8 males and 7 females in both the districts taken together. The category of 65 years and above age group has 23 persons among non-agricultural households with 16 males and 7 females in the two selected

districts. Further, table 1 highlighted that on an average, there are 933 females per thousand males among non-agricultural households in both the sample districts. The sex ratio is found to be higher than state's average sex ratio of 895 females per thousand males as per Census 2011 data. Inter-district analysis of sex ratio reflects that sex ratio is higher i.e. 950 females per thousand males in Ludhiana district as compared to 917 females per thousand males in Muktsar district among non-agricultural households. Higher sex-ratio among non-agricultural households is due to the rising literacy level and awareness with regard to gender discrimination in the sample districts. The standard mandays have been computed to know per household per day availability of labour force among the sample households in Ludhiana and Muktsar districts. Table 1 indicated that per household average standard mandays are 3.33 and 4.09 among non-agricultural households in Ludhiana and Muktsar districts respectively.

Socio-Economic Characteristics of Sample Rural Households

The table 2 depicted the total number of households, average family size, percentage of family workforce, percentage of dependents, per household per day available standard mandays, literacy percentage and caste among the sample households.

Table 2

Average Size of Holding & Family, Percentage of Family Workforce, Dependents & Literacy, Number of Standard Mandays and Caste among Sample Households

Sr. No.	Particulars	Ludhiana	Muktsar	Overall
1.	Total number of households	106	94	200
2.	Total number of family members	466	462	928
3.	Average size of holding (in hectares)	-	-	-
4.	Average Size of family	4.40	4.91	4.67
5.	Total workforce (Between 15-59 years)	312	318	630
6.	Percentage of family workforce	66.95	68.83	67.89
7.	Total no. of dependents (0-15 years and above 59 years)	154	144	298
8.	Percentage of dependents	33.05	31.17	32.11
9.	Total standard mandays	352.5	384	736.5
10.	Per household per day standard mandays	3.33	4.09	3.68
11	Literacy (in % age)			
	Males	75.31	74.5	74.58
	Females	68.28	66.5	68.30
12	Caste (in % age)			
	Scheduled Caste/Schedule Tribe	58.49	56.39	57.5
	Backward Caste	11.32	11.70	11.5
	General	30.19	31.91	31.00
Field Survey, 2016				

The table 2 depicted that non-agricultural households do not possess any land holdings in the two selected districts. Average family size is registered 4.40 and 4.91 among non-agricultural households in Ludhiana and

Muktsar districts respectively Overall, the average family size among non-agricultural households turned out to be 4.67 in the sample districts taken together. The percentage of dependents among non-agricultural households came to 33.05 per cent and 31.17 per cent in Ludhiana and Muktsar districts respectively. The percentage of male literacy to the total population is found to be 75.31 per cent and 74.50 per cent among non-agricultural households in Ludhiana and Muktsar districts respectively. Overall, the percentage of male literacy is recorded 74.58 per cent among non-agricultural households in the sample districts. Among females the percentage of literacy comes to 68.28 per cent and 66.5 per cent among non-agricultural households in Ludhiana and Muktsar districts respectively. Overall, percentage of female literacy turns out to be 68.30 per cent among non-agricultural households in the sample districts of Ludhiana and Muktsar. Cast of the households significantly affect the participation in high remunerative farm and non-agricultural activities. Caste wise composition of sample households depicted that 57.5 per cent of non-agricultural households belong to scheduled caste category followed by 31.00 per cent belongs to general category and 11.5 per cent belong to backward caste, in the sample districts. Thus diverse socio-economic characteristics among non-agricultural households are registered in both the sample districts.

Housing and Civic Amenities Available with Sample Rural Households

Housing and civic amenities reflect standard of living of the households. The table 3 highlighted availability of housing and civic amenities with non-agricultural households in the sample districts.

Table 3
Housing and Civic Amenities among Sample Households

(In percentage)

Sr. No.	Characteristics	Ludhiana Non-agricultural Households	Muktsar Non-agricultural Households	Overall Non-agricultural Households
1.	Ownership status of home			
	Owned	80.19	84.04	82.12
	Rented	19.81	15.96	17.89
	Any Other	-	-	-
	Total	100.00	100.00	100.00
2.	Type of house			
	Homeless	-	-	-
	Kutcha	4.7	7.53	6.11
	Semi Pucca	55.40	59.49	57.44
	Pucca	29.52	26.60	28.06
	Urban type	10.38	6.38	8.39
	Total	100.00	100.00	100.00
3.	Availability of kitchen			
	Available	67.4	58.51	62.95
	Not available	32.6	41.49	37.05
	Total	100.00	100.00	100.00

4.	Availability of toilet			
	Available	59.67	55.32	57.49
	Not available	40.33	44.68	42.51
	Total	100.00	100.00	100.00
5.	Source of cooking			
	LPG	82.75	79.53	81.14
	Cow dung cake	11.25	13.47	12.36
	LPG & Cow dung cake	6.00	7.00	6.5
	Total	100.00	100.00	100.00
6.	Drinking water source			
	Tap	52.83	47.66	50.25
	Hand pump	36.58	45.59	41.08
	Tap & Hand Pump	3.77	3.19	3.48
	Public Aqua Supply	6.82	3.56	5.19
	Well	0.00	0.00	0.00
	Others (Tank, Pond or Lake, River, Canal, Spring)	0.00	0.00	0.00
	Total	100.00	100.00	100.00
Field Survey, 2016				

The table 3 revealed that 82.12 per cent of non-agricultural households are living in owned houses in the sample districts. Whereas, 17.89 per cent of non-agricultural households live in rented houses in the sample districts. Among non-agricultural households, 39.9 per cent and 32.98 per cent live in pucca houses in Ludhiana and Muktsar districts respectively. Among all households together, 36.45 per cent of non-agricultural live in pucca houses in the sample districts. Further, 55.40 per cent and 59.49 per cent of non-agricultural households live in semi-pucca houses in Ludhiana and Muktsar districts respectively. Overall, 57.44 per cent of non-agricultural households live in semi pucca houses in the sample districts. Moreover, 4.7 per cent of non-agricultural households in Ludhiana and 7.53 per cent in Muktsar district live in kutcha houses. Overall, 6.11 per cent of non-agricultural households live in kutcha houses which reflect poor living conditions among these households in the two selected districts. Further, 62.95 per cent of non-agricultural households have availability of kitchen in their houses in the sample districts. As far as energy source of cooking is concerned, 81.14 per cent of non-agricultural households owned Liquefied Petroleum Gas (LPG) as the major sources of energy in the sample districts. Only 6.5 per cent of non-agricultural households used both LPG and cow dung as energy source of cooking. Overall, among all households together, 50.25 per cent of non-agricultural households have public supply of drinking water through proper piped water connections. The quality of water in most parts of Muktsar district is found poor due to high chemical contamination of ground water, compared to Ludhiana district. The poor quality of water has adversely affected the health of non-agricultural households in Muktsar district. No public facility has been found to improve the quality of drinking water in the district of Muktsar.

Number of factors can be attributed for poor standard of living of non-agricultural households in the sample districts. Muktsar district has hardly any industry which retards employment opportunities for rural

workers. Consequent to it, rural workers remain unemployed for large number of months in a year which is reflected by smaller number of mandays available to these households in the district. The poor health conditions among non-agricultural households in Muktsar district is attributed to poor quality of drinking water available to these households as a result of which these households are suffering from chronic diseases made them to spend higher on medicines and health treatments. Consequent to low level of earnings, non-agricultural households cannot afford spending on higher level of education which retards them to take participation in high remunerative non-agricultural activities. Contrary to it, Ludhiana district being progressive generate diverse employment opportunities for rural workers enabling them to have the access to general living conditions.

IV

Concluding Remarks

The present paper studies demographic, socio-economic characteristics and housing and civic amenities of non-agricultural households based on the primary data collected from 200 households from the rural areas of Ludhiana and Muktsar districts. The results of the study noted diverse socio-economic and demographic characteristics among non-agricultural households in the studies areas. The findings of the study argued that rural non-agricultural sector has failed to uplift living standards of the sample non-cultivating households in the sample districts. Number of factors can be attributed for poor standard of living of non-agricultural households. Muktsar district has hardly any industry which retards employment opportunities for rural workers. Consequent to it, rural workers remain unemployed for large number of months in a year which is reflected by smaller number of mandays available to these households in the district. The poor health conditions among non-agricultural households in Muktsar district is attributed to poor quality of drinking water available to these households as a result of which these households are suffering from chronic diseases made them to spend higher on medicines and health treatments. Consequent to low level of earnings, non-agricultural households cannot afford spending on higher level of education which retards them to take participation in high remunerative non-agricultural activities. Contrary to it, Ludhiana district being progressive generate diverse employment opportunities for rural workers enabling them to have the access to general living conditions. There is an ample scope for the growth of rural non-agricultural sector in the state of Punjab. There is a dire need to impart entrepreneurship skills among educated youth in the rural areas of Punjab to create employment opportunities in high remunerative non-agricultural activities. Therefore, training programmes must be started at village level to enable the educated youth to understand the dynamics of entrepreneurship. Skill formation among rural people is a must to enable educated youth of Punjab to start their own non-agricultural ventures at village level.

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