

Caste Differentials in Levels of Educational Attainment in Village Sirsa Kheri

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Abstract

In the present research work an attempt has been made to assess the caste wise level of educational attainment in village Sirsa Kheri which is located in south-eastern part of Julana tahsil of Jind district in Haryana state. There are nine castes viz; Brahmins, and Jats from general category, Bairagi, Khati, Kumhar, Lohar and Jhinwar from other backward castes and Churas and Chamar from scheduled castes in the village. Primary data has been collected of all the 317 households. Caste wise data on total educated person with male and female break up has been collected. As per field survey, about 72 per cent persons are educated in the village. The study concludes that the Chamars which belong to scheduled castes have taken a lead in terms of educational attainment. The occupational mobility has been more conspicuous among Chamars than other castes which come under the fold of scheduled castes. The Churas, the other important caste among scheduled castes, on the other hand, were not able to give up their traditional occupations. Therefore, their educational status is one of the lowest in the village. It is remarkable to note that the other backward castes which forms nearly one sixth of the population in the village are placed in a slightly better position in terms of levels of educational attainment as compared to the Churas.

Key words: Literacy rate, Educational attainment, other Backward Castes, Scheduled Castes, Occupational mobility.

Introduction

Education is the basic requirement and the 'Fundamental Right' of the citizens in India. Attainment of basic education is important in terms of both its impact on the living standards of the people and its role in augmenting the capabilities of individuals. Those who 'cannot read or write or count, and cannot follow written instructions' face several problems and barriers in their day to day life [Sen., 1998]. Educational level, thus, is an important demographic indicator

as well as essential tool for measuring human progress [Roy, 2008]. Educational attainment is a term commonly used by us to refer to the highest degree of education an individual has completed. Sources of data on educational attainment, therefore, classify population of a given area in terms of different levels of education. For instance, Census of India defines the different levels of educational attainment like (i) not literate, (ii) literate without formal schooling, (iii) below primary, (iv) primary, (v) middle,

(vi) secondary, (vii) higher secondary, (viii) diploma/certificate, (ix) graduate, and (x) post graduate and above. Similarly, NSSO also refers to the same stages of educational attainment. The levels are (i) not literate, (ii) literate without formal schooling, (iii) below primary, (iv) primary, (v) middle, (vi) secondary, (vii) higher secondary, (viii) diploma/certificate, (ix) graduate, and (x) post graduate and above. It may be noted that if a person has successfully passed the final year of a given level, then and only then, he/she will be considered to have attained that level of education.

In India, education is believed to be an important avenue for bringing about social change and gaining entrance into prestigious occupations [Vaid, 2004]. Education is regarded as the most essential indicator of human development. In view of this perspective, universal elementary education, not just literacy, and higher level of liberal and professional education are both indispensable, of course at internationally comparable levels of quality [Gosal, 2005]. Although literacy is not equivalent to education it plays an important role for both males and females to achieve all round development. Educational attainment, especially among females, is regarded as one of the important indicators of modernization and status of women in the society [Patnaik, 1985].

Indian society is a heterogeneous groups consisting of various castes and religious groups. The castes system prescribes for differential access to education depending upon the caste affiliation of an individual. Caste is a basic attribute of the Indian social structure. It is, however, remarkable to note that caste attitudes are undergoing changes as a result of *education, economic*

development and social and political reform movements [Ahmad, 1999]. The village is a mosaic of different castes in rural India. The castes were interlinked with one-another under Jajmani system in the past. The system in the present context is not conducive for equitable development of all the castes and therefore is undergoing disintegration with the passing of time. At the same time behavior of the castes is also gradually undergoing change, although in varying magnitude from one caste to another. The process of change and the underlying factors are the outcomes of the process of modernization and social change which have now made their inroads in rural society also. An understanding of the process and the direction of change among different caste groups will provide as important insight into social and cultural elements of an area [Tripathi and Vishwakarma, 1990].

In India, efforts for enhancing basic and universal education were initiated during the colonial era. At that time by and large the issue was taken up by some state authorities and national leaders of freedom movements only. But education has become one of the ever increasing demands of the modern human society. It is generally believed that education is an effective instrument to bring about changes in the attitudes and aspirations of people. Recognizing this role of education, Indian government has invested resources to strengthen the educational programmes and make it accessible to the people from the deprived and backward sections of the Indian society, namely scheduled castes, scheduled tribes, other backward castes and minorities. Education helps people in their everyday activities and enables them to get

more out of life. It prepares them for better employment and enables to adjust towards change.

Availability and accessibility to educational institutions has a great impact on the levels of educational attainment among people at village level. Scheduled caste students experience different kind of discrimination in educational institutions which affect their performance. Thus, in the light of this the present study intends to examine the *caste differentials in level of educational attainment* among general population, other backward castes and scheduled castes in a select village situated in the central part of Haryana.

Study Area

Sirsa Kheri, a village located in south-eastern part of Julana tahsil of Jind district in Haryana has been selected as a study area. The district of Jind stretching in the north-west to south-east direction is located in the north-central part of Haryana. An important village in respect to educational attainment among Scheduled Castes, Sirsa Kheri is located at the intersection of 29° 10' 51" North latitude and 76° 28' 06" East longitude. The village is about 9.5 kilometers away from Julana town on the State Highway No. 15 connecting Sangrur with Rohtak [Fig. 1].

Source of Data and Research Methodology

The study is based on primary data collected on the basis of a well-structured schedule and personal interviews of the head of the family. Data collection is based on census method in that all the households in the village have been covered. Caste wise

data on total educated person with male and female break up have been collected. Thereupon, the proportion of educated persons was worked out. To assess the levels of educational attainment number of educated persons for each caste groups has been divided into six categories (*as per educational attainment level*) and their percentages were calculated. In order to determine the related ranks of each of these caste groups, weightages have been applied to the proportion of educated persons in different levels of educational attainment. These weightages are in increasing order as one moves up from primary to higher level of education, for instance 1 to primary, 2 to middle, 3 to matriculation, 4 to plus two, 5 to graduate and others professional courses and 6 to post graduate. Thereafter, the weighted aggregates were worked out. On the basis of total weighted aggregates, the rank scores have been assigned to each caste which shows its relative position regarding educational attainment levels.

Demographic Characteristics

The village consists of 317 households with a total population of 1,721 persons comprising 929 males and 792 females. The village is inhabited by nine castes like Brahman and Jat (belonging to general category); Bairagi, Khati, Kumhar, Lohar and Jhinwar (belonging to other backward Castes); and Chura and Chamar (belonging to scheduled castes). Brahman and Jat are two pre-dominant castes in the village which together account for nearly 60 per cent of the population and households. Other backward castes shared about 16 per cent population and households, while scheduled castes shared nearly one fourth of population and

households. Average size of the households in the village is 5.4 persons. The average size of households among other backward castes and scheduled castes is 5.3 persons and 5.5 persons respectively. The Kumhars have the largest size of households i.e. seven person followed by Churas with average size of 5.9 persons. The Brahmans and Lohars report average household size of 5.8 persons. The smallest size of households i.e. 4.9 persons is reported by the Khatis.

Overall literacy rate in the village

works out to be nearly 72 per cent. Just as elsewhere in the rural India, male female differential in literacy rate is strikingly very high. While male literacy rate in the village is as high as 84 per cent, literacy rate among female is only a little over 58 per cent. Likewise, literacy rates vary across various caste groups. The general population reports a literacy rate of 73.87 per cent followed by other backward castes with 71.73 per cent and scheduled castes with 67.43 per cent.

Table No.: 1: Village Sirsa Kheri: Caste Wise

Demographic Characteristics, 2011.

Caste/ Varna	No. of H Holds	Total Pop.	Total Pop > 6Yr.	Male Pop. > 6Yr.	Fem Pop. > 6Yr.	Total Lit.	In (%)	Male Lit.	In (%)	Fem Lit.	In (%)	HH Size
(A) General Population												
Brahman	98	573	494	256	238	368	74.49	228	89.06	140	58.82	5.8
Jat	92	459	390	204	186	285	73.08	167	81.86	118	63.44	5.0
T. Gen	190	1032	884	460	424	653	73.87	395	85.87	258	60.85	5.4
(B) Other Backward Castes Population (OBC)												
Bairagi	29	148	129	74	55	90	69.77	63	85.13	27	49.09	5.1
Khati	11	54	50	27	23	39	78.00	25	92.59	14	60.87	4.9
Kumhar	05	35	26	14	12	21	80.77	13	92.86	08	66.67	7.0
Lohar	05	29	26	16	10	19	73.08	13	81.25	06	60.00	5.8
Jhinwar	02	07	06	02	04	01	16.67	00	00.00	01	25.00	3.5
T. OBC	52	273	237	133	104	170	71.73	114	85.71	56	53.85	5.3
(C) Scheduled Castes Population (SC)												
Chura	44	258	214	118	96	138	64.48	89	75.42	49	51.04	5.9
Chamar	31	158	136	79	57	98	72.06	64	81.01	34	59.65	5.1
T. SC	75	416	350	197	153	236	67.43	153	77.66	83	54.25	5.5
Total Village	317	1721	1471	790	681	1059	71.99	662	83.80	397	58.30	5.4
Source: Field Survey, 2011.Compiled by Authors.												

Caste-Wise Levels of Educational Attainment

As regard educational attainments are concerned, 1059 persons in the village are educated out of which 662 are males and 397 are females. It may be noted that an individual who has obtained formal education of any level has been treated as '**educated**' for the present purpose. As is expected, there is an inverse association between the level of educational attainment and proportion educated persons in a given category As **Table. 2** reveals, of the total educated persons, 27.6 per cent persons have attained education up to primary level, 25.7 per cent up to middle level, 23.9 per cent up to matriculation, 16.6 per cent up to plus two level, 3.6 per cent up to graduation and 0.6 per cent up to post graduation. Likewise 2.0 per cent persons have obtained education in other professional courses like I.T.I., O.T., Polytechnic, B.Tech. J.B.T., B. Ed, M.B.A in the village. The table also indicates an interesting correspondence between caste groups and the share of educated persons under different levels. While for the general population, the larger share of educated persons is seen in the category '**up to matriculation**', for other backward castes and scheduled castes, it is the '**primary**' level that has the largest share of educated persons. There is a remarkable difference in the magnitude of concentration of educated persons in the '**primary**' level between other backward castes and scheduled castes also.

The differential across different levels of educational attainment for male and female separately reveals another interesting picture. It is observed that of the total educated persons in the village, males

account for 62.5 per cent while the share of female is only 37.5 per cent. Out of the total educated males a little less than one fourth are educated only up to primary level. An equal number of male have obtained up to '**middle**' level education. Another about 27 per cent educated males in the village have acquired education up to '**matriculation**' level. Thus, less than 5.0 percent male have obtained education up to graduation and above. The distribution of educated females in the above categories reveals that more than one third of them are educated up to '**primary**' level and another 30 per cent up to '**middle**' level. It is important to note that barely 2 per cent educated females in the village have obtained beyond '**graduation**'. On the whole, education among female is encouraged only for the lower levels of education among all the caste groups. In this regard, it may also be noted that among general population and among other backward castes, the share of educated females is larger than that of males in both '**primary**' and '**middle**' levels, and beyond this level of education male out number females. However, for the scheduled castes, the cut off level is '**primary**' only. This would mean that due to prevailing economic constraints, females from scheduled castes category, in general, are not able to obtain higher level of formal education as compared to their counterpart higher in caste hierarchy.

As mentioned earlier, one of the objectives of the present study was to determine the rankings of individual castes in the village on the basis of distribution of educated persons in different levels. For this a weighted aggregate of scores was worked out. On the basis of aggregate

Table No. 2: Village Sirsa Kheri: Caste Wise Educational Attainment, 2011.

(A) General Population																								
Caste	Primary Edu.			Middle Edu.			Matric Edu.			+ 2 (Plus 2)			Graduate			Post Graduate			Others			Total		
	T	M	F	T	M	F	T	M	F	T	M	F	T	M	F	T	M	F	T	M	F	T	M	F
Brahman	78	40	38	90	45	45	97	68	29	73	51	22	17	13	04	02	01	01	11	10	01	228	140	368
(%)	21.2	17.5	27.1	24.5	19.7	32.2	26.4	29.8	20.7	19.8	22.5	15.7	04.6	05.7	02.9	00.5	00.4	00.7	03.0	04.4	00.7	62.0	38.0	100
Jat	66	33	33	70	33	37	82	55	27	53	39	14	09	05	04	01	01	00	04	01	03	167	118	285
(%)	23.2	19.8	28.0	24.6	19.8	31.4	28.8	32.9	22.9	08.6	23.3	11.8	03.2	03.0	03.4	00.3	00.6	00.0	01.4	00.6	02.5	58.6	41.4	100
Total	144	73	71	160	78	82	179	123	56	126	90	36	26	18	08	03	02	01	15	11	04	395	258	653
(%)	22.1	18.5	27.5	24.5	19.7	31.8	27.4	31.1	21.7	19.3	22.8	14.0	04.0	04.6	03.1	00.4	00.5	00.4	02.3	02.8	01.5	60.5	39.5	100
(B) Other Backward Castes Population(OBC)																								
Bairagi	26	16	10	31	20	11	19	15	04	11	09	02	03	03	00	00	00	00	00	00	00	63	27	90
(%)	28.9	25.4	37.0	34.4	31.7	40.8	21.1	23.8	14.8	12.2	14.3	07.4	03.3	04.8	00.0	00.0	00.0	00.0	00.0	00.0	00.0	70.0	30.0	100
Khati	12	05	07	07	05	02	08	06	02	10	07	03	01	01	00	00	00	00	01	01	00	25	14	39
(%)	30.7	20.0	50.0	17.9	20.0	14.3	20.5	24.0	14.3	25.6	28.0	21.4	02.6	04.0	00.0	00.0	00.0	00.0	02.6	04.0	00.0	64.1	35.9	100
Kumhar	05	03	02	05	02	03	06	03	03	03	03	00	01	01	00	00	00	00	01	01	00	13	08	21
(%)	23.8	23.1	25.0	23.8	15.3	37.5	28.6	23.1	37.5	14.3	23.1	00.0	04.8	07.7	00.0	00.0	00.0	00.0	04.8	07.7	00.0	61.9	38.1	100
Lohar	08	06	02	07	05	02	03	02	01	01	00	01	00	00	00	00	00	00	00	00	00	13	06	19
(%)	42.1	46.1	33.3	36.8	38.5	33.3	15.8	15.4	16.7	05.3	00.0	16.7	00.0	00.0	00.0	00.0	00.0	00.0	00.0	00.0	00.0	68.4	31.6	100
Jhinwar	00	00	00	01	00	01	00	00	00	00	00	00	00	00	00	00	00	00	00	00	00	00	01	01
(%)	00.0	00.0	00.0	100	00.0	100	00.0	00.0	00.0	00.0	00.0	00.0	00.0	00.0	00.0	00.0	00.0	00.0	00.0	00.0	00.0	0.00	100	100
Total	51	30	21	51	32	19	36	26	10	25	19	06	05	05	00	00	00	00	02	02	00	114	56	170
(%)	30.0	26.3	37.5	30.0	28.1	33.9	21.2	22.8	17.9	14.7	16.7	10.7	02.9	04.4	00.0	00.0	00.0	00.0	01.2	01.7	00.0	67.1	32.9	100
(C) Scheduled Castes Population (SC)																								
Chura	80	41	39	35	27	08	12	12	00	09	08	01	01	01	00	01	00	01	00	00	00	89	49	138
(%)	58.0	46.1	79.6	25.4	30.3	16.4	08.7	13.5	00.0	06.5	09.0	02.0	00.7	01.1	00.0	00.7	00.0	02.0	00.0	00.0	00.0	64.5	35.5	100
Chamar	18	08	10	26	15	11	26	17	09	16	12	04	06	06	00	02	02	00	04	04	00	64	34	98

(%)	18.4	12.5	29.4	26.5	23.4	32.3	26.5	26.6	26.5	16.3	18.7	11.8	06.1	09.4	00.0	02.1	03.1	00.0	04.1	06.3	00.0	65.3	34.7	100
Total	98	49	49	61	42	19	38	29	09	25	20	05	07	07	00	03	02	01	04	04	00	153	83	236
(%)	41.6	32.0	59.0	25.8	27.4	22.9	16.1	19.0	10.9	10.6	13.1	06.0	03.0	04.6	00.0	01.2	01.3	01.2	01.7	02.6	00.0	64.8	35.2	100
T.Village	293	152	141	272	152	120	253	178	75	176	129	47	38	30	08	06	04	02	21	17	04	662	397	1059
(%)	27.6	23.0	35.5	25.7	23.0	30.2	23.9	26.9	18.9	16.6	19.5	11.9	03.6	04.5	02.0	00.6	01.6	00.5	02.0	07.5	01.0	62.5	37.5	100

Source: Field Survey, 2011. Compiled by Authors, Note: T=Total Persons, M= Male Persons, F= Female Persons

Table No. 3: Village Sirsa Kheri: Caste-wise Level of Educational Attainment, 2011.														
Caste	Primary		Middle		Matriculation		10+2 (Plus Two)		Graduate/ Other		Post Graduate		Total	Ranks
	21.2 X 1	21.2	24.5 X 2	49.0	26.4 X 3	79.2	19.8 X 4	79.2	7.6 X 5	45.6	0.5X6	03.0		
Brahman	21.2 X 1	21.2	24.5 X 2	49.0	26.4 X 3	79.2	19.8 X 4	79.2	7.6 X 5	45.6	0.5X6	03.0	277.2	II
Jat	23.2 X 1	23.2	24.6 X 2	49.2	28.8 X 3	86.4	18.6 X 4	74.4	4.6 X 5	27.6	0.3X6	01.8	262.6	III
Bairagi	28.9 X 1	28.9	34.4 X 2	68.0	21.1 X 3	63.3	12.2 X 4	48.8	3.3 X 5	19.8	0.0X6	00.0	229.6	VI
Khati	30.7 X 1	30.7	17.9 X 2	35.8	20.5 X 3	61.5	25.6 X 4	102.4	5.2 X 5	31.2	0.0X6	00.0	261.6	IV
Kumhar	23.8 X 1	23.8	23.8 X 2	47.6	28.6 X 3	85.8	14.3 X 4	57.2	7.6 X 5	45.6	0.0X6	00.0	260	V
Lohar	42.1 X 1	42.1	36.8 X 2	73.6	15.8 X 3	47.4	05.3 X 4	21.2	0.0 X 5	00.0	0.0X6	00.0	184.3	VIII
Jhinwar	00.0 X 1	00.0	100 X 2	200.0	00.0 X 3	00.0	00.0 X 4	0.0	0.0 X 5	00.0	0.0X6	00.0	200.0	VII
Chura	58.0 X 1	58.0	25.4 X 2	50.8	08.7 X 3	26.1	06.5 X 4	26.0	0.7 X 5	04.2	0.7X6	04.2	169.3	IX
Chamar	18.4 X 1	18.0	26.5 X 2	53.0	26.5 X 3	79.5	16.3 X 4	65.2	10.2 X 5	61.2	2.1X6	12.6	289.9	I

Source: Field Survey, 2011. Compiled by Authors.

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weighted score, it is observed that the chamars (belonging to scheduled caste) are the first rank caste in the village. Strikingly, Brahmans occupy only the second position. The Jats follow with the third rank. It may be noted that Brahmans and Jats are the dominant castes in the village not only in numerical terms but also in terms of their position in social hierarchy. Khatis have obtained fourth rank followed by Kumhars, Bairagi, Jhinwar and Lohars, all belonging to Other Backward Castes. Churas another caste belonging to Scheduled Caste occupies the lowest position in the village [Table-3].

Concluding Remarks

The above findings indicate that the Chamars which belong to scheduled castes have taken a lead in terms of educational attainment. The Brahmans and Jats which are otherwise dominant castes lower rank than the Chamars. It may be noted that scheduled castes as on today present a very diverse picture. The *occupational mobility* has been more conspicuous among Chamars than other castes which come under the fold of scheduled castes. Our personal observations or experiences indicate that the Chamars were successful in giving up their traditional occupation after independence and were brought under the fold of education under various provisions of the constitution of India. This is more so in case of the village under study. The Churas, on the other hand were not able to give up their traditional occupation. Therefore, their educational status is one of the lowest in the village. It is remarkable to note that the other backward castes which forms nearly one sixth of the population in the village are placed in a

slightly better position in terms of levels of educational attainment as compared to the Churas.

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