



Socio-economic status of farmers of Sarguja Division, Chhattisgarh

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Abstract

The landscape of the Sarguja division of Chhattisgarh is a challenging one for agriculture due to the presence of hills, plateau and steep slopes. As Hasdeo Bango dam provides irrigational facilities to limited area, the agriculture, by and large, is monsoon dependent. The paper is based on primary data obtained from 500 households of farmers through the use of an interview schedule. Agriculture yield of Paddy 936.84 kg /Ha is lower than the state and National averages. Ownership of less than 2Ha agricultural land with the majority (73.85%) of farmers belonging to marginal and small categories, is a significant factor responsible for the present status of agriculture in the region.

Keywords: Agriculture, farmer, paddy, income, suicide

Introduction

The Indian agriculture scenario presents a wide spectrum. At one end, are impressive achievements like, production of 25.00% Pulses, 25.00% Cotton, 22.00% Paddy and 13.00% Wheat of total productions in the World? Not only, India has a buffer stock of Rice (499.79mt) and Wheat (273.04mt) but it also exports various agricultural products to U.S.A. China, Indonesia, Malaysia, Iran, Vietnam, and Nepal and so on. Agriculture sector provides livelihood to 70.00% rural population in India and accounts for 19.9% of the National GDP (Instapedia, 2022) ^[12].

At the other end, the average Paddy yield (3,695 Kg/Ha) of the India is quite lower to those of many other countries, such as Australia (10,288 Kg/Ha), U.S.A. (8,112Kg/Ha), China (6,932Kg/Ha), Indonesia (5,414 Kg/Ha) and so on (atlasbig.com, 2018-2020). State-wise also, Paddy yield presents a differential picture varying from 1810 kg/ha (Chhattisgarh) to 4132Kg/Ha (Punjab) (Agriculture Statistics, 2019). Similarly, despite having 52.60% irrigational coverage in India, it is differentially distributed from state to state, ranging from 17.02% (Maharashtra) to 98.90% (Punjab).

Profit margins of farmers, especially ones belonging to Marginal and Small categories have been gradually dwindling over the years due to the increase in cost price of diesel/ petrol, as well as the withdrawal of subsidies on various agricultural goods such as, fertilizers/ pesticides etc., as part of Government policy. As a result, these farmers depend upon supplementary income from labor work, minor forest product, business activities and jobs. Some farmers even migrate to urban centers in search of jobs. Often farmers get trapped in a loan network, which at times, they are not able to repay due to crop damage. Farmers restore to committing suicide in extreme conditions. There have been 3,58,164 suicides cases among farmers between 1995-2019 (NCRB, 2022) ^[9]. Five States, Karnataka, Telangana, Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh and Chhattisgarh account for 89.1% of total suicides cases of farmers (Dhaka and Urmila, 2016) ^[2]

The agriculture in the Chhattisgarh is predominantly monsoon-dependent because of inadequate (23.00%)

irrigational facilities which are concentrated in specific pockets, like Dhamatari, Bilaspur, Rajnandgaon etc. Although the state has more than 20,000 Paddy varieties and considered as a Rice Bowl of the country, its yield/Ha is lower to many states of the country.

The present communication aims to throw light on the socio-economic condition of farmers from Sarguja division, Chhattisgarh.

Field Area Characteristics

- 1. Location:** The Sarguja division, located between latitudes (N): 23° 37' 25" – 24° 06' 17" and longitudes (W): 81° 34' 40" – 84° 04' 40", is spread over 28174 sq km.
- 2. Landscape:** It is characterized of hills, plateaus and gentle slopes. Sarguja, Surajpur and Balrampur districts have steeper slopes (150-300mt/km) in comparison to Koriya (10-20mt/km) and Jashpur (20-50mt/km), which are almost flat (State Atlas of the Chhattisgarh).
- 3. Forest Cover:** Forest area (14,733.37km) is dominated by protected forest (56.14%) followed by reserved forest (36.95%) and un-classified forest (06.91%) (Agriculture Statistics Tables, 2021).
- 4. Annual Rainfall:** The area receives 90.33% of the average annual rainfall (1233.48 mm) from south-west monsoon during rainy season from June to September.
- 5. Demographic Details:** Population of the Sarguja division is 38,70,472 with 50.45% males and 49.55% females. Gender ratio is 978. Rural population constitutes 85.97% of the total population. More than half (54.84%) of the population belongs to scheduled tribes, followed by O.B.C. (27.15%), S.C. (5.93%) and Unreserved (12.08%) [Fig.1] Tribal population is represented by Gond, Oraon, Korwa, Panika, Bhuiya and so on.\

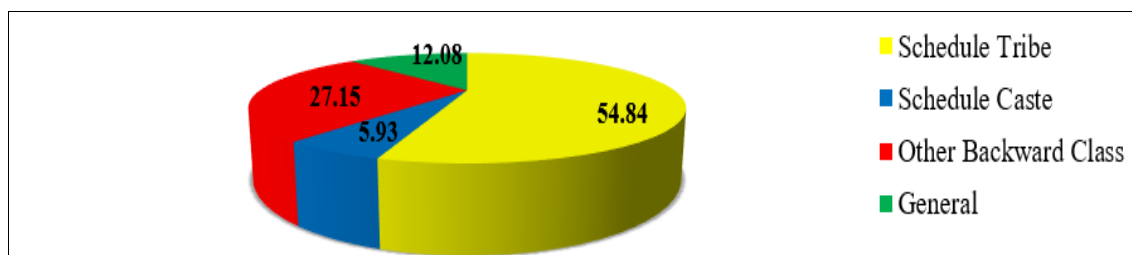


Fig 1: Category-wise population distribution

6. Farmers' Population: Sarguja division has a 5,89,723 farmers population ranging from 98,907 (16.77%) in Koriya district to 1,38,987 (23.57%) in Balrampur District. (Agriculture Census, 2010-11).

Material and Methods

The study is based on primary data collected from 500 farmer households from all 5 districts, namely, Sarguja, Jashpur, Koriya, Balrampur and Surajpur, by use of interview-schedule. In order to make, data representative, random sampling technique is employed. Equal numbers of households are included in the sample from all four Directions, as well.

Results and Discussion

1. Agricultural Practices

1.1 Crops Sown:

- 1.1.1 **Kharif Crops (June-Sept):** Paddy, Maize, Kodo-Kutki, Urad, Moong, Kulthi, Groundnut and so on.
- 1.1.2 **Rabi Crops (October-March):** Wheat, Maize, Paddy, Gram, Peas, Lentil etc.
- 1.1.3 **Zaid Crops (March-June):** Water melon, Musk Melon, Tomato, Cucumber etc.

1.2 Agriculture in the Sarguja division is essentially monsoon based, In light of just 15.44% irrigational coverage.

1.3 Almost all farmers sow Kharif crop, following primitive agriculture technology, by and large. Rabi and Zaid crops, on the other hand, are sown by few farmers, having irrigational facilities.

1.4 Incidence of using tractor for ploughing agricultural fields is quite high (75.80%). In majority of the cases, the tractor, however, is hired. Use of Hybrid seeds (89.40%), Chemical Fertilizers (92.20%) and Pesticides (81.40%) is also quite high. The exact knowledge regarding the quantity, quality and frequency of their use is, however, lacking.

1.5 Paddy is the main crop of the field area. Its yield (936.84Kg/Ha) is quite low to the State and National standards.

2. Socio-Economic Profile of Farmers:

2.1 Land Hoarding: Marginal and Small farmers (<2 Ha land) constitute the dominant group (73.85%), followed by 25.33% Medium Farmers (2-10 Ha land) and 0.82% Large Farmers (>10 Ha). In terms of agriculture land, bottom 73.85% farmers belonging to marginal and small categories own 34.60% of the agricultural land, while 26.15% Medium and Large farmers own 65.40% agriculture land (Fig.2)

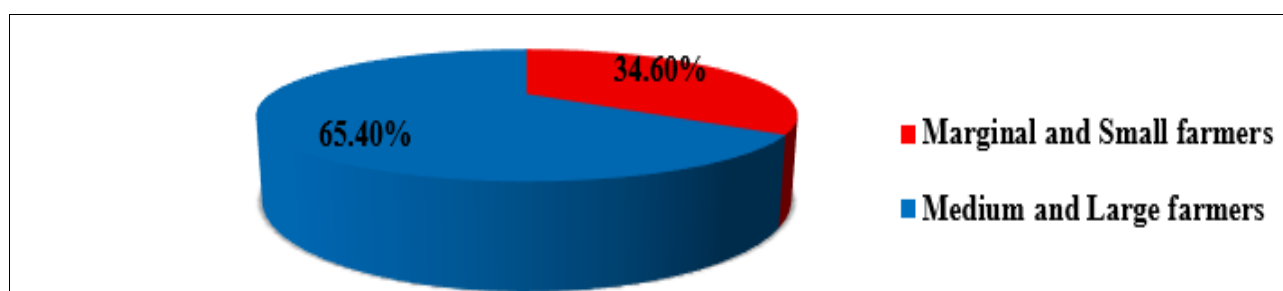


Fig 2: Land Hoarding by the Farmers in Sarguja Division

2.2 Size of Residential Plot: Plot size records wide variation between smallest house (52 Sq. feet) and largest house (8,812 Sq. feet). About two-third (68.80%) farmers are found living in medium sized plots (500-1500'), while 18.00% live in small plots (<500' Sq feet). On the other hand, only 13.20% farmers are found living in large sized plots (>1500 Sq. feet).

2.3 House Size: More than half (52.00%) of studied families are found living in small houses (one roomed), followed by 33.80% living in medium houses (2-3 roomed). In contrast, only 14.20% families live in large houses (>3 roomed).

2.4 Nature of House Construction: Only 18.60% of houses are found *Pucca* houses, whereas, *Kutcha* (42.00%) and *Semi-Pucca* houses (39.40%) are found, more or less, in equal proportion.

2.5 Family Size: Family members in a house show a wide range between 1 and 21. Most (59.20%) of the surveyed families are found to be medium-sized (5-8 members) followed by 27.20% large-sized families (>8 members). In contrast, only 13.60% families are found to be small-sized (<5members).

2.6 Family Type: Almost three-fourths (73.20%) of surveyed families are found to be extended families

while the remaining 26.80% belong to nuclear families. Nuclear families are found in a relatively higher

proportion among Marginal and Small farmers in comparison to that of large farmers. [Fig.3.]

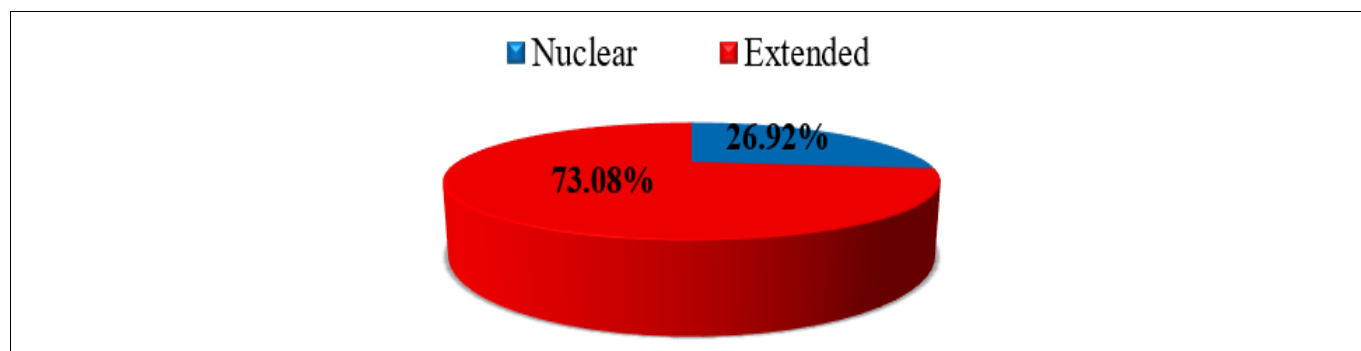


Fig 3: Distribution of Family Types

2.7 Dietary Habits: Staple food consisting of rice, seasonal vegetable and *Daal* (as per availability) are consumed daily at lunch (11-12 AM) and dinner (7-8PM). Black tea is commonly drunk in the morning. The Stale food (*Baasi*) is commonly consumed during breakfast and evening tea time. Intake of non-vegetarian food, fruit, milk products etc. is done on special occasions, such as, weekly market day, entertaining guest and while performing rituals and ceremonies.

2.8 Literacy Rate: Literacy rate of the surveyed farmers is 52.60%, showing wide variation among various farmers

‘categories. While 100.00 % literacy is observed among large farmers, it is 59.31% and 49.00% among Medium and Marginal/ Small farmers, respectively.

2.9 Educational Level of Literate Farmers: Most (62.74%) of the literate farmers have education up to middle school level. Other 29.66% have been found educated up to higher secondary level. Only 7.60% surveyed farmers have higher educational degrees of UG/PG, which is distinctly higher among large farmers in comparison to farmers belonging to Marginal, Small and Medium categories. [Fig.4.]

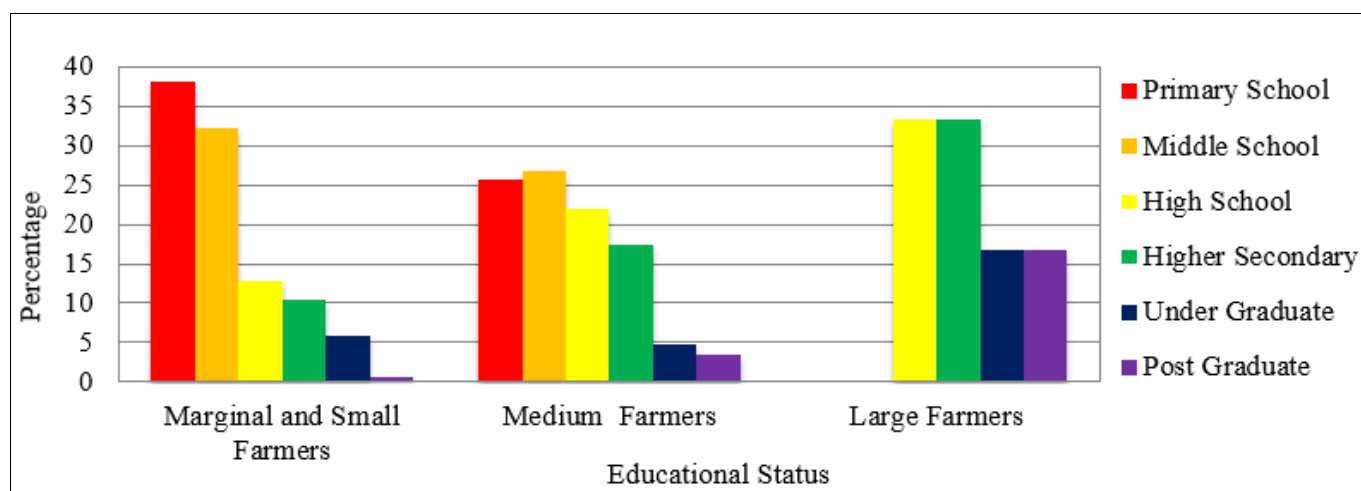


Fig 4: Educational Status: According to Farmers Category

2.10 Paddy Production: Total paddy production of 500 surveyed farmers is 17,447.30 quintal. Out of which 44.34% (7,737 quintals) was kept for family needs

while 4.68% (816 Quintal) was stored as seeds for subsequent crop. Remaining 50.98% (8893.30 Quintal) was sold.

Total paddy production of the Field Area		
S.no.	Categories	% (quintals)
1.	For family needs	44.34 (7,737.00)
2.	Stored as seeds	04.68 (816.00)
3.	For Sale	50.98 (8893.30)
Total		100.00 (17,447.30)

2.11 Income from Paddy: Income of surveyed farmers from sale of paddy ranged between Rs 1400 and Rs.6, 30,000. Majority (74.36%) of farmers earned less than

Rs 50,000, while 16.41% of them earned between Rs 50,000 and Rs. 1, 00,000. Only 9.23% farmers earned more than Rs. 1, 00,000 from paddy sale. [Fig.5.]

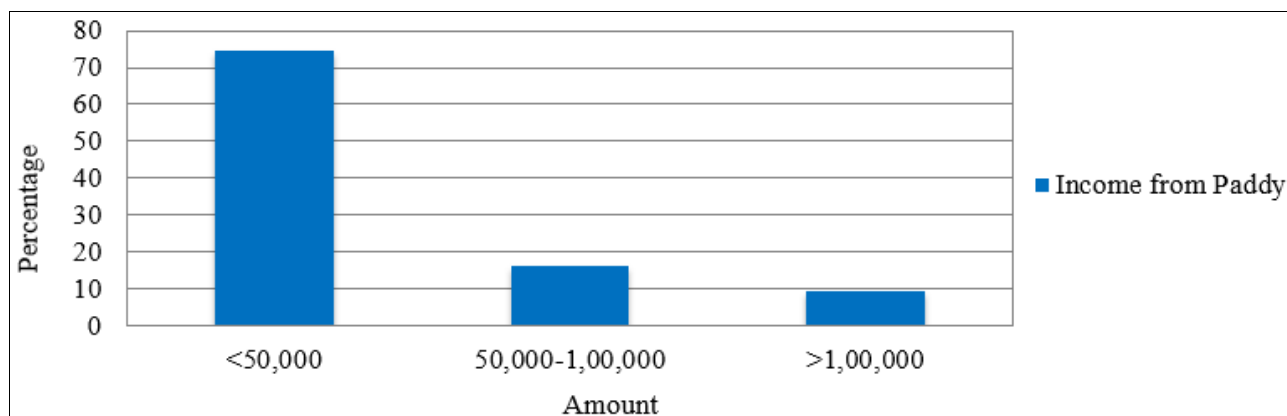


Fig 5: Distribution of Paddy Income

2.12 Combined Income: Combined income of surveyed farmer families from all sources comes to Rs.10,71,68,975. Labor work with 39.34% is the main

contributor, followed by Agriculture (33.01%), Jobs (9.73%), Business (06.97%), M.F.P. (5.64%), and Domestication (5.31%). [Fig.6.]

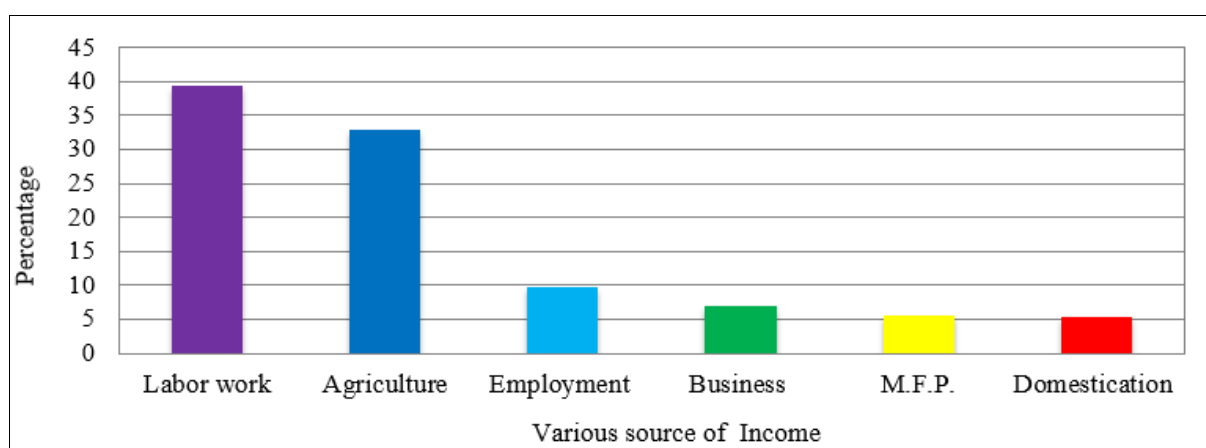


Fig 6: Income from Various Source

2.13 Per Capita Income: It comes to Rs 29,321/- which is much lower to that of the Chhattisgarh (Rs.1,18,401/-) and India (Rs.1,27,000/-) (Fortune India.com, 2021)

factor responsible for the present state of agriculture in the Sarguja division.

Conclusion

1. The landscape with steep slopes in Sarguja, Balrampur and Surajpur is not ideal for agriculture due to thin soil layer. Frequent occurrence of hailstorm episodes during winter are the other natural hazards in the region, potentially harmful for the agriculture.
2. Relatively lower production of Paddy in comparison to that of the Chhattisgarh State and the National averages is due to inadequate irrigational facilities. Out of 10 major Dams in the State, only Hasdeo Bango dam is located in the region
3. Illiteracy and poverty are other hurdles in proper adaptation to modern agricultural practices. Inadequate storage and poor transportation facilities are other serious concerns.
4. Small hoardings and distribution pattern of land ownership under which bottom 73.85% farmers belonging to marginal and small categories own only 34.60% of agricultural land is major single underlying

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