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Trends of work participation rate in Haryana between 2001 and 2011: A comparative study of SC and non-SC population

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Abstract

The work participation is an important variable to find out the level of socio-economic and political empowerment of a given community and of the nation at large. It is academically well known that social and economic activities are intertwined, therefore, change in the one activity leads to change in another. Most of the people used to work in agriculture sector prior to arrival of industrial revolution and slowly moved to non-agricultural sector after the industrial revolution. This changed the basic relationship between different sections of society broke the traditional client-patron relationships. Therefore, this paper aims to study the changes in the work participation rate and the composition of work to determine the status of socio-economic changes especially after the economic reforms of 1991 in Haryana. This paper use the Census of India 1991 and 2011 data to assess the changes in labor market. The paper finds that the work participation rate of both SC and the non-SC Workers has declined between 1991 and 2011 in the rural areas of Haryana with a marginal increase in the urban areas. This study finds that the rate of increase in the proportion of SC worker in non-agricultural sector is greater than the increase in the non-SC workers. Further, the proportion of SC workers in agricultural sector has declined but the level of their participation in agricultural activities is still very high. The analysis of trends in the proportion of main workers to total workers has declined in all the districts of Haryana which means that the quality of work is deteriorating across all the districts of Haryana. This is why the non-SC landed communities have not moved to the non-agricultural sector for employment as the non-agricultural sector is providing casual jobs with low wages.

Keywords: SC workers, non-SC workers, work participation in Haryana, work participation rate, economic reforms, casualization of workforce

Introduction

In the Indian economy, the economic reforms occurred in 1991 which impacted the different spheres of economy such as agriculture, industry, banking and financial institutions. There were a number of bottlenecks in the economic development in India. The large scale institutional and technological upgradation occurred at the global level. The global pressure to adopt the liberal trade rules and free flow of goods and services triggered fast economic and subsequent social changed at regional and global level. India was forced to adopt economic reform of liberalization, globalization and privatization to solve its balance of payment crisis. The economic reforms accelerated fast growth in industry and service sector whereas the agricultural grew at a slower pace. Ultimately, the labour force started to migrate from agricultural to non-agricultural sector. This lead to severance of traditional relationship between scheduled castes and non-scheduled caste population. The scheduled castes (SC) workers moved to non-agricultural sector and became independent from the grip of dominant castes. The SCs started asserting their dominance over the social and political space which lead to physical and ideological clashes between SC and non-SC groups (Kothari 1994; Judge 2008) [4, 3]. In the light of these changes, the following paper aims to address the magnitude of changes in the socio-economic structure owing to economic changes.

In the total framework of post reforms period, it was assumed that there will be reasonable impact on the employment in developing countries. The technological and institutional reforms primarily helped to poor countries to improve their economic development. The post-reform industries demanded hire and fire policies which caused great casualization of labour force (Datt 1994) [2]. Haryana state is primarily an agricultural state which enjoyed the fruits of green revolution for many year but the unsustainable agricultural practices has

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finally lead to low profits in agricultural sector. Therefore, the people has started leaving this sector. Further, the emergence of National Capital Region as an economic powerhouse helped Haryana to boost its non-agricultural income also. Many young people from across the India came to Gurugram for employment avenues. Further, the people are focused on government jobs only. The government jobs and formal private employment is limited and only available to skilled labor. Where do the normal person with non-technical education go for employment? Do they stay unemployed or do they take up low paid informal jobs? Recently, the report from Center for Monitoring Indian Economy puts Haryana at the top of most unemployed states (CMIE Report, 2022). So what is causing this unemployment! This points towards the voluntary unemployment among the youth of Haryana.

The post-reform policies has highly affected the traditional job market especially the role of women, children and other marginalized social groups. The scope of technical and skilled work increased manifold but the availability of common unskilled work is not abundant. The work participation rate is mainly influenced by factors such as nature of economic activities, industrialization, agricultural development, social development, trade and commerce. The work force participation is a dynamic phenomenon, the change may take place with the transformation of economic activities. In the post reform period the large scale economic development ushered to growth of employment opportunities in manufacturing and highly technical job work. The non-skilled worker has been rendered jobless due to availability of automatic applications of technology in industrial and agricultural operations. The people in rural areas who primarily depend upon the agriculture for their livelihood particularly landless laborers have been rendered jobless. The migration streams from rural to urban areas has been intensified. The poor people in urban areas have to live in slum areas and find low paid job such as house maid, security guards in shopping malls, construction workers, rickshaw pullers, helpers in unorganized sector etc.

It must be noted that the impact of any economic reform is not homogenous among different strata of society. Therefore, this paper will make a comparison between the SC and Non-SC workers as caste is an overwhelming factor in Indian society.

Data Source

This paper used the B-Series tables from Census of India 1991 and 2011 to reach the determined objectives.

Methodology

This paper analyses the trends and pattern of work participation rate and proportion of workers in different sectors. Further, the proportion of main workers to total workers has been used to show the changes in the quality of work between 1991 and 2011. This time period has been specifically chose because the impact of economic reforms of 1991 was not visible in 2001, therefore, the author used the data from 2011 census.

Total Work Participation Rate

Table 1: Work Participation Rate in Haryana

	Non-Scheduled Castes			
	Rural		Urban	
	2001	2011	2001	2011
Total	43.53	36.36	31.54	33.16
Male	51.20	50.07	49.68	51.51
Female	34.67	20.80	10.05	12.05
	Scheduled Castes			
	Rural		Urban	
	2001	2011	2001	2011
Total	40.71	49.03	31.19	31.83
Male	31.14	36.35	46.51	49.17
Female	50.03	20.91	13.52	12.39

The work force participation is important indicator of economic prosperity of a region. The table 1 shows the work participation rate of Non-Scheduled castes and Scheduled Castes, in Haryana in 2001 and 2011. The table 1 shows that the WPR of SC population has increased for SC population from 40.71 percent to 49.03 percent in rural Haryana whereas the WPR in urban Haryana is almost stagnant. In rural Haryana, the WPR trajectory is different for both male and female. The female WPR declined steeply for SC women whereas the male WPR registered an increase. Contrarily the WPR of non-SC population experienced a decline from about 43 percent to 36 percent in rural Haryana. For non-SCs, the male WPR remained constant whereas the female WPR declined though not as sharply as the SC women. This decline in female WPR in rural Haryana seems to be primarily due to mechanization of agriculture which has shortened the sowing and harvesting period leading to less availability of workdays. Chadha and Sahu (2002) ^[1] proposed school hypothesis to explain decline in rural female WPR. They proposed that the greater number of women are attending educational institutes due to increase in prosperity of households (Chadha and Sahu 2002) ^[1]. These women only take up well paid and respectable jobs. Therefore, they would remain unemployed rather than being employed in menial jobs. However, the decline in female WPR is more pronounced among SC women in rural Haryana. Does it mean that the SC community has become more prosperous than the non-SC women? No, it is not so. It shows that the employment opportunities for females have decreased in rural areas due to more mechanization in agriculture along with greater enrolment in schools whereas the non-SC workers report themselves as employed as cultivators despite all the work being done by migrant labour force.

District Level Work Participation Rate

A further analysis of spatial pattern of WPR at district level shows the similar picture as the all Haryana data. The fig. 1 shows the District wise work participation rate of SC workers in Rural Haryana between 2001 and 2011. It is very much clear that there is increase in the work participation of SC in rural Haryana in all district in 2001 and 2011. The highest increases in SC work participation rate seen in Ambala district.

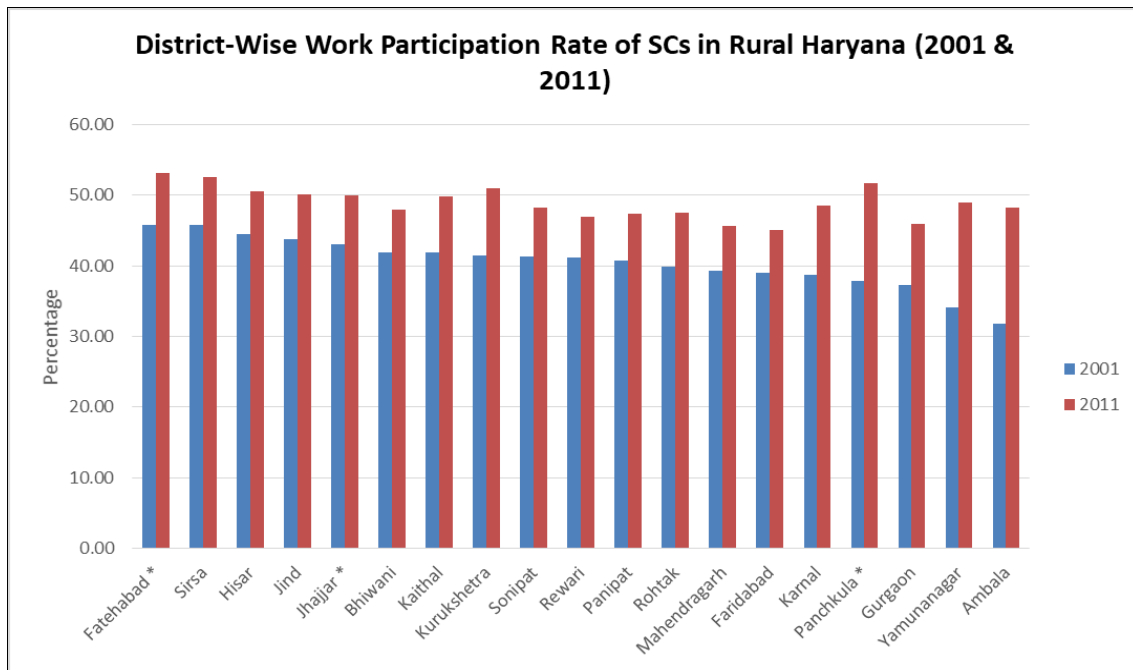


Fig 1: District Wise SC WPR in Rural Haryana in 2001 and 2011

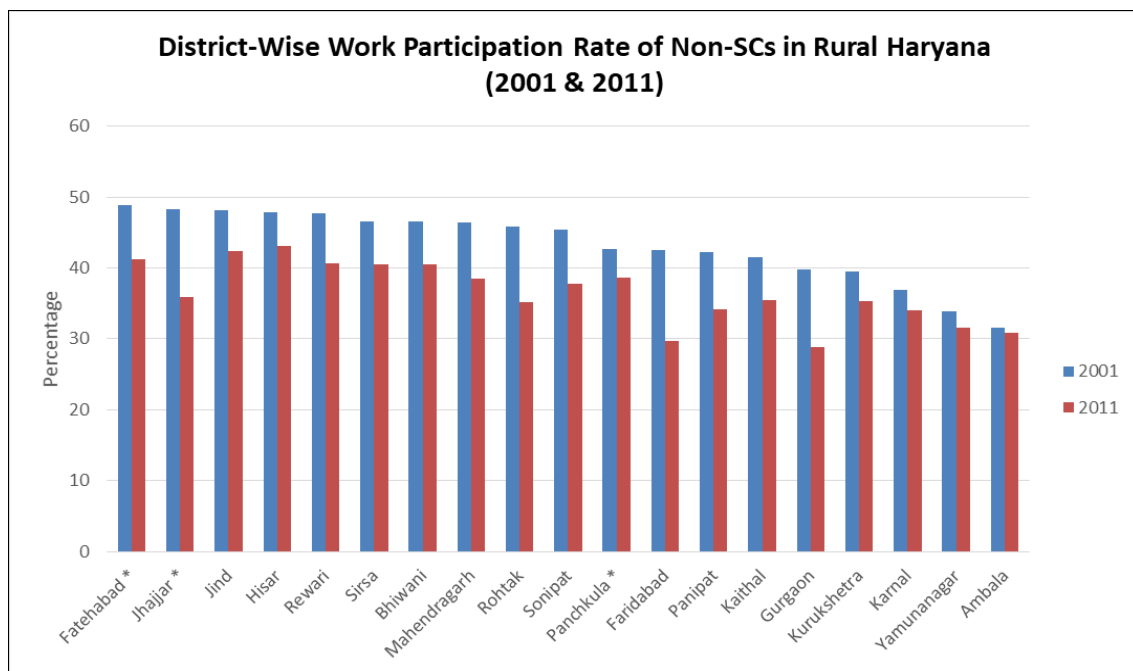


Fig 2: District Wise Non-SC WPR in Rural Haryana in 2001 and 2011

In the same way, the fig. 2 shows the District Wise Work participation rate of Non-SCs in rural Haryana in 2001 and 2011. It shows that there is overall decline in the work participation rate of non-SCs in rural Haryana in 2001 and 2011. The highest decline has been registered in Faridabad, Gurgaon and Jhajjar which are in National Capital Region. The non-SCs are landowning communities and their land was acquired by different governmental and non-governmental projects for huge amounts of money. Therefore, the non-SC population in NCR districts of Haryana has withdrawn from work and enjoying the price of their land only to be pauperized at the end.

A general difference between the trajectory of SC and non-SC WPR is that the SC WPR has increased whereas the non-SC WPR has declined. This points towards the shift of SC work force from the rural agricultural based jobs to

urban non-agricultural jobs across all the districts. So, why don't the non-SC workers take up the non-agricultural jobs? The answer lies in the subsequent section where the quality of work has been addressed.

Quality of Work in Haryana

The table 2 shows the proportion of SC Main Workers to total Workers in Rural Haryana between 2001 and 2011. The proportion of main workers in total workforce provides us a general idea about the changes in the quality of work. The main worker are defined as those worker who are able to find paid work for more than 180 days in a year. The workers find employment in agriculture, industries, mining, construction, services and other govt. schemes such as MNREGA.

Table 2: Proportion of Workers in Total Workforce in 1991 and 2011

Proportion of Main Workers in Haryana							
	Age Group	Total		Male		Female	
		1991	2011	1991	2011	1991	2011
Rural	5-14	79.38	40.62	93.81	46.04	52.45	32.89
	15-34	89.99	71.16	99.38	80.55	51.40	44.93
	35-59	91.37	77.65	99.68	87.90	50.88	50.64
	>60	93.61	74.93	99.17	83.61	49.21	46.91
	Total	99.16	73.89	99.85	83.62	91.56	47.38
Urban	5-14	96.65	87.96	98.01	90.20	89.57	77.33
	15-34	99.04	86.63	99.85	88.65	89.99	76.91
	35-59	99.40	91.72	99.93	93.47	93.77	83.06
	>60	98.84	87.33	99.53	89.75	87.03	72.70
	Total	99.16	88.54	99.85	90.62	91.56	78.45

The table 2 shows that the proportion of main workers has declined across all age groups in rural as well as the urban Haryana between 1991 and 2011. This trend points towards a general decline in the quality and quantity of work in Haryana’s economy. The non-SC worker do not take up the non-agricultural jobs because these jobs are low paid casual jobs and firms do not generally provide job security to low paid laborers. This argument is further supplemented by the evidence from trends proportion of workers in agricultural and non-agricultural sector between 1991 and 2011.

Industrial Classification of SC and Non-SC Workers

The people require some sort of work to earn their livelihood. The nature of work is being done by people indicates the status of economic prosperity and potential to do progress in future. Traditionally, workers in India got work based on their caste status and SC population was primarily agricultural laborers. Hence, they were dependent

on non-SC people for their livelihood. This client-patron relationship continued even after independence. The real threat to this system was posed by globalization and liberalization. The globalization and liberalization gave a boost to non-agricultural activities in India especially after economic reforms of 1991. The traditional patterns of economic activities gradually lost its charm and people moved to non-agricultural avenues. The technological innovation has expanded the scope of the people to find diversified jobs in different economic sectors.

The table-3 shows the proportion of SC workers in agricultural and non-agricultural occupations in 1991 and 2011. It is evident from the table that there is a very small proportion of cultivators among the SC workers whereas a large proportion of SC workers are engaged as agricultural labor in rural Haryana. The proportion of agricultural labor has decreased over time but the level of participation in agricultural labor is still very high.

Table 3: Proportion of SC Workers in Different Industrial Categories

		Total		Rural		Urban	
		1991	2011	1991	2011	1991	2011
		Cultivators	Total	8.06	5.97	9.31	7.93
	Male	7.96	5.73	9.20	7.63	2.04	1.15
	Female	8.88	7.16	10.07	9.32	1.14	1.26
Agricultural Laborer	Total	55.08	34.09	63.18	45.11	15.25	7.01
	Male	53.92	33.07	62.08	43.96	15.04	6.86
	Female	64.27	39.03	71.46	50.47	17.42	7.84
Non-Agricultural Activities	Total	36.85	59.94	27.51	46.97	82.79	91.82
	Male	38.12	61.20	28.71	48.41	82.92	91.99
	Female	26.85	53.81	18.47	40.21	81.43	90.90

Contrarily, the proportion of cultivators in total SC workers is below 10 percent and is decreasing over time. Further, SC workers’ proportion in non-agricultural activities is growing very fast in rural as well as the urban areas. The decline in agricultural workers is corresponded by increase in the non-agricultural workers.

The proportion of SC agricultural laborer in the total work force has declined from 63.18 to 45.11 per cent between 1991 and 2011 in rural Haryana. There is decline in this proportion of about 19 percent and 20 per cent for male and female in rural Haryana, respectively. If we study the proportion of total SC agricultural laborers to the total work force in urban area, it is observed that it has also declined from 15.25 percent (1991) to 7.01 percent (2011). The same decline in the proportion of SC male and female agricultural laborers has been recorded in urban areas of about 8.18

percent and 8.58 percent respectively between 1991 and 2011.

The proportion of SC non-agricultural workers in the total work force has increased from 19.46 Percent between 1991 and 2011 in rural Haryana. The proportion of SC non-agricultural laborers has increased among the female (19.70 percent) than the male (11.74 percent) between 1991 and 2011 in rural Haryana. In the same way, there is also an increase in the proportion of non-agricultural laborers in the total work force of about 9.03 percent between 1991 and 2011 in urban Haryana.

The table 4 shows the proportion of agricultural laborers, cultivators and the non-agricultural workers to the total workforce in Haryana 1991 and 2011. It shows that the proportion of non-SC cultivators is about four times the SC cultivators in 1991. The non-SC workers also experienced

decline from about 46 percent to 33 percent from 1991 to 2011. Surprisingly, the proportion of non-SC agricultural laborers has increased for the same period. This change points towards the fragmentation of landholdings of the non-SC population to a level where they can't sustain their

livelihood by farming small farmlands. Therefore, they need to work as agricultural laborers to suffice their farming income. Further, they are not moving to non-agricultural sectors as swift as the SC workers.

Table 4: Proportion of Non-SC Workers in Different Industrial Categories

		Total		Rural		Urban	
		1991	2011	1991	2011	1991	2011
Cultivators	Total	46.32	32.74	60.66	51.34	5.31	2.97
	Male	45.14	32.59	59.40	51.48	5.46	3.08
	Female	57.79	33.49	72.05	50.68	3.53	2.32
Agricultural Laborer	Total	10.14	12.70	12.40	18.20	3.66	3.23
	Male	9.79	12.25	12.00	17.62	3.66	3.24
	Female	13.45	14.97	16.03	21.02	3.64	3.18
Non-Agricultural Workers	Total	43.54	59.33	26.94	39.14	91.03	94.06
	Male	45.07	59.90	28.61	39.63	90.89	93.95
	Female	28.76	56.41	11.92	36.77	92.84	94.65

The non-SC workers are the landholding communities in Haryana. They can work as agricultural laborers during peak farming season i.e. sowing and harvesting (Sharma 1974) [5]. The agricultural laborer's wages are very high in Haryana especially due to shortage of migrant laborers. This income contribute the income earned through cultivating their own lands. In short, non-SC workers are able to sustain their rural way of living with the help of a little agricultural labour and do not need to shift to non-agricultural informal sector whereas the SC workers need to.

Conclusion

In short, we can argue that the economic reforms has pushed the agricultural workers towards the non-agricultural sectors at a very high pace after the economic reforms of 1991. However, the rate of shift of SC workers is greater than the non-SC workers. This difference in the trends of participation in different economic activities is based on rational decisions. The non-agricultural sector jobs are primarily informal especially the unskilled jobs. Further, there is a lack of job security. In addition, these jobs are paid lesser than the agricultural labor in the rural areas of Haryana. It is evident from the data that the proportion of female workers has experienced a greater decline in their WPR between 1991 and 2011 which may be attributed to their greater attendance in educational avenues and lack of well-paying jobs in non-agricultural sectors. Overall, the data points towards a lack of good quality jobs in Haryana's economy.

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