

Analysis of Demographic and Socio-Economic Profile of Tribal Households in Himachal Pradesh

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ABSTRACT

This paper is an attempt to analyse the prevailing demographic and socio-economic conditions among the tribal households in Himachal Pradesh. For this purpose, multistage random sampling is used to select 439 tribal households from all the seven community development blocks of Himachal Pradesh for the year 2013-14. The analysis of family composition reveals the fact that the average size of the family has been showing an increasing tendency with an increase in the size of land holdings. The sex ratio comes out to be the highest on small holdings followed by marginal holdings and it is the lowest in case of semi-medium holdings. The literacy ratio shows an increasing tendency with an increase in the size of land holdings. The percentage share of earners is the highest on the semi-medium holdings as compared to small holdings and lowest on the marginal holdings. This paper will be helpful in carrying out the further extensive analysis and showing a way to improve the existing socio-economic status of tribal population in Himachal Pradesh.

1. Introduction

There are approximately two hundred million tribal people in the entire globe, which constitute about 4 per cent of the global population. They are found in many regions of the world and majority of them are the poorest amongst poor (Vaid, Kumar and Kumar, 2011). India is home to about 700 tribal groups with a population of 104 million, as per 2011 census. These indigenous people constitute the second largest tribal population in the world after Africa. The widely pervasive reality in respect of tribal communities in India is that the most of them are geographically isolated, economically weak, socially ignorant and politically indifferent but culturally rich, behaviourally simple and trustworthy, leading their life in the lap of nature (Raj, 2003).

Social infrastructure and human resources are as critical for human development as physical infrastructure. But the tribals are deprived on many counts such as education, levels of living and other socio-economic aspects than 'others' (Das, 2008; Husain, 2009). In India, Human Development Index of tribals is much lower than that of the rest of the population. Their condition is far worse than that of the rest of the population and they have not been able to reach the envisaged level of development, where they could benefit from the new opportunities offered by a fast expanding economy (Ministry of Tribal Affairs, 2009). They are facing multiple problems such as poverty, deprivation, disadvantages, which forced them to lead a life at bare subsistence level, are very difficult to be tackled by their own efforts (Raj, 2003).

Since independence, the Center as well as State governments continued to emphasize the programmes and schemes for raising the socio-economic levels of the weaker sections of the society because making the society more egalitarian, both in economic and other social aspects, has remained one of the major objectives of State policies. Many of these plans and programmes aim at improving education,

employment and income status of these marginalized communities (Chakrabarty, 2000). But scheduled tribe households in both developed and backward regions have gained little and the gap between the 'haves' and 'have-nots' has not been reduced.

As per the 2011 Census of India, tribal population in India was 104.54 million consisting of 11.30 per cent of total rural population and 8.60 per cent of the total population of India. Out of total tribal population, 90.00 per cent lives in the rural areas and 10.00 per cent in the urban areas. Further, the proportion of the scheduled tribe population among the total population of urban areas is a meager 2.7 per cent. The population of scheduled tribes has been found to be increasing after 1951. The proportion of scheduled tribe population to the total population had increased from 5.29 per cent in 1951 to 8.2 per cent in 2001 (Vaid, Kumar and Kumar, 2011) and further to 8.6 per cent in 2011. The sex ratio of scheduled tribe population in 2001 was 978 which rose to 990 in 2011, which was much higher than the national average of 943. As per the Census, the literacy ratio among the tribals increased from 47.10 per cent in 2001 to 59 per cent in 2011 which was far below the overall literacy of the country, i.e., 73.00 per cent. The female literacy rate among tribals was 49.40 per cent consistently lower as compared to the overall female literacy of 64.40 per cent. Among scheduled tribes, the poverty incidence was very high at 45.30 per cent in rural areas and 24.10 per cent in urban areas, compared to 25.70 per cent in rural areas and 13.70 per cent in urban areas in respect of total population (Ministry of Tribal Affairs, 2018).

Total population of Himachal Pradesh as per 2011 Census is 68,64,602 of which males and females are 34,73,892 and 33,82,617 respectively. In 2001, total population was 60,77,900 in which males were 34,81,873 while females were 33,82,729. The total population growth in this decade (2001-2011) was 12.94 per cent while in previous decade it was

17.53 per cent. The population of Himachal Pradesh forms 0.57 per cent of total population of India in 2011 whereas this figure was 0.59 per cent in 2001. As per the 2011 Census, the population density was 123 persons per square kilometer whereas according to the 2001 Census, the population density in Himachal Pradesh was of 109 persons per square kilometer, i.e., far low as compared to the national level of 382 persons per square kilometers. The district-wise population density varies from 2 persons per sq. kilometer in Lahaul-Spiti district to 407 persons in Hamirpur district (Department of Economics and Statistics, 2017)

Himachal Pradesh has the highest percentage of rural population among all the states of the country as 89.96 per cent of its total population is residing in 17,882 inhabited villages. The sex-ratio (number of females per 1000 males) was 968 as per 2001 Census and it has increased to 972 in the 2011 Census for the whole Himachal Pradesh which was higher than the national average of 940 females per 1000 males. The sex ratio was found to be more, i.e., 986 females per 1000 males in the rural areas as compared to that in the urban areas, i.e., 853. As per 2001 Census, the literacy rate was 85.35 per cent for males and 67.42 per cent for females which increased to 89.53 per cent and 75.93 per cent for males and females respectively in 2011 Census. The overall literacy rate in Himachal Pradesh has seen an upward trend and increased from 76.48 per cent in 2001 to 82.80 per cent in 2011 (Economics and Statistics Department, 2019).

In Himachal Pradesh, the socio-economic conditions of tribal households are not at par with the non-tribal households. All the scheduled/ tribal areas are far behind other regions in terms of availability of socio-economic services. Because of problems of comparative inaccessibility and segregation, the potentials of development are not realized to the fullest for these areas. Along with these, illiteracy, socio-economic exploitation, poverty, unemployment, indebtedness, primitive agricultural practices and shifting cultivation are some of the major disabilities faced by the tribal households. Taking care of both the economic as well as the socio-cultural needs and aspirations of the tribal people and the tribal areas is not only vital but a national responsibility (Parmar, 2007).

The present paper throws light on various demographic and socio-economic aspects such as age-wise and sex-wise family composition, sex ratio, marital status, educational status and literacy levels, economic conditions as well as type of dwelling and housing conditions etc. among the tribal households in Himachal Pradesh. The findings of the present study will prove helpful to the planners, policy makers and administrators for the betterment of tribal households as well as to the academicians and researchers to carry out further research for analyzing the various socio-economic aspect of tribal life in Himachal Pradesh.

2. Objectives of the Present Study

The specific objectives of the study are as follows

1. To analyse the demographic profile of the sampled tribal households.
2. To examine educational status of the sampled tribal households.

3. To work out economic status of sampled tribal households
4. To study the housing conditions of sampled tribal households in Himachal Pradesh.

3. Research Methodology

In order to achieve the objectives of present study, a sample 439 of tribal households from different size of holdings from Kinnaur, Lahaul-Spiti and Chamba districts in the rural areas of Himachal Pradesh has been selected with the help of multi-stage random sampling. Out of the total 439 households, 276 households fall in the category of marginal, 110 in the category of small and the remaining 53 households in the category of semi-medium holding households. The reference period of the present study is 2013-14.

4. Results and Discussions

The results of the present study are as follows:

Age and Sex-wise Family Composition of the Sampled Tribal Households

The data related to age-wise and sex-wise distribution of the sampled tribal households in Himachal Pradesh is presented in Table 1. In the present study, total sample population of 439 tribal households is split in five groups, by using exclusive interval grouping method (the method in which the higher value of any group is excluded but the lower value of any group is included). The first group is of the population below 9 years which includes infants and small children unable to do any productive physical work. The second group is of the age of 9 to 15 years that comprises of children who are supposed not only to study but also help in various farm activities like crop, fruit and vegetable production, livestock rearing etc. as well as non-farm activities such as in home activities like cleaning, washing, rearing of children, cooking, bringing water, collecting wood for fuel etc. The third group includes the proportion of sample population with age of 15 to 59 years, which is the age group of active work force available for participation in gainful economic activities. The fourth group includes proportion of sample tribal population with age from 59 to 65 years which cannot be considered totally dependent on working population because they also help in farm activities as well as in light household activities such as cooking food, washing, cleaning, collecting fuel, bringing water etc. The fifth group comprises of the proportion of sample tribal population with age above 65 years, which is considered dependent.

The results of the study reveal that out of the total sample tribal population of 439 households with 2302 persons, 1173 are males and 1129 are females. The marginal holding households have 1388 persons, of which 707 are males and 681 are females; small holding households have 595 persons of which 302 are males and 293 are females; and semi-medium holding households' population is comprised of 319 persons including 164 males and 155 females. The age-wise break up of marginal size of land holding households, shows that 12.46 per cent, i.e., 173 persons (90 males and 83 females) fall in the age group of below 9 years of age; 10.66 per cent, i.e., 148 persons (79 males and 69 females) in the second age group of 9 to 15 years; the highest proportion of 68.44 per cent, i.e., 950 persons (484 males and 466 females) in the third group of age between 15 to 59 years; 4.97 per cent, i.e., 69 persons (31 males and 38 females) in the fourth group

of age from 59 to 65 year and remaining 3.46 per cent, i.e., 48 persons (23 males and 25 females) fall in the age group of 65

Table 1: Age and Sex-wise Family Composition among the Sampled Tribal Households

Sr. No.	Age Group and Other Particulars	Marginal Holdings	Small Holdings	Semi-medium Holdings	All Holdings	
1.	Below 9 Years	Male	90 (6.48)	32 (5.38)	15 (4.70)	137 (5.95)
		Female	83 (5.8)	28 (4.71)	13 (4.08)	124 (5.39)
		Total	173 (12.46)	60 (10.08)	28 (8.78)	261 (11.34)
2.	9-15 Years	Male	79 (5.69)	27 (4.54)	20 (6.27)	126 (5.47)
		Female	69 (4.97)	20 (3.36)	18 (5.64)	107 (4.65)
		Total	148 (10.66)	47 (7.90)	38 (11.91)	233 (10.12)
3.	15-59 Years	Male	484 (34.87)	212 (35.63)	105 (32.92)	801 (34.80)
		Female	466 (33.57)	217 (36.47)	104 (32.6)	787 (34.19)
		Total	950 (68.44)	429 (72.10)	209 (65.52)	1588 (68.98)
4.	59-65 Years	Male	31 (2.23)	17 (2.86)	11 (3.45)	59 (2.56)
		Female	38 (2.74)	15 (2.52)	8 (2.51)	61 (2.65)
		Total	69 (4.97)	32 (5.38)	19 (5.96)	120 (5.21)
5.	65 Years and above	Male	23 (1.66)	14 (2.35)	13 (4.08)	50 (2.17)
		Female	25 (1.80)	13 (2.18)	12 (3.76)	50 (2.17)
		Total	48 (3.46)	27 (4.54)	25 (7.84)	100 (4.34)
6.	Total Population	Male	707 (50.94)	302 (50.76)	164 (51.41)	1173 (50.96)
		Female	681 (49.06)	293 (49.24)	155 (48.59)	1129 (49.04)
		Total	1388 (100.00)	595 (100.00)	319 (100.00)	2302 (100.00)
7.	Average Size of Family	5.03	5.41	6.02	5.24	

Source: Primary Survey, 2013-14.

Note: Figure in parentheses is the respective percentage of the value to the respective column total.

Out of the total 595 persons (302 males and 293 females) in the small holding households, 10.08 per cent, i.e., 60 persons (32 males and 28 females) fall in the age below 9 years, 7.90 per cent, i.e., 47 persons (27 males and 20 females) in the age group of 9 to 15 years; 72.10 per cent accounting for 429 persons (212 males and 217 females) in the age group of working force, i.e., 15 to 59 years; 5.38 per cent or 32 persons (17 males and 15 females) in the age group of 59 to 65 years and the remaining 4.54 per cent of the total small holding households, i.e., 27 persons (14 males and 13 females) fall in the age group category of 65 years and above.

Further, the results highlights that out of total population of 319 persons from semi-medium size of land holdings, 8.78 per cent, i.e., 28 persons (15 males and 13 females) fall in the age below 9 years; 11.91 per cent, i.e., 38 persons (20 males and 18 females) fall in the age group of 9 to 15 years; 65.52 per cent, i.e., 209 persons (105 males and 104 females) in the age group of 15 to 59 years constituting the working population in

semi-medium holding households; 5.96 per cent, i.e., 19 persons, i.e., (11 males and 8 females) fall in the age group of 59 to 65 years and remaining 7.84 per cent, i.e., 25 persons including 13 males and 12 females fall in the age group of 65 years and above.

Among all the tribal households' total population of 2302 persons (including 1173 males and 1129 females), 11.34 per cent, i.e., 261 persons (137 males and 124 females) fall in the age group with age below 9 years; 10.12 per cent, i.e., 233 persons (126 males and 107 females) fall in the age group of 9 to 15 years; 68.98 per cent, i.e., 1588 persons (801 males and 787 females) fall in the age group of 15 to 59 years, 5.21 per cent, i.e., 120 persons (59 males and 61 females) fall in the age group of 59 to 65 years and the remaining 4.34 per cent, i.e., 100 persons (50 males and 50 females) fall in the age group of 65 year and above. It is clear from the analysis of age-wise composition that a large majority of tribal population falls in the age group of 15 to 59 years among the marginal,

small and semi-medium holding households in Himachal Pradesh.

The data, further, highlights the fact that the average size of family has been exhibiting an increasing tendency with an increase in the size of land holdings as it comes out to be 5.03, 5.41 and 6.02 in case of marginal, small and semi-medium holdings respectively whereas it comes to be 5.24 in case of all holdings taken together.

Sex Ratio among the Sampled Tribal Households

The data related to age group-wise sex ratio of tribal households is presented in the Table 2. The given data reveals that the sex ratio is the highest, i.e., 970 in case of small holdings, followed by 963 in case of marginal holdings and is the lowest, i.e., 945 in case of semi-medium holdings whereas it comes out to be 962 in case of all holdings taken together.

Table 2: Sex Ratio among the Sampled Tribal Households

Sr. No.	Age Groups	Marginal Holdings	Small Holdings	Semi-medium Holdings	All Holdings
1	Below 9 Years	922	875	867	905
2	9-15 Years	873	741	900	849
3	15-59 Years	963	1024	990	983
4	59-65 Years	1226	882	727	1034
5	65 Years and Above	1087	929	923	1000
6	Total	963	970	945	962

Source: Primary Survey, 2013-14.

The sex ratio is the highest, i.e., 1226 and 1087 respectively for the marginal holding households for both the age groups of 59 to 65 years and above 65 years of age, followed by 882 and 929 in case of the small holdings for the respective age groups and was the lowest, i.e., 727 and 923 in case of the semi-medium holdings for the age group of 59 to 65 years and 65 years and above respectively. For all holdings taken together, the sex ratio is worked out to be 1034 for the age group of 59 to 65 years and 1000 for the age group of 65 years and above. The results clearly point out that the sex ratio is lower in the children whereas it is higher among the old population and working age population among the tribal population of Himachal Pradesh.

Marital Status of the Sampled Tribal Households

The age group-wise analysis of sex ratio among tribal households highlights that the number of females per thousand males for the age group of below 9 years is worked out to be 905 for all holdings taken together whereas it comes to be 922, 875 and 867 in case of marginal, small and semi-medium holdings respectively presenting a declining trend with respect to an increase in size of land holdings. For the age group of 9 to 15 years, the sex ratio is worked out to be 849 in case of all holdings taken together whereas in case of marginal, small and semi-medium holdings, it comes out to be 873, 741 and 900 respectively. The sex ratio for the main work force, i.e., for the age group of 15 to 59 years of the age comes out to be the highest, i.e., 1024 in case of small holdings followed by 990 in case of semi-medium holdings and is the lowest, i.e., 963 in case of marginal holdings whereas in case of all holdings taken together, it comes out to be 983.

The data related to the marital status among the total tribal sample population is presented in the Table 3. As per the data presented in the table, the proportion of children is the highest, i.e., 29.61 per cent in the category of marginal holdings and this proportion is declining with an increase in the size of land holdings, i.e., 24.87 per cent and 24.14 per cent in case of the small and semi-medium holdings. For the whole sample, this ratio comes out to be 27.63 per cent. The proportion of married persons for the whole sample of tribal population is 52.56 per cent and this ratio comes out to be 57.99 per cent, 53.78 per cent 50.79 per cent in case of the semi-medium, small and marginal holdings respectively. The main cause of the higher proportion of the married persons in the category of households with semi-medium size of land holdings is their prosperity in terms of wealth.

Table 3: Marital Status of the Sampled Tribal Households

Sr. No.	Marital Status	Marginal Holdings	Small Holdings	Semi-medium Holdings	All Holdings
1.	Children	411 (29.61)	148 (24.87)	77 (24.14)	636 (27.63)
2.	Married	705 (50.79)	320 (53.78)	185 (57.99)	1210 (52.56)
3.	Unmarried	193 (13.90)	103 (17.31)	42 (13.17)	338 (14.68)
4.	Others*	79 (5.69)	24 (4.03)	15 (4.70)	118 (5.13)
5.	Total	1388 (100.00)	595 (100.00)	319 (100.00)	2302 (100.00)

Source: Primary Survey, 2013-14.

Note: 1. * includes widowed, widower, separated, divorcee etc.

2. Figure in parentheses is the respective percentage of the value to the respective total.

It is important to note here that some cases of polyandry are found among the marginal as well as semi-medium holding households. Polyandry plays important role in the collectiveness of wealth and property for the tribal folks. The proportion of the unmarried persons is the highest, i.e., 17.31 per cent on the small holdings, followed by 13.90 per cent on marginal and 13.17 per cent on semi-medium holdings, whereas this proportion is 14.68 per cent for the whole sample. Among the total sample population, the proportion of the others such as widowed, widower, separated, divorcee etc. is 5.69 per cent, 4.03 per cent and 4.70 per cent among marginal, small and semi-medium holdings respectively whereas it is 5.13 per cent for the total sampled population.

Education Status and Literacy Levels of the Sampled Tribal Households

In the present day world, education is the basic requirement and the 'Fundamental Right' of the citizens of a nation (Mukherjee, 2004). Educational attainment by any person leads to the improvement in his/her socio-economic status as well as quality of life by nurturing his/her attitude and enhancing his value, capability, self-confidence, knowledge and skills (Singh, 2009). Besides being a basic need, education especially vocational, technical and professional, is necessary for job placement and thus acquiring a higher social status. Thus, it acts as the catalyst that brings the

multidimensional changes in the society on economic, social, cultural as well as technological fronts (Dey and Rajput, 2003).

The data related to the educational status of the sample tribal households is given in Table 4. The table throws light on the fact that the proportion of illiterates is the highest, i.e., 24.57 per cent in case of marginal holdings followed by 18.98 per cent in small holdings and is the lowest, i.e., 16.54 per cent in case of semi-medium holdings whereas this proportion comes out to be 21.80 per cent for all holdings, which reveals the negative relationship between number of illiterates and size of landholdings among the sampled tribal households. The proportion of persons who appeared up to primary level comes out to be 14.11 per cent in case of all holdings whereas this proportion is the highest (17.26 per cent) for marginal holdings followed by semi-medium holdings (11.03 per cent) and is the lowest (8.94 per cent) in case of small holdings.

As far as the proportion of the persons having educational status up to middle class, i.e., up to class 8th standard is concerned, the marginal holding households stand first with 13.76 per cent followed by semi-medium holding households (12.87 per cent) and at last are the small holding households with only 7.30 per cent persons whereas for the whole sample, the percentage of the persons with educational status up to middle standard comes out to be 11.81 per cent.

Table 4: Educational Status among the Sampled Tribal Households

Sr. No.	Education Level	Marginal Holdings	Small Holdings	Semi-medium Holdings	All Holdings
1.	Illiterates	316 (24.57)	104 (18.98)	45 (16.54)	465 (21.80)
2.	Primary	222 (17.26)	49 (8.94)	30 (11.03)	301 (14.11)
3.	Middle	177 (13.76)	40 (7.30)	35 (12.87)	252 (11.81)
4.	Matriculation	213 (16.56)	81 (14.78)	30 (11.03)	324 (15.19)
5.	Senior Secondary	200 (15.55)	114 (20.80)	60 (22.06)	374 (17.53)
6.	Graduate	123 (9.56)	110 (20.07)	66 (24.26)	299 (14.02)
7.	Postgraduate	35 (2.72)	50 (9.12)	33 (12.13)	118 (5.53)
8.	Professional and Technical	22 (1.71)	24 (4.38)	17 (6.25)	63 (2.95)
9.	Total	1286 (100.00)	548 (100.00)	299 (100.00)	2133 (100.00)

Source: Primary Survey, 2013-14.

Note: Figure in parentheses is the respective percentage of the value to the respective column total.

The results further highlights that the proportion of the persons with the educational status up to matriculation is 15.19 per cent in case of all holdings together whereas it is showing a decreasing tendency with respect to an increase in the size of land holdings as it comes to be 16.56 per cent, 14.78 per cent and 11.03 per cent in case of marginal, small and semi-medium holdings respectively.

Contrary to this trend, the proportions of persons with educational attainment level up to senior secondary level has been showing an increasing tendency with an increase in the size of land holdings as this very proportion is increased from

15.55 per cent in case of marginal holdings to 20.80 per cent in case of small holdings and further to 22.06 per cent in case of semi-medium holdings. In case of all holdings taken together, the proportion of persons with educational level up to senior secondary level has been worked out to be 17.53 per cent which is the highest among all the categories of educational attainment in Himachal Pradesh.

Similar positive trend is visible in the category of educational status up to graduate level as the proportion of persons has been exhibiting an increase from 9.56 per cent in case of marginal holdings, to 20.07 per cent in case of small

holdings and further to 24.26 per cent in case of semi-medium holdings respectively and it is 14.02 per cent in case of all holdings taken together. Similarly, in the category of educational level up to postgraduate, the proportion of persons is the highest, i.e., 12.13 per cent in case of semi-medium holdings followed by 9.12 per cent in case of small holdings and is the lowest, i.e., 2.72 per cent in case of marginal holdings and it is 5.53 per cent in case of all holdings taken together.

When professional and technical education comes in the scene, the proportion of persons with professional education degree is also showing a positive correlation with respect to an increase in size of land holdings. The proportion of persons with educational status up to professional and technical degree comes out to be 1.71 per cent persons in case of marginal holdings, 4.38 per cent for small and 6.25 per cent in case of semi-medium holdings, whereas this ratio is 2.95 per cent for the total sampled population.

In the present day society, literacy or educational attainment is an important indicator for understanding the

levels of living. The data related to the sex-wise literacy prevalence among the sampled tribal population is given in Table 5. As per the data presented in the table, it is clear that there exists an increasing tendency in the literacy levels among both males and females with respect to an increase in the size of land holdings.

The results reveal that overall literacy rate is 78.20 per cent whereas it is 85.13 per cent among males and 71.05 per cent in case of females among the tribal households in Himachal Pradesh.

In case of the marginal holdings, the literacy ratio comes out to be 82.95 per cent in case of males and only 67.57 per cent in females whereas in overall it is 75.43 per cent. In case of small holdings, overall it is 81.02 per cent whereas it is 87.32 per cent among males and 74.63 per cent among females. The literacy ratio is the highest in case of the semi-medium holdings on all aspects, i.e., 90.67 per cent in the males, 79.19 per cent in the females and as a whole it is 84.95 per cent.

Table 5: Sex-Wise Literacy Ratio among the Sampled Tribal Households

Sr. No.	Particulars	Marginal Holdings	Small Holdings	Semi-medium Holdings	All Holdings	
1.	Literacy Ratio	Males	82.95	87.32	90.67	85.13
		Females	67.57	74.63	79.19	71.05
		Total	75.43	81.02	84.95	78.20
2.	Illiteracy Ratio	Males	17.05	12.68	9.33	14.87
		Females	32.43	25.37	20.81	28.95
		Total	24.57	18.98	15.05	21.80

Source: Primary Survey, 2013-14.

The results of the study further reveal that the incidence of illiteracy is higher on the smaller holdings as compared to that on the larger holdings. In case of males, illiteracy ratio has been worked out to be 14.87 per cent in case of all holdings and it is declining significantly from 17.05 per cent to 12.68 per cent and further to 9.33 per cent in case of marginal, small and semi-medium holdings respectively. Corresponding to this, female literacy is also exhibiting a declining trend as it comes out to be 32.43, 25.37 and 20.81 per cent in case of marginal, small and semi-medium holdings respectively and it is 28.95 per cent in case of all holdings together. Further, the overall illiteracy ratio has been worked out to be 21.80 per cent in case of all holdings whereas in case of marginal, small and semi-medium holdings, it comes out to be 24.57 per cent, 18.98 per cent and 15.05 per cent respectively.

It is found from the above analysis that the performance of households with marginal size of land holdings is poor on literacy front. Their share in the higher, graduate, post graduate education and in professional and technical education is low as compared to small and medium holdings. The main reason behind this phenomenon is the uneconomic marginal holdings, lesser gainful employment activities, and insignificant income along with heavy dependency ratios in case of households with marginal holdings due to which they cannot afford to bear the financial burden of providing their

children with education beyond the free education provisions. And on the other hand, the households with larger holdings with profitable size of land holdings, availability of gainful employment opportunities and lesser dependency on larger holdings can afford to make investments in the education of their children.

Economic Status of the Sampled Tribal Households

The data related to the economic status of the sampled tribal households in Himachal Pradesh is given in the Table 6. As per the data, the proportion of earners as well as the proportion of earning dependents is showing up a positive relationship with respect to an increase in the size of land holdings.

The proportion of earners has been worked out to be 32.42 per cent, 33.45 per cent and 42.32 per cent in case of marginal, small and semi-medium holdings whereas this proportion comes out to be 34.06 per cent for the whole sample. On the other hand, the proportion of earning dependents is the highest, i.e., 36.30 per cent in case of small land holdings followed by semi-medium holdings (30.09 per cent) and is the lowest, i.e., 26.87 per cent in case of the marginal holdings whereas the proportion of earning dependents for the total sample of tribal populace comes out to be 29.76 per cent.

Table 6: Economic Status of the Sampled Tribal Households

Sr. No.	Economic Status	Marginal Holdings	Small Holdings	Semi-medium Holdings	All Holdings
1.	Earners	450 (32.42)	199 (33.45)	135 (42.32)	784 (34.06)
2.	Earning Dependents	373 (26.87)	216 (36.30)	96 (30.09)	685 (29.76)
3.	Dependents	565 (40.71)	180 (30.25)	88 (27.59)	833 (36.19)
4.	Total	1388 (100.00)	595 (100.00)	319 (100.00)	2302 (100.00)

Source: Primary Survey, 2013-14.

Note: Figure in parentheses is the respective percentage of the value to the respective total.

Contrary to it, the incidence of dependency is showing a declining tendency with respect to an increase in the size of land holdings. The proportion of dependents comes out to be 40.71 per cent, 30.25 per cent and 27.59 per cent in case of marginal, small and semi-medium holdings respectively whereas it is 36.19 per cent in case of all holdings taken together.

Housing Conditions of Sampled Tribal Households

Housing is also an important area of concern as far as the social as well as economic analysis is concerned. Better housing and living conditions always contribute positively in the lives of populace because housing provides a sense of psycho-social security as well as protection on various aspects. The data related to the different housing conditions

such as type of dwelling and housing conditions, is given in Table 7.

The results reveal that 34.17 per cent of the total sample tribal households are living in the *kutch* house (made from mud, thatch or other low quality material). This proportion is the highest (39.13 per cent) for marginal holdings followed by small holding households (27.27 per cent) and is the lowest (22.64 per cent) for medium holding households thereby showing a declining tendency with respect to an increase in the size of land holdings. The same negative relationship is observed in case of semi-*pucca* houses as the proportion of the households living in semi-*pucca* house comes out to be 46.38 per cent, 43.64 per cent and 41.51 per cent in case of marginal, small and semi-medium holdings respectively whereas it is 45.10 per cent in case of all holdings taken together.

Table 7: Type of Dwelling House and Housing Conditions among the Sampled Tribal Households

Sr. No.	Housing Conditions	Marginal Holdings	Small Holdings	Semi-medium Holdings	All Holdings	
1.	Type of House	<i>Kutch</i>	108 (39.13)	30 (27.27)	12 (22.64)	150 (34.17)
		<i>Pucca</i>	40 (14.49)	32 (29.09)	19 (35.85)	91 (20.73)
		Semi- <i>Pucca</i>	128 (46.38)	48 (43.64)	22 (41.51)	198 (45.1)
2.	Housing Conditions	Good	70 (25.36)	51 (46.36)	28 (52.83)	149 (33.94)
		Average	178 (64.49)	59 (53.64)	24 (45.28)	261 (59.45)
		Dilapidated	28 (10.14)	0 (0.00)	1 (1.89)	29 (6.61)
		Total	276 (100.00)	110 (100.00)	53 (100.00)	439 (100.00)

Source: Primary Survey, 2013-14.

Note: Figure in parentheses is the respective percentage of the value to the respective total.

Opposite to this, the number of households living in *pucca* house has been exhibiting an increasing tendency with respect to an increase in the size of land holdings as it comes out to be 14.49 per cent, 29.09 per cent and 35.85 per cent in case of marginal, small and semi-medium holdings respectively whereas it is 20.73 per cent in case of all holdings taken together.

The data given in the table, further, highlights the facts that the proportion of the households living in good conditions has been exhibiting an increasing tendency with respect to an increase in the size of land holdings as it comes out to be 25.36 per cent, 46.36 per cent and 52.83 per cent in case of

marginal, small and semi-medium holdings respectively whereas this proportion comes out to be 33.94 per cent in case of all holdings taken together. On the other hand, the proportion of households living in average conditions has been registering a declining tendency with respect to an increase in the size of land holdings. The proportion of households living in average housing conditions has been found to be 59.45 per cent in case of all holdings whereas it is the highest, i.e., 64.49 per cent in case of marginal holdings followed by 53.64 per cent in case of small holdings and is the lowest, i.e., 45.28 per cent in case of all holdings taken together.

The miserable condition of the marginal holdings comes in to the scene when the data related to the households living in dilapidated state is looked upon. As per the data, 28 households, i.e., 10.14 per cent of the households with marginal size of land holdings and one household, i.e., 1.89 per cent of the households with semi-medium holdings have been found living in dilapidated condition. No such household is found in case of small holdings. In case of all holdings taken together, 6.61 per cent of the total sampled households have been living in dilapidated conditions. It is important to mention here that *kutch*a and semi-*pucca* houses are suitable because of weather or cold climatic conditions prevailing in the tribal areas.

5. Concluding Remarks

The age-wise composition of the sampled tribal population reveals that the majority of the population falls under the working age group. The average size of the family has been showing an increasing tendency with respect to an increase in the size of land holdings. The sex ratio comes out to be the highest on small holdings followed by marginal holdings and it is the lowest in case of semi-medium holdings. In Himachal Pradesh, the cases of polyandry have been found during the field survey, which depict the inclination of tribal population towards their customs and their reluctance for further fragmentation of land and other assets. The number and proportion of illiterates is the highest in case of marginal holdings whereas it is lowest in case of semi-medium holdings thereby revealing a declining tendency with respect to an increase in the size of land holdings. The results of the study highlight that literacy among the male members is higher as compared to female member on all size of land holdings. The main reason behind the low educational status of the marginal holdings is the inadequate and inconsistent level of income from

their uneconomic size of land holdings along with lesser availability of gainful employment opportunities due to higher illiteracy. Though, the government has been providing many kinds of scholarships in order to raise the level of education among the poor households, the lack of knowledge and financial inabilities become the hindering stone in acquiring the higher and professional education attainment. Thus, the government should have given top priority in providing skill based vocational, technical and professional education so that the households with the smaller holdings could start earning while learning and thus be able to participate in the gainful employment opportunities in the mainstream economy. Apart of this, free and compulsory education up to a specific level, provision of variety of scholarships, easy and cheap institutional finance for education should be given top priorities by the Government.

The economic analysis reveals that the dependency ratio is the highest in case of marginal holdings and it is declining with respect to an increase in the size of land holdings. The housing conditions of the tribal households in Himachal Pradesh are highlighting the fact that majority of the population is living in the *semi-pucca* and *kutch*a houses where these house are suitable because of the prevailing weather conditions. The percentage share of *kutch*a and semi-*pucca* houses shows a declining tendency whereas the share of *pucca* houses shows an increasing tendency. In nutshell, the socio-economic conditions of marginal holdings are far worse as compared to that of small and semi-medium holdings and their backwardness is attributed to the prevalence of higher illiteracy levels, heavy dependency, uneconomic size of land holdings, lack of gainful employment opportunities, meager income levels, lack of regular source of income, lack of other facilities etc.

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