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# Rural Household Livelihoods, Non-farm Economy and Landless Workforce: Evidence from the Village Economy of Haryana, India

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## ABSTRACT

This paper examines household livelihoods patterns of the landless poor in a village of Haryana by applying sustainable livelihood approach rather than the reductionist approach of income-consumption paradigm. The attempt is made to investigate and analyse the contours of life of landless workers from the multiple perspectives: literacy rate among male and female in each household, education attainment, income-expenditure patterns, rural farm and non-farm occupational choice, housing conditions and the role of social and financial capital. It also explores the desperation and vulnerability among the working class in a village in the context of above indicators. The economic and social environment locates the landless workforce in the brutal and vicious circle of low literacy- unskilled and semi-skilled works- low income- poor living condition which is not pleasant to asset creation. Keeping these actualities in mind, the paper indicates towards the environment created by central planning system, various welfare schemes run by the state and central governments and specifically by economic reforms initiated in the last quarter of twentieth century. As a corollary, landless workforce is doomed to live in vulnerability and desperation.

**Keywords:** Haryana, landless workers, economic, social environment

Rural economy of Haryana has been transforming from representative farm economy to non-farm economy with respect to increasing share of non-farm sector in the state domestic product and employment in the economy. In Post-independence, the Indian state actively prompted industrialisation through economic planning in comparison to British rule where Indian economy stagnated for over a hundred years prior to independence (Eswaran and Kotwal, 1994). Prompted industrialisation and technology-driven agricultural reforms in the form of green revolution initiated the era of food availability and employment generation in the primary sector. Through building agriculture-industry linkage it resulted into de-ruralization and de-peasantization of rural economy. Increasing urbanization contributed a lot to change the

earlier economic and social character of the rural economy of India and particularly Haryana, the state in question. In many ways, village economy still revolved around land as a basic factor input and social and economic relations of production are primarily based on land ownership. Changing production methods evolved new traits of socio-economic relations with the penetration of capital in the village economy overtime. Due to variations in the land ownership, household inequalities exist in all spheres of life in the village economy of Haryana and these inequalities are determined by the availability of livelihood assets, state intervention and physical environment. To understand inequalities, the concepts of livelihood strategies, rural diversification and livelihood systems have been gaining ground in the policy making circles and in social science research.

Haryana economy experienced major rural development through technological agrarian reforms and a number of economic and social welfare schemes implemented by the central as well as state governments to advance the living standards of the landless poor at the village level. Many researchers argued that in the post green revolution period, rural poverty has been declined to great extent with reference to income-poverty approach. But on the other in addition to poverty, these include social inferiority, isolation, physical weakness, vulnerability, seasonal deprivation, powerlessness and humiliation (Chambers, 1995) and these aspects with regard to rural poor in fact became apparent after market liberalization which Indian state introduced by new economic policy in 1991. In response to structural barriers and stressful events (not to get sustainable work opportunities), what households and individual decide to cope with? In this context, we argued that after the letdown of green revolution, employment opportunities which were based on previously secured caste-occupation ties in the rural economy also wiped out. New paradigm of economic reforms led to new economic opportunities for the rural labouring poor.

Hence, economic diversification revealed a wide range of uncertain household livelihoods from high-salaried occupations to low wage and piece work employment opportunities. It is a common perception in the free market mantra that people who have low literacy and low skills adopt low wage works in the informal sector of its economy and outside due to low human and social capital. In the course of current production processes, rural poor have been engaging with their tentative diversified livelihood portfolio to cope with employment vulnerability and powerlessness. What are the glimpses of realities of the rural labouring poor at the peripheries is a relevant question for social scientists after the quarter century of reforms being implemented in India.

This paper is divided into four sections including introduction part. Section two describes the framework for analysis, purpose of the study and research questions. Third section deals with data and methodology. Section four deals with empirical evidence part and is further divided into seven sub parts: human capital, physical capital, basic

material needs, social resources, financial resources and desperation and vulnerability among the rural labour.

### **Framework for analysis, Purpose and Research Questions**

Livelihood perspectives are important for integrating insights and interventions beyond disciplinary or sectoral boundaries. Livelihood perspectives start with how different people in different places live. More conventional approaches to looking at rural development focus on defined activities like agriculture, wage employment farm labour, small-scale enterprise and so on. But in reality people get their living by combining different activities in a complex portfolio. Outcomes of inquiry from different perspectives of course vary. Livelihoods approaches have challenged fundamentally single-sector approaches to solving complex rural development problems by understanding the things from local perspectives. Being focused on understanding complex, local realities livelihoods approaches are an ideal entry point for participatory approaches to inquiry, with negotiated learning between local people and outsiders.

The concept of household livelihoods has been gaining ground in concerned research and policy making about rural development, regional development, agriculture intensification, poverty alleviation, resource management, trade and environment sustainability over time. And this concept is on the agenda of various research institutions, funding agencies and individual researchers to look poverty and poor household portfolios in a more holistic manner rather than a narrow understanding of income-consumption related poverty. The term livelihood strategies used by the different research institutions and individual researchers in different perspectives and approaches. The concepts like household livelihood strategies, rural diversification and sustainable livelihoods are in currency since 1960's onwards in economics literature and researcher adopted different approaches to understand these concepts. "Yet such perspective did not come to dominate development thinking in the coming decades. As theories of modernisation came to influence development discourse, more mono-disciplinary perspectives ruled the roost" (Scoones, 1998).

From 1990s (Chambers and Conway 1992, Scones 1998, Carvay 1998 & 2002) a strong advocacy for sustainable livelihood approaches in development scholarship came and many development agencies started to put the approach as their central point of programming.

Defining livelihood, Chamber and Conway (1992) explained livelihood as the means of gaining a living, including livelihood capabilities, tangible assets and intangible assets. A sustainable livelihood strategy stresses natural resources management, redistribution of livelihood resources, prices and payments, health, abolishing restrictions and hassle, and safety nets for poor people during bad times (Chamber, 1995). Similarly, the livelihood approach considers as 'A livelihood comprises the capabilities, assets (including both material and social resources) and activities required to make a living and to cope with and recover from shocks and stresses' (Chambers and Conway, 1992). This approach considers as entitlement approach towards livelihood is quite relevant and useful because it highlights inter-temporal linkages between consumption and production decisions, which is useful to understand coping strategies and longer-term sustainability. It also incorporates a comprehensive definition of capital, to include human, natural, financial, social and physical (Wilson, 2004).

In the context of opting livelihood portfolios, Wethington (1992) note the notion of a strategy is an appealing metaphor for family responses to structural barriers and stressful events. However, what denotes a stressful event and what strategies, if any, are employed in the day to day lives of rural villagers? To answer this question it is necessary to consider the ways in which household strategies are socially defined, the scale and scope of different decisions, and how these interact with long-term and short-term strategizing. How closely they live to the vulnerable margins? According to Wilson (2004) livelihoods are not fixed, immutable practices, they are often adhoc and households are flexible units who respond quickly to opportunities and threats.

In the light of above discussion, the present study draws attention to understand the dynamics of household livelihoods of the landless poor in a village in the context of macroeconomic issues: unfavorable terms of trade, rapid growth in

urbanization and introduction of economic reforms in 1991 in changing policy environment. Due to these factors, rural and urban non-farm economy diversification between and within the sectors has been growing. So, the rural households and individuals diversify their livelihood portfolios in response to distress and crisis driven by market liberalization.

The purpose of field work was to understand household livelihood portfolios of the landless labouring poor who are not capable to get work in the formal sector due to various reasons: low human and social capital, lack of physical environment and inattention of state in the welfare activities. Our basic question was to understand that how they make their livelihood in the changing competitive environment due to market liberalization after new economic reforms. To response these questions, we tried to analyse literacy rate and education attainment among the households, occupation diversification, composition of consumption expenditure on consumer durables, health, education and other basic things to live a smooth life and basic amenities: housing condition, water and electricity facilities and place of defecation. The reason to get information regarding the above indicators is to understand the desperation, vulnerability or sustainability of the household unit in the context of role of social resources to find work and financial capital in the time of market liberalization. Majority of studies for rural economic development and poverty reduction emphasized the diversification of work opportunities and asset creation which is causal in relation to former. Assets in this framework include : human capital (the education skills and health of house hold members); physical capital (e.g. farm equipment or a sewing machine) ;social capital (the social networks and associations to which people belong); financial capital and its substitutes (savings, credit, cattle, etc.); and natural capital (the natural resource base) (Ellis, 1999).

## Data and Methodology

We selected Khai village of Fatahabad district of Haryana which falls in Ratia tehsil of the district. Khai is a medium size village. The Khai village has population of 1864 of which 974 are females as per population census 2011. Average sex-ratio of village is 914 which is higher than Haryana state

average of 879. Khai village has lower literacy rate compared to Haryana. In 2011, literacy rate of Khai village was 58.35 percent compared to 75.55 percentage of Haryana. In Khai male literacy stands at 67.81 percent while female literacy rate was 47.90 percent. In Khai village, most of the villagers are from scheduled caste (SC). Scheduled caste (SC) constitutes 75 percentage of total population in Khai village. All schedule caste households are landless. That is why we selected this village to understand livelihood strategies of the landless households.

In the Khai village, total number of households was 354. Out of 354, 265 households belong to schedule caste community. This study covered 104 households which share thirty percent of the landless households in the village. Out of 104 households, seventy-three households belong to schedule caste category and thirty-one households belong to other backward caste category. We interviewed the household head to get the information. In the absence of the household head, the respondent was the wife or elder son or daughter of the head who knew the intact information about the household. Structured schedules have been pressed into service. And focused group discussions and interviews have also been conducted to get information regarding economic and social life in the village. We conducted ten meeting with ten to fifteen villagers each day around two to three hours to understand their life during the summer of 2013 and 2014.

## EMPIRICAL EVIDENCE

### Human Capital

Human Capital could be explained as the ability and mental capability of a person to cope the exogenous economic challenges and diversify its own work portfolio. It could be assigned as the foremost determinant for a better living. The significance of education , both formal academic education and workplace skills, for improving livelihood prospects is established by a great number of studies and poverty is closely associated with low levels of education and lack of skills. There is little doubt that rural education is under stress in many countries (Ellis, 1999).

### Literacy rate among landless households

Literacy and education attainment are important

determinants for overall human developmental goal and for sustainable livelihood growth path. With respect to global policy and national policy initiatives, Indian state has taken substantial steps to improve the overall level of literacy since 1947. National average literacy rate achieved the more than 70 per cent target in 2011 (census 2011). It was 74.04 per cent in which male literacy rate stood at 80 per cent whereas female literacy rate stood at 65.46 per cent.

With its overall literacy rate of 75.55 per cent, Haryana is at 22<sup>nd</sup> position in literacy rate in all over India. Where its male literacy rate is 84.06 per cent and female literacy rate stood at 65.94 per cent. At district level Fatehabad, in which our sample village falls, the overall rate of literacy is 67.92 per cent in which male literacy rate stood at 76.14 per cent and female literacy rate is at 58.87 per cent. We can see the huge gap of literacy rate of landless working class. Data in Table 1, the male and female literacy rates of village Khai are far below than national level. Female literacy is much low which is approximately 53.44 percent and male literacy is 65.60 per cent. The path of development oriented by market economy reforms needs a high level of industrialization and development of tertiary sector. It needs a big pool of skilled and semi-skilled work force to support.

**Table 1:** Distribution of Literacy rate among males and females

Literacy	Literate	Illiterate	Total
Male	185 (65.6)	97 (34.4)	282 (100)
Female	155 (53.4)	135 (46.6)	290 (100)
Total	340(59.44)	232(40.56)	572 (100)

Source: Field Work and figures in the brackets show percentage

### Education Attainment for rural labour class

Due to low level of income of rural labour class education attainment of their wards is also low. It could be seen as their vicious circle in which they are crippled. Due to low literacy they are compelled to work in low profile jobs and due to low level of income, education attainment of their wards is again low. As the table shows education attainment of the least size income group i.e. 0-0.5 lakh is also least. 36.36 per cent people belonging to this income group are getting just primary level education and

metric level is the highest level of degree of this income group.

Similarly, in 0.5-1 lakh income group maximum percentage of people i.e. 36.84 percent are getting just primary education and negligible are going for higher education. In income group of 1-1.5 lakh, maximum percentage of people is getting primary level education. We can see that the modal value of education attainment of first three income groups lie in primary level.

In income group of 1.5-2 lakh, still maximum percentage of people i.e. 30.56 percent are getting up to primary level but considerable percentage of people i.e. 8.33 per cent is going for higher education. For the income groups of 2-2.5 lakh and 2.5-3 lakh, maximum percentage of people attained middle level education. In income group of 3-3.5 lakh, we see that 21.43 per cent of people are getting education of higher secondary level, which is very important change hitherto. An important change in this income group is that 7.14 per cent people have attained technical education. Income groups more than 3.5 lakh do not exhibit any major differentiation than others.

So, from above analysis of this table, we can see that as the level of income increases, there is a considerable increase in education attainment. Very few people from the rural poor are going for higher education and any other technical education.

### Physical Capital Resource Utilities at Village Level

Work opportunity and asset creation are two

important indicators for improving living standard. At village level, our findings paint a grim picture. With low human capital the landless labourers, are not a healthy position to attain and create physical capital to diversify their work portfolios or gaining expertise in one occupation and get rid of vicious circle of low productivity. Still majority (i.e. around 85 per cent) of rural landless labourers basically rely on their weak human content (workforce and knowhow) to earn a living. As an asset human capital creation is very low in village economy and most of people work as wage labour.

In current economic scenario, economic policy making and planning for economic resources has been restructured at global level through international organizations. Developed nations (First world countries) as well as New Emerging Markets are opening their economies for more global effect of development and around since last fifty years 'opening markets' or 'Globalisation' is the key term for economic development for many progressive countries. As per global development discourse the traditional approach for development of an economy is that as economy grows, the occupation pattern of people of shifts from primary to secondary and then to tertiary sector. As an important determinant of development, many developed nations witnessed this growth path. India also adopted strong economic measures of LPG to have speedy growth as well as development with full employment. But our field data paints a repellent picture.

**Table 2:** Income wise education attainment of the residents (in percentage)

Income (In Lakhs.)	Below Primary	Primary	Middle	Metric	Higher Secondary	Diploma	Degree	Post Graduation	Technical Education
0-0.5	9.00	36.36	27.27	27.27	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
0.5-1	7.89	36.84	26.32	14.47	7.89	1.32	2.63	2.63	0.00
1 -1.5	19.72	28.17	22.54	15.49	5.63	5.63	2.82	0.00	0.00
1.5 -2	19.44	30.56	19.44	11.11	11.11	0.00	8.33	0.00	0.00
2 -2.5	4.76	28.57	42.86	4.76	9.52	4.76	4.76	0.00	0.00
2.5 - 3	9.52	23.81	38.10	4.76	4.76	4.76	9.52	4.76	0.00
3 -3.5	14.29	21.43	7.14	14.29	21.43	0.00	14.29	0.00	7.14
3.5 - 4	0.00	50.00	0.00	0.00	50.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
More than 4	16.67	16.67	25.00	16.67	8.33	8.33	0.00	8.33	0.00
Total	13.16	30.45	25.19	13.16	8.65	3.01	4.51	1.50	0.38

(Percentage)

Source: Ibid and figures in the bracket show percentage.

**Table 3:** Distribution of labour force

	Schedule Caste	Other Backward Caste	Total
Farm labour	38(79.16)	10 (20.83)	48 (22.02)
Nonfarm labour/ nonfarm economic activities	118 (69.41)	52 (30.59)	170(77.98)
Total (column wise)	156(71.56)	62(28.44)	218(100)

Source: Ibid and figures in the bracket show percentage

Table 3 explains the distribution of labour force into farm labour activities and non-farm labour activities. It shows that 22.02 per cent of the total workforce is involved in farm labour and 77.98 percent workforce is involved in non-farm labour and other non-farm economic activities. This table also recognizes the fact that the share of schedule caste workforce is higher in farm labour as well as non-farm labour workforce. All the workers are involved as casual labour in the unorganized sector and self employment activities in the unorganized sector.

In the case of farm labour, Table 4 illuminates that only 8.33 per cent of labourers were attached labourers who had a one year contract with the farmer (employer) and rest of the labourers worked as casual labour in agriculture either on daily wage work or seasonal workers.

**Table 4:** Type of Agriculture Labour

Attached Labour	Casual Labour	Total
4(8.33)	44(91.67)	48(100)

Source: Ibid and figures in the bracket show percentage.

The above facts deal with the unsustainable livelihoods of both the farm and no-farm labourers that all the labourers worked as casual workforce which is still a question of sustainable livelihood of households.

**Overtime occupation change: from farm to non-farm economy**

It is clear from the above section that there has been shrill decline in traditional occupations at the village economy. Household livelihood strategies often involve different members in diverse activities and sources of support, at different times of the year (Chamber, 1995). Transformation of traditional agriculture, growth of rural non-farm sector, growth of urban economy, changes in mode of

transportation and information & communication linkages, government interventions have led to structural changes in the village economy.

The Table 5 reveals the basic relationship of age-wise education attainment (i.e. Mean Year of Schooling) and occupation. We can see the apparent inverse relation between age group and mean year of schooling and with large size of mean year of schooling the diversification of work opportunities is more towards urban, market and services oriented sector.

If we analyze the Mean Year of Schooling in ascending order, the workers who had minimum mean year of schooling i.e. 1.05 years involved in traditional caste based occupations and farm sector. In age-group of 46-55 years, workers who had 1.31 mean year of schooling which is still very much low and workers in this group were depend upon farming sector to work as casual labour, agricultural labour and traditional caste based occupation. In next age-group i.e. 36-45 years, mean year of schooling increases to 2.89. Maximum workers in this group also worked as casual labour, agricultural labour and skilled labour in farming sector as well as non-farm activities in the urban economy and diversion of occupation towards non- farm sector.

In age-group i.e. 25-35 years as maximum number of workers belonged to this age-group who had 5.38 mean year of schooling. It is comparatively higher than the former age-groups. The data reveals that considerable change in occupation diversification in this age-group. Besides casual labour, agriculture labour and seasonal labour in farming sector, workers are moving towards skilled as well as nonskilled jobs in nearest towns. Maximum mean year of schooling is 8.37 which belong to minimum age-group i.e. 15-24 years. The data depicts that they involved in non-traditional occupations. Negligible numbers of workers depend upon farming sector and maximum i.e. around more than

**Table 5:** Distribution of workforce regarding Age, Mean year of schooling and occupation diversification

Age-Group	Total Workers	Mean Year of Schooling	Occupations adopted by the workforce
15-24	38	8.37	JCB Operator (1), Casual Labour (14), Milkman (1), Mechanic (4), Hair Dresser (3), Painter (2), Salesman (1), Peon (1), Masson (3), Carpenter (1), Electrician (1), Car Mechanic (1), Driver (1), Accountant (Munim) (2), Mobile Repairer (1), Private Job (1)
25-35	83	5.38	Casual Labour (45), Mechanic (1), Shopkeeper (1), Mechanic (1), Beauty Saloon (1), Accountant (1), Carpenter (1), Mason (3), Shopkeeper (1), Driver (1), Furniture Carpenter (2), Cycle Mechanic (1), Agriculture Labour (3), Driver (1), Painter (1), Accountant (1), Asha Worker (1), Shopkeeper (1), Combine Driver (1), Tailor (2), Rural Medical Practitioner (2), Helper at Shop (1), Furniture carpenter (1), Polish Labour (1), Salesman (1)
36-45	44	2.89	Casual Labourer (25), Painter (1), Truck Driver (2), Tailor (1), Mason (1), Waterworks/Pump Operator (1), Labour (4), Labour (Tractor Driver) (1), Tailor (1), Beauty Saloon (1), Shopkeeping Helper (1), Trader Distributor (4), Salaried Accountant (Munim) (1), Car Driver (1), Mason (1)
46-55	32	1.31	Casual Labour (19), Agriculture labour (7), Tailor (3), Tea Staller (1), Shop in Village, Cobbler (2), Rural Medical Practitioner (1), Vegetable Vendor (1)
58-80	21	1.05	Casual Labourer (12), Priest at Gurudwara (1), Cobbler (2), Attached Labour (4), Engine Repair Helper (1)

Source: *Ibid*

90% workers are moving towards service oriented work opportunities.

Due to mechanization of farming, growth of non-farm economic activities and capitalistic norms of social relations, it is becoming difficult to get more dignified work opportunities in farm sector. Meanwhile people belonging to age-group 15-35 years with maximum Mean Year of Schooling i.e. 8.37, could not find any work in the organized sector. As the age-group increases in its size, Mean Year of Schooling decreases drastically and most of these workers find work opportunities in traditional structural form of economy. They are diversifying their occupation in the unorganized sector as casual workers and self-employed activities.

### Household income-expenditure pattern of different income groups

Distribution of income is a crucial determinant of the composition of demand for various goods. Another important aspect of our analysis is the structure of demand. It is common understanding that the poor spend most of their incomes on their basic needs. Considering household expenditure behaviour of the landless poor in the context of priorities and hierarchical needs, it is somewhat clear in our analysis that a major share of their

income consumed in the food and non-food grain items. Since the composition of demand/consumption of demand is crucial to determining how the fruits of growth process are distributed, the pattern of inequitable growth is self-perpetuating. Household Expenditure by a person is fundamental determinant for his/hers Income asset. As we know, with increase of income household expenditure also increases, but not proportionally. In our survey, consumption expenditure is classified by income groups and caste based socio-economic groups.

Income-class wise, income-expenditure ratio shows the much expected trend line for the rural households. As we can see from the table ratio for each income class is more than one which explains that the average expenditure of all the households is more than their average income. Our data also explores that 81 households (78 per cent) earn their income below two lakhs.

It means saving across all income groups and castes are negative. Negative saving is a sign of their inability to go for productive asset creation which is supposed to be necessary condition for capital formation (social, human, physical) and sustainability of their livelihood. We can analyze from the table that the trend of line as the income class gets bigger in size. The reasoning may be

**Table 6:** Income-Expenditure pattern by the households across income groups and caste category

Income Groups (In lakh)	Number of Households		Total Persons	Average Income	Average Expenditure	I-E* Ratio	Per Capita Income
	SC	BC					
Below 0.50	5	0	20	40660	70080	1.72	10165
0.50-1.00	26	3	143	79800	120500	1.51	16183
1.00-1.50	28	1	162	135840	170500	1.26	24317
1.50-2.00	16	2	102	185000	224000	1.21	32647
	75	6(78%)	427(75%)				
2.00-2.50	5	0	28	220050	274800	1.25	39294
2.50-3.00	6	1	51	285100	332000	1.16	39131
3.00-3.50	5	1	36	325000	357500	1.10	54166
3.50-4.00	0	1	4	389000	420000	1.08	97250
4.00-5.00	3	1	26	420000	450050	1.07	64615
<b>Total</b>	<b>94</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>572</b>	<b>231161</b>	<b>268825</b>	<b>1.16</b>	<b>41974</b>

Source: *Ibid.* and \* denotes income-expenditure ratio.

explored that all the income category households lie in the survival crisis.

### Access to Basic Amenities

#### Housing status

In basic needs, housing is main determinant of healthy and secure life. A proper housing facility provides a sustainable life elevating opportunities. Without own house or permanent living place, health and hygiene are more vulnerable.

**Table 7:** Type of the house across households and social groups

Type of House	Caste		Total
	Schedule Caste	Backward Caste	
Kucha	4(80) [5.5]	1(20) [3.2]	5(100) [4.8]
Semi Pucca	60(74) [82.20]	21(26) [67.70]	81(100) [77.90]
Pucca	9(50) [12.3]	9(50) [29.1]	18(100) [17.3]
Total	73(70.2) [100]	31(29.8) [100]	104(100.0) [100]

Source: *Ibid.* Round brackets denote row-wise percentage and long brackets denote column-wise percentage.

Table 7 shows the living conditions of rural labour class, where 77.90 per cent rural labourers are living in semi-pucca house where either floor or ceiling

is without concrete. Moreover, out of these 82.20 percent people living in such houses belong to lowest strata of caste hierarchy. Further around 4.80 percent people are still living in 'kucha' (mud) house where they are not getting proper and healthy living conditions. Only 17.21 per cent rural labourers are living in pucca (Well-constructed) house which is a negligible number.

#### Housing Facilities

In our study, we have taken availability of kitchen, bathroom and electricity as basic determinants for women health and hygiene and overall future prospect of a rural labourer household. Availability of kitchen and bathroom provides security and hygienic conditions in general. For women health issues and for overall development of family, housing facilities are one of the determinants. As table 8 shows around 52 per cent of rural labour class does not have a separate kitchen in their house, and 23.10 per cent do not have separate bathroom that all belong to schedule caste. Around 8.70 per cent rural labour class lives without electricity connection. Moreover, these people belong to lowest strata of socio-economic caste hierarchy and people with least materialistic resources.

#### Payable water

Availability of clean drinking water is another major determinant of overall health. In rural areas, availability of payable water is still a big challenge. 59.60 per cent of rural labour household depend



**Table 8: Housing facilities across social groups**

Facility	SC			BC			Overall Total		
	Yes	No	Total	Yes	No	Total	Yes	No	
Kitchen	34(46.5)	39(53.5)	73 (100)	16(51.6)	15(49.4)	31 (100)	50(48)	54(52)	104
Bathroom	57(78)	16(22)	73 (100)	23(74.2)	8(25.8)	31 (100)	80(76.9)	24(23.1)	104
Electricity	68(93.1)	5(6.9)	73 (100)	27(87.1)	4(12.9)	31 (100)	95(91.3)	9(8.7)	104

Source: *Ibid*

**Table 9: Source of water**

Source of Water	Caste		Total
	Schedule Caste	Backward Caste	
Canal Water	2(100) [2.7]	0(0) [0]	2(100) [1.9]
Public Source	46(74.2) [63.1]	16(25.8) [51.6]	62(100) [59.6]
Own Source	9(56.9) [12.3]	7(43.1) [22.5]	16(100) [15.4]
Fetching from Neighbourers	16(66.7) [21.9]	8(33.3) [25.8]	24(100) [23.1]
<b>Total</b>	<b>73(70.2) [100]</b>	<b>31(29.8) [100]</b>	<b>104(100.0) [100]</b>

Source: *Ibid*

upon public source for drinking water. They don't have their own private source for drinking water. Another 23.10 per cent of rural labour household depend upon the mercy of their neighbours to fetch their payable water. Only 15.40 per cent of people are having their own source of drinking water. This data indicates the poor condition of the households.

## Health and Hygiene

Further we can see place of defecation as a basic indicator to analysis the hygienic condition of rural people.

**Table 10: Place of defecation**

Place of Defection	Caste		Total
	Schedule Caste	Backward Caste	
Covered Dry Latrine	14(73.7) [19.1]	5(26.3) [16.1]	19(100) [18.3]
Pit Latrine	31(68.9) [42.4]	14(31.2) [45.2]	45(100) [43.3]
Septic Tank	2(50) [2.8]	2(50) [6.4]	4(100) [3.8]
Open Defection	26(72.2) [35.7]	10(27.8) [32.3]	36(100) [34.6]
<b>Total</b>	<b>73(70.2) [100]</b>	<b>31(29.8) [100]</b>	<b>104(100) [100]</b>

Source: *Ibid*

This table shows the data regarding the place of defecation of our sample population. We can see from the table that 34.6 per cent of the rural landless labourers go for open defecation in which 72.2 per cent belongs to scheduled caste group and 27.8 per cent belongs to other backward caste group, which indicates that the people who are placed at the lowest position in social caste hierarchy are in deplorable living conditions. 19.10 per cent belonging to this class use covered dry latrine and 42.40 per cent are using pit latrine which are also not attached with any public sewerage system. Merely 3.8 per cent of total population of our sample village uses septic tank as their place of defecation. No doubt, it is safe and secure from hygiene aspect but it is used by negligible number of people. Above data in the table reveals the fact these households do not avail basic facilities due to low income.

## Social Resources

Village as an economic and social space has been changing its character from standing economic and social culture to cater residents after the entry of British Empire. The empire tried to change its character by introducing new institutional setup which are the impetus to transformation and halt traditional village institutions. Earlier, traditional institutional setup were the lifeline of the residents which can be explained in number of ways may be progressive or regressive, exploitative or fair nature and based on Hindu caste system which determined

the occupational structure of the village. When wide-ranging changes take place in the economic system, traditional ties and bonds breakdown and new occurrences revealed in the context of modern economic system on different domains of life. In the context of market liberalization, the mantra of competition lies in the free market and opportunity to be more efficient in the world market. The employment is also based on the competition and arranged through different institutional setup. But in the context of employment in formal and informal sector in rural and urban sector, social resources and networks play a very important role. Through focus group discussions and interviews with respondents, the study revealed that neighbours, extended family members, friends play a role to get employment to one or the other. Here are the tables (11 and 12) which explain that how many of our respondent get work through open competition or through social networks which can be explain by social capital and social resources phenomena.

**Table 11:** Traditional and Modern Occupational Networks

1.Traditional occupational ties	
1a. Farmer community	→ landless worker
1b. Farmer Community	→ Artisan → Landless worker
1c. Big Farmers and government employees residing outside the village	→ Landless workers
2.Modern occupational networks	
2a.labouring poor	→ City employer
2b.Landless labourer	→ City employer → Landless
2c.Landless labourer	→ Contractor → Worker → Employer

2d. Farmers and employed in formal sector	→ City employer → worker
2e.Landless labourer	→ Relatives as jobholder or businessmen → Village worker

Source: *Ibid.*

Table explored that not even a single worker got work through modern institutional and labour market mechanism. Traditional ties among communities provide insurance to the household or individual that grip into shocks. Well-known economists who are working on agrarian issues in India like Gill (2004) and Singh, Bhangu and Sharma (2016) contended in their studies that client-patron system between and within communities in the village economy broke down overtime. In this village, our field survey endorsed the view that community does not provide insurance during distress and shocks but they help to find work in the urban areas through their social networking.

### Financial capital

It is pertinent to understand that how households and individuals fulfill their credit needs by because of two reasons: Individuals require money for various purposes because they have irregular work availability, low and uncertain wages. All the respondents depend for their credit needs on the landed community, small traders in the village and employers in the urban centres where they do work and they charge very high interest rates. Except very few, they do not avail credit facilities from formal credit institutions, like commercial banks and primary agricultural cooperative society. The prominent reason is that all the households and individuals do not have any collateral asset for the formal credit institutions to get loan. The purpose of loan taken by the households are house construction, medical expenses, consumption expenditure, education expenditure and on marriage. When we tried to understand the expenditures which are secured through getting loans, it can be endorsed that households need credit to balance their daily economic and social dignified life. The main reasons

**Table 12:** People from community who helped to get work in the urban area

Urban Market	Who helped to get work	Urban Market	Who helped to get work	Urban Market	Who helped to get work
Mechanic(4)	Brother-in-law	Driver(3)	Friend	Shopkeeper (2)	Father
	Brother		Neighbour		Paternal uncle
	Neighbour		Paternal uncle		
	Neighbour	Furniture polish(1)	Uncle	Salesman(1)	Friend
Mobile repair(1)	Friend from neighbouring village	Factory Worker(1)	Brother-in-law	Tea Staller(1)	Maternal cousin
Tailor(2)	Father	Painter(2)	Cousin	Barber(2)	Father
	Uncle		Uncle		Paternal cousin

Source: *Ibid.*

to take advances are low wages, irregular work and economic shocks. Due to fewer earnings, they spend their entire income on daily consumption needs which we discussed under the income expenditure section.

### Question of Desperation and Vulnerability

After the discussion on income-consumption behaviour of the households, their employment structure, social and financial capital, their living conditions, the question needs to address whether these poor households' purpose of life is survival or security after sixty five years of central planning system and moreover twenty-five years of Liberalisation, Privatisation and Globalization (LPG) policy. Field work observations and data regarding households revealed that changing composition of household livelihoods and different institutional arrangements and rearrangements within the prevailing rules systems, the labouring poor's household livelihoods are taken as coping strategies which defined as stages of desperation and vulnerability. We tried to understand these two conditions in the context of rural and urban work availability. It is very difficult for us to quantify it. To understand this problem, we asked one straight question to our respondents, what do you think about economic condition of the household? Whether it has been improved, deteriorated or stagnant overtime? Out of 104 respondents, ten respondents stated that their economic condition is somehow improved. Fifty respondents stated that their economic conditions deteriorated and 54 respondents responded that their economic

condition has been same over the period of time. This data shows the desperation and vulnerability among the households due to occupational choices.

### CONCLUSION

This micro empirical study examined the rural household livelihoods in a village economy of Haryana. The results explored the vulnerable and hopeless condition of rural worker in a manner which deals with many aspects of their life: literacy rate among male and female in each household, education attainment, consumption pattern, rural farm and non-farm occupational change, housing conditions and the role of social and financial capital. Literacy rate of the peripheral households is lower than the state as well as national averages of literacy rate and there exists a notable difference between male and female literacy rate which put patriarchal society in a serious question. The education attainment is very low among the poor households. The housing conditions are relatively poor in the village. Not in relative terms, a notable number of households did not have a kitchen, a toilet facility and any safe drinking water source. This research endorsed the view of changing occupation pattern, occupation diversification and work opportunities availed by the landless workers. It examined the role of financial capital and social resources and network in the changing rural household livelihoods. This study also explored desperation and vulnerability state among the working class in a village in the context of above indicators. They did not feel free and capable to choose a remunerable occupation as they could not shift to asset creation due to cruel

and vicious circle of low literacy- unskilled and semi-skilled work opportunities - low income- poor living condition. With these actualities regarding poor at the village, it is not difficult to predict the grey future of coming generations of rural workers in the village. The landless workforce has been facing vulnerability and desperation due to poor employment conditions and low earnings in the free market economy. To overcome the plight of the landless households, interlinked public institutions should be developed at the village level.

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