



## RESEARCH PAPER

# Livelihood income sources of landless and marginal rural households in Haryana

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**Abstract :** The present study was conducted in four districts two each from Eastern and Western zones of Haryana. Total 300 household from different landholding categories were selected from four villages of the selected districts. Finding revealed that majority of landless families was mainly through wages followed by livestock and in most of the cases it was less than 2.5 lakh per annum. As regards marginal land holding farmers, major source of income of both males and female was wages and private work. The income of large majority of marginal farm families was below Rs. 2.5 lakh per annum.

**Key Words :** Livelihood, Sustainable, Landless farmers, Income, Gender

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## INTRODUCTION

The word “livelihood” originates from the word “live”. The simple dictionary definition of livelihood is a “means of living”. A livelihood is sustainable when it can cope with and recover from stress and shocks and maintain or enhance its capabilities and assets both now and in the future, while not undermining the natural resource base. For the developing countries like India, where a majority of families, in both the farm and non-farm sectors, derive their livelihoods from agriculture, sustainability of agriculture cannot be discussed or even defined in isolation of the issue of livelihoods. Livelihood is defined as adequate stock and flow of food and cash with an individual or a family to meet its basic needs. Livelihood security then means secured ownership of,

or access to, resources and income-earning activities, including reserves and assets to offset risks, ease shocks and meet contingencies.

The importance of non-farm employment is gaining momentum in India as ruraleconomy is becoming diversified and is being extended well beyond agriculture. The labour absorptive capacity of agriculture has reached the upper limit and it is not able to keep the rural workers engaged throughout the year. Rural households also seek employment outside the agriculture sector to tide over the inter-year and intra-year variations in agricultural income. During slack agricultural season, the small farmers and landless households depend on rural non-farm activities as the secondary source of income (Elumalai and Sharma, 2003). The development factors

like agricultural modernization, commercialization, increased demand for non-crop goods and services, urbanization, growing literacy and even welfare oriented policy intervention, etc. have tried to pull the labour force away from agriculture towards more lucrative non-farm activities (Shylendra and Thomas, 1995 and Kalamkar, 2003). Several distress factors like poverty, unemployment, under-employment and frequent natural calamities like droughts have pushed the rural households to go in search of various non-farm activities to supplement their income and employment. Hardly 58 per cent of rural households in India are engaged in farming activity, which, in turn, contributes not even 60 per cent to their average total monthly incomes.

These are the findings of the latest countrywide “Situation Assessment Survey of Agricultural Households” conducted by the National Sample Survey Office (NSSO) for the 2012-13 crop year from July to June. Further, even within the 9.02 crore agricultural households, only 68.3 per cent reported farming (*i.e.* cultivation, livestock rearing and other agricultural activity) as their principal source of income. Thus, a mere 39.5 per cent of rural households today are dependent on agriculture as the source yielding the maximum share of income. Even more revealing is the data on the total income of agricultural households. Net receipts from cultivation and rearing of animals accounted for just 59.8 per cent of the average Indian farming family’s monthly income. The remaining was from wage/salaried employment, non-farm business and other sources such as remittances, interest and dividends. In short, while barely 58 per cent of rural households are now “agricultural”, over 40 per cent of income even in their case comes from non-farming economic activities. This makes the gap between agriculture’s share in GDP relative to that of the population residing in rural areas not as yawning as it may appear to be.

Livelihood is utilized as opposed to work or even wellspring of wage. Most rural people in the Haryana work in agriculture or get off-farm job opportunities only seasonally and often part time. Individuals and households create a living from various sources: production (farming, local craftwork, small-scale industries), own labor, trading, transfers (grants and remittances); this last form of entitlement often forms the backbone of rural people’s livelihood. Moreover, off-farm activities also account for a significant proportion of rural households’ income.

Haryana is one of the most progressive states of

India, spread over 44, 212 sq. km. comprising 21 districts, 119 blocks and 6, 955 villages. As per Census 2011, the total population of Haryana is around 25 million and 65.21% of it lives in the rural areas. Despite significant industrial development during the recent past, the economy of Haryana continues to be primarily based on agriculture and allied activities.

## MATERIAL AND METHODS

The present study was conducted in Haryana state. The Haryana state is divided into two zones *viz.*, Eastern zone and Western zone. Out of each zone, two districts were selected randomly *viz.*, Panipat and Karnal from Eastern zone and Hisar and Sirsa from Western zone. From each selected district, one village was selected randomly, thus making a total of four villages. Seventy five respondents from each selected villages were drawn randomly representing various land holding categories (15 each from landless, marginal, small, medium and large). Thus, a total sample of three hundred households was taken for the study. A well-structured pre –tested interview schedules was constructed for the study. Data were collected personally from heads of households. Frequency and percentages were computed.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The results obtained from the present investigation as well as relevant discussion have been summarized under following heads :

### Gender wise income of landless households from various sources:

Table 1 depicts sources of income of all adult male and female working members of landless families from different activities. The scrutiny of Table 1 reveals that in majority of cases income of male members was mainly through wages which was below Rs 2.5 lakhs per annum in Eastern zone (146.7%) as well as Western zone (160%). This was followed by livestock (20% and 23.3%, respectively) from which they could earn income below Rs 2.5 lakhs. However, 6.7 per cent males from both the zones each were earning Rs. 2.5 to 5 lakhs per annum from livestock. Only few landless men were earning above Rs. 5 lakh from service in both Eastern (3.3%) and Western zones (13.3%).

As regards females, again major source of income in majority of cases was wages. Women were earning

less than Rs. 2.5 lakh in both Eastern (110%) as well as Western (120%) zones. Further, it can be seen from Table that 16.7 per cent women in Eastern zone were earning less than Rs 2.5 lakh from business/private work while none of women in Western zone was doing business private work, 3.3 percentage was also earning through livestock poultry/fisheries. None of the women was earning through service.

Thus, it can be concluded from Table 1 that the income of landless families was mainly through wages followed by livestock and in most of the cases it was less than Rs. 2.5 lakh per annum. Salman and Munir (2016) revealed that there were almost one third landless people in almost every village and the marginal and small landholders constitute about 90 per cent of the total landholders. The largest share of the respondents was

**Table 1: Gender wise income of landless households from various sources**

Variables and categories		Annual income in Rs.									
		Eastern zone (n=30)			Western zone (n=30)			Total (n=60)			
		Below-2.5 lakh	2.5-5 lakh	Above 5 lakh	Below-2.5 lakh	2.5-5 lakh	Above 5 lakh	Below-2.5 lakh	2.5-5 lakh	Above 5 lakh	
Sr. No.	Source of income	M	F (%)	F (%)	F (%)	F (%)	F (%)	F (%)	F (%)	F (%)	
1.	Livestock	M	6(20.0)	2(6.7)	0(0.0)	7(23.3)	2(6.7)	0(0.0)	13(21.7)	4(6.7)	0(0.0)
		F	1(3.3)	0(0.0)	0(0.0)	2(6.7)	0(0.0)	0(0.0)	3(5.0)	0(0.0)	0(0.0)
2.	Poultry/ Fisheries	M	1(3.3)	1(3.3)	0(0.0)	1(3.3)	1(3.3)	0(0.0)	2(3.3)	2(3.3)	0(0.0)
		F	2(6.7)	0(0.0)	0(0.0)	1(3.3)	0(0.0)	0(0.0)	3(5.0)	0(0.0)	0(0.0)
3.	Service	M	0(0.0)	0(0.0)	1(3.3)	0(0.0)	0(0.0)	4(13.3)	0(0.0)	0(0.0)	5(8.3)
		F	0(0.0)	0(0.0)	0(0.0)	1(3.3)	0(0.0)	0(0.0)	1(1.7)	0(0.0)	0(0.0)
4.	Business/ private work	M	0(0.0)	2(6.7)	0(0.0)	1(3.3)	1(3.3)	0(0.0)	1(1.7)	3(5.0)	0(0.0)
		F	5(16.7)	0(0.0)	0(0.0)	0(0.0)	0(0.0)	0(0.0)	5(8.3)	0(0.0)	0(0.0)
5.	Wages	M	44(146.7)	0(0.0)	0(0.0)	48(160.0)	0(0.0)	0(0.0)	92(153.3)	0(0.0)	0(0.0)
		F	33(110.0)	0(0.0)	0(0.0)	36(120)	0(0.0)	0(0.0)	69(115.0)	0(0.0)	0(0.0)

\*Percentage has been worked out by taking total working adult males and females in family divided by n

**Table 2: Gender wise income of marginal land holding households from various sources**

Variables and categories		Annual income in Rs.									
		Eastern zone (n=30)			Western zone (n=30)			Total (n=60)			
		Below-2.5 lakh	2.5 to 5 lakh	Above - 5 lakh	Below-2.5 lakh	2.5 to 5 lakh	Above - 5 lakh	Below-2.5 lakh	2.5 to 5 lakh	Above - 5 lakh	
Sr. No.	Source of income	M	F (%)	F (%)	F (%)	F (%)	F (%)	F (%)	F (%)	F (%)	
1.	Agriculture	M	11(36.7)	0(0.0)	0(0.0)	10(33.3)	0(0.0)	0(0.0)	21(35.0)	0(0.0)	0(0.0)
		F	0(0.0)	0(0.0)	0(0.0)	3(10.0)	0(0.0)	0(0.0)	3(5.0)	0(0.0)	0(0.0)
2.	Livestock	M	10(33.3)	0(0.0)	0(0.0)	8(26.7)	1(3.3)	0(0.0)	18(30.0)	0(0.0)	0(0.0)
		F	3(10.0)	0(0.0)	0(0.0)	2(6.7)	0(0.0)	0(0.0)	5(8.3)	0(0.0)	0(0.0)
3.	Poultry/ Fisheries	M	3(10.0)	0(0.0)	0(0.0)	3(10.0)	0(0.0)	0(0.0)	6(10.0)	0(0.0)	0(0.0)
4.	Fruits and vegetables	M	2(6.7)	0(0.0)	0(0.0)	1(3.3)	0(0.0)	0(0.0)	3(5.0)	0(0.0)	0(0.0)
5.	Service	M	0(0.0)	1(3.3)	2(6.7)	0(0.0)	0(0.0)	1(3.3)	0(0.0)	1(1.7)	3(5.0)
6.	Business/ private work	M	3(10.0)	4(13.3)	0(0.0)	3(10.0)	3(10.0)	0(0.0)	6(10.0)	7(11.7)	0(0.0)
		F	4(13.3)	0(0.0)	0(0.0)	3(10.0)	0(0.0)	0(0.0)	7(11.7)	0(0.0)	0(0.0)
7.	Wages	M	20(66.7)	0(0.0)	0(0.0)	32(106.7)	0(0.0)	0(0.0)	52(86.7)	0(0.0)	0(0.0)
		F	16(53.3)	0(0.0)	0(0.0)	19(63.3)	0(0.0)	0(0.0)	35(58.3)	0(0.0)	0(0.0)

\*Percentage has been worked out by taking total working adult males and females in family divided by n

found to be engaged in crop cultivation (37.95%) followed by agricultural labour (19.73%), animal husbandry (17.11%), other employments (13.44%) and business/job (11.78%). Although, the share of people engaged in agricultural activities seemed to be less than 40 per cent but many farmers were practicing agriculture as their second or third occupation. Many marginal farmers started non-agricultural activities along with the traditional agriculture on their small piece of land.

### Gender wise income of marginal land holding households from various sources:

The total income range of marginal farm families through various sources has been presented in Table 2. A perusal of Table clearly depicts that source of income of marginal farm families was wages in most of the cases both in Eastern (66.7%) and Western zone (106.7%), though they were earning less than Rs. 2.5 lakh per annum. The other source of income of marginal male farmers was livestock and wages (33.3) each, followed by poultry/fishery and selling fruit and vegetables (6.7%) in Eastern zone. Similarly 26.7% males in Western zone were also earning through livestock followed by poultry/fishery (10%), wages (10%) and fruits and vegetables (3.3%). The amount of income earned through these activities was less than Rs. 2.5 lakh in both the zones. Only one and two persons, respectively from both the zone were earning more than Rs. 5 lakh from service. Hiremath (2007) concluded that agriculture and allied activities supported livelihoods of nearly 70 per cent of India's rural population. In recent years, land-based livelihoods of small and marginal farmers were increasingly becoming unsustainable, since their land has not been able to support the family's food requirements and fodder for their cattle. Natural resource-based micro-enterprises have emerged as alternative livelihood opportunities in rural areas.

Regarding females, about one fifth in Eastern (53.3%) and Western (63.3%) zones were earning through wages followed by business/private work (13.3% and 10%, respectively). About 10 per cent females in Eastern zone and 6.7 per cent in Western zone were also earning through livestock. It can also be seen for Table 2 that 10 per cent females were earning up to Rs 2.5 lakh from agriculture while none of the

female in Eastern zone was earning through agriculture. Sreedevi (2013) estimated that most of the farmers basically were dependent on agriculture *i.e.*, 74.96 per cent in Kistapur and 57.23 per cent in Powerguda village for their livelihoods. The second source of livelihoods in both the villages was agricultural labour wages (about 17.22% in Powerguda and 7.97% in Kistapur). Non-agricultural wage labour was ranked third as sources of livelihoods in Kistapur village with 4.78 per cent and 2.78 per cent in Powerguda ranked six.

Thus, it can be concluded from Table 2 that the major source of income both males and female was wages and private work. The income of large majority of marginal farm families was below Rs. 2.5 lakh per annum.

### Conclusion:

The finding of the study revealed that, the income of landless and marginal families were mainly through wages and livestock and it was less than Rs. 2.5 lakh per annum.

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