

# Understanding the Socio-Economic Situation & Deprivation of Marginal Farmers in Peri-Urban Delhi

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**Abstract:** *An overwhelming proportion of farmers in India are small or marginal. These two farm size group also account for a large proportion of the total farm land. However in most of the states their share in total operated area is less than forty percent. As a result inequalities in land ownership and socio-economic status remain quite large but the situation of these inequalities is not uniform across India. The land dynamics is quite different in Peri-urban areas. Peri-urban areas have received influx of money, migrant worker, and private development. Therefore it can be hypothesized that the socio-economic status of small and marginal farmer is better near the core of the urban growth centre. This paper looks into the socio-economic situation of farmers and traces the level of deprivation in terms of possession of material well-being.*

**Keywords:** *Marginal Farmer, Deprivation, Urban Fringe, Trickle Down of Growth, Casualization.*

**Introduction:** The rural life in India is characterized by farming, community life, social cohesion and a life which is predominantly governed by customs tradition and localized institutional structure. But with the advent of modernity the rural life is altered moulded, disturbed, and shaped by the processes emanating from urban core. Today the rural-urban both spatial units share a dynamic relation of economic and social processes. In a rapidly expanding economy this interdependence of rural-urban has a vital role as most of the processes like migration, pressure on urban area and other important aspects are shaped by this relationship. The present paper tries to understand this dynamism and seek to explore the role of farmer and their

positional aspect in this changing economic structure.

Department of Agriculture, Cooperation & Farmers Welfare has released Agriculture Census 2010-11(Phase-II). If we look at the Census, the average size of the holding has been estimated as 1.15 hectare. The average size of holdings has shown a steady declining trend over various Agriculture Censuses since, 1970-71.

In India, out of 121 million agricultural holdings, 99 million are with small and marginal farmers, with a land share of just 44 per cent and a farmer population share of 87 per cent. With multiple cropping prevalent, such farmers account for 70 per cent of all vegetables and 52 per cent of cereal output.

**Table no.-1 Typology of farmers and their distribution at National level**

Size-Group	Percentage of number of operational holdings to total	Percentage of area operated to total
Marginal (below 1.00 ha.)	67.10	22.50
Small (1.00 - 2.00 ha.)	17.91	22.08
Semi-medium (2.00 - 4.00 ha.)	10.04	23.63
Medium (4.00 - 10.00 ha.)	4.25	21.20
Large (10.00 ha. & above)	0.70	10.59
<b>Source: Agriculture Census 2010-11(Phase-II)</b>		

According to National Sample Survey Office data, 33 per cent of all farm households have less than 0.4 hectares of land. About 50 per cent of agricultural households are indebted. Therefore it is very much vivid that situation of small and

marginal farmers on a whole is not considered as very good, but this paper tries to look at the situation of small and marginal farmers in the National Capital Region, which is often considered as growth centre in the academia. This paper utilizes a very

new data set that is Socio-economic caste census and tries to understand the prosperity and vulnerability of the per-urban farmers. The study area of this study has experienced the boon and bane of structural reforms and stabilization policies introduced in India in 1991. These reforms were particularly focused on industry, tax reforms, foreign trade and investment, banking and capital markets. These economic reforms did not include any specific package specifically designed for agriculture. In the post reform (since 1991) period, India has done well in some indicators such as economic growth, exports, balance of payments, resilience to external shocks, service sector growth, significant accumulation of foreign exchange, Information technology (IT) and stock market, improvements in telecommunications.

However, there have been exclusion, relative deprivation and widening inequalities in the country. In other words, development in terms of fruits growth shared by all sections of the population has not taken place, capital is accumulated with few. One of the excluded sector (later on neglected sector) during the reform period was agriculture which showed low growth and experienced

more farmers' suicides. There are serious concerns on the performance of agriculture sector in the country. Agricultural Census data shows that there were about 121 million agricultural holdings in India in 2000-01. Around 99 million were small and marginal farmers. Average size has declined from 2.3 hac in 1970-71 to 1.37 hac in 2000-01. Small and marginal farmers account for more than 80% of total farm hhs. But their share in operated area is around 44%. Thus, there are significant land inequalities in India. The role of small farms in development and poverty reduction is well recognized Lipton (2006). The argument raised through World development Report WDR, (2008) that the global experience of growth and poverty reduction shows that GDP growth originating in agriculture is at least twice as effective in reducing poverty as GDP growth originating outside agriculture is well accepted in the academia all over the world and it has become a thing experience for developing countries.

Small holdings play important role in raising agricultural development and poverty reduction. The objective of this paper is to examine the Status and challenges of small holding agriculture in the National Capital Region.

Behlpa Fazalwas and Gabsanpur situated in the peri-urban region of South three villages chosen and they are part of west National Capital Region. Gurgaon and Mewat respectively and are

**Table no.- 2 Typology of Farmers and their distribution across villages**

CLASSIFICATION OF FARMERS	BEHLPA	FAZALWAS	GABSANPUR
MARGINAL (below 1 hec)	35 (19.9)	-	-
SMALL (1-2 hec)	102 (57.9)	8 (11.9)	2 (9.5)
SEMI – MEDIUM (2- 4 hec)	15 (8.5)	45 (67.2)	6 (28.6)
MEDIUM (4- 10 hec)	23 (13.1)	13 (19.4)	8 (38.1)
LARGE (over 10 hec)	1 (0.6)	1 (1.5)	5 (23.8)
TOTAL	176 (100)	67 (100)	21 (100)
TOTAL HOUSEHOLDS	295	320	29

*Source:Secc 2011*

Urban fringe is a complex dynamic system of economic processes here even small farmer may overshadow the output of traditional large farmerAs the urban fringe provides better connectivity which creates backward and forward linkages to the farmers and easy access to market offer them to go for more remunerative cash crops and floriculture.Behlpa which is closer to the urban agglomeration has high number of

marginal farmers and a very high number of farmers are there in the category of small. Nearly 60% are marginal farmer .percentage of large farmers is highest in the mewat by this data we can hypothesize that large farmers socio-economic condition should be better. But the case is reversed marginal farmers of Behlpa in terms of possession of assets are better than that of Gabsanpur.

**Table no.- 3 Distribution of assets crosstab with typology of farmers across villages**

CLASSIFICATION OF FARMERS	Refrigerator			Telephone/ mobile			2/3/4 Motorised Wheeler		
	B	F	G	B	F	G	B	F	G
<b>MARGINAL (below 1 ha)</b>	23 (65.7)	-	-	34 (97.1)	-	-	20 (57.1)	-	-
<b>SMALL (1-2 ha)</b>	83 (81.4)	7 (87.5)	1 (50)	94 (92.1)	8 (100)	2 (100)	69 (67.6)	6 (75)	1 (50)
<b>SEMI MEDIUM (2- 4 ha)</b>	12 (80)	39 (86.7)	3 (50)	15 (100)	45 (100)	6 (100)	12 (80)	37 (82.2)	2 (33.3)
<b>MEDIUM (4- 10 ha)</b>	22 (95.6)	13 (100)	3 (37.5)	22 (95.6)	13 (100)	8 (100)	19 (82.6)	10 (76.9)	5 (62.5)
<b>LARGE (over 10 ha)</b>	1 (100)	1 (100)	3 (60)	1 (100)	1 (100)	5 (100)	1 (100)	1 (100)	4 (80)

*Source: Secc 2011, B,F,G-Behlpa, Fazalwas, Gabsanpur*

It can be inferred that the village which is closer to urban agglomeration is having better socioeconomic profile. It appears agriculture in mewat is not remunerative even the large farmers are not at good condition in all the indicators.

Whereas Behlpa which is closer to the core is well performing in terms possession of refrigerator, telephone and vehicles this shows the effect of trickle down of fruits of growth. The land prices of the village which is closer to the core must be higher and even

after land acquisition the farmer which was earlier a medium may have turned a marginal farmer but still better in socio-economic profile. Therefore all throughout the problems of marginal farmers does not apply to the farmers of Urban fringe.

Possession of assets and property may be a function of many other factors, better purchasing power always lead to purchase, possess and consume is not necessarily true. But possession of

agriculture equipment and irrigation equipment along with other property detail could definitely provide an insight in their socioeconomic condition. And even in case of agriculture equipment's it is the village which is closer to the core is better their small and marginal farmer is better than that of their counterpart. Therefore the peri-urban dynamics is different and concerns challenges of the marginal and small farmers must be different and addressed differently.

**Table no.- 4 Agricultural equipment possessed by farmers**

CLASSIFICATION OF FARMERS	Agricultural equipment			Irrigation equipment		
	B	F	G	B	F	G
MARGINAL (below 1 ha)	1 (2.9)	-	-	3 (8.6)	-	-
SMALL (1-2 ha)	5 (4.9)	1 (12.5)	-	25 (24.5)	8 (100)	-
SEMI – MEDIUM (2- 4 ha)	-	8 (17.8)	1 (16.7)	4 (26.7)	44 (97.8)	4 (66.7)
MEDIUM (4- 10 ha)	6 (26.1)	7 (53.8)	3 (37.5)	17 (73.9)	13 (100)	5 (62.5)
LARGE (over 10 ha)	-	-	3 (60)	1 (100)	1 (100)	3 (60)
<i>Source: Secc 2011, B,F,G-Behlpa, Fazalwas, Gabsanpur</i>						

Even by looking at the main source of the income it is clearly evident that though cultivation as a main source of income is quite high and marginal farmer are also very high in this village only

therefore there must be some remunerative practices existing here in agriculture which lead to the good socio-economic profile of this village.

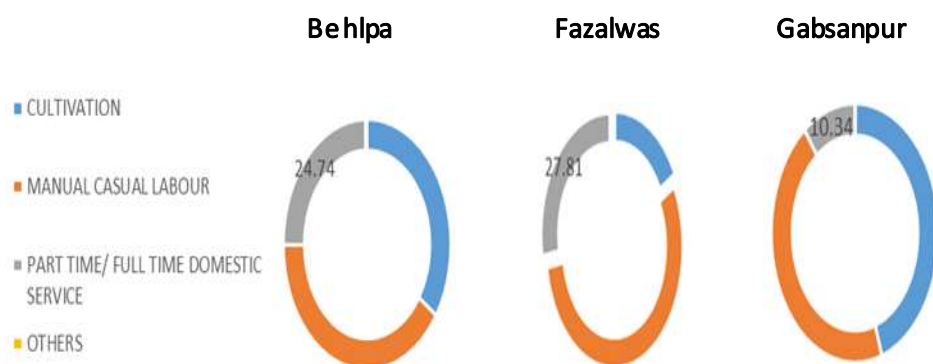


Figure 1 Main source of income

Single variable may not be exhibiting the real picture therefore a composite scoring of all the variable could

bring some insights in to the socio-economic level of the peri-urban farmers.

Table no. -5 Methodological framework of weighting and constructing indices

Variable Used	Description	Categorisation Of Households On Deprivation Based On Total Score
<b>Housing</b>		
Material Of Wall	0-Kachcha 1-Semi- Pucca 2- Pucca	
Material Of Roof	0-Kachcha 1-Semi- Pucca 2- Pucca	

<b>Income Characteristics</b>		
Pay Income Tax / Professional Tax	0-Not paying income tax, 1- Paying income tax	0: Abject Deprivation (AD)
Monthly Income	0-Less Than Rs 5000, 1-Between Rs 5000 To 10,000, 2- Rs 10,000 Or More	1-5: Moderate Deprivation (MD)
<b>Assets</b>		6-10: Just above Deprivation (JAD)
Refrigerator	0-No Refrigerator, 1-have Refrigerator	10-15 : Well above Deprivation (WAD)
Telephone/ Mobile	0-No telephone, 1-have either Landline or Mobile, 2-have both landline and mobile	
2/3/4 Motorized Wheelers	0-No motorised wheeler, 1-have 2 or 3 Wheeler, 2-have 4 Wheeler	
<b>Property</b>		
Own Any Land	0-No Land, 1-Own Land	
Agricultural Equipment	0-No, 1- Yes	
Irrigation Equipment	0-No, 1- Yes	
Kisan Credit Card	0-No KCC, 1-have KCC	



The above table shows the variables used in this paper to estimate the level of deprivation, which includes housing, assets and property possessed by the household. For each household each variable is given a score of 0, 1 or 2 indicating their level of presence and degree of goodness. We have assigned a score 0 to kachcha house, score 1 to semi- pucca house and 2 to pucca house

The total score for rural households range from 0 to 15. Here 0 means a household does not have any of the specified necessity. We categorise scores as Abject Deprivation (AD), Moderate Deprivation (MD), Just Above Deprivation (JAD) and Well Above Deprivation (WAD) on the basis of scores achieved by households.

**Table no.- 6 Deprivation across villages**

CATEGORISATION OF HOUSEHOLDS ON DEPRIVATION	BEHLPA	FAZALWAS	GABSANPUR
Abject Deprivation (AD)	-	-	-
Moderate Deprivation (MD)	4 (1.3)	5 (1.6)	1 (3.4)
Just Above Deprivation (JAD)	271 (91.9)	298 (93.1)	22 (75.9)
Well Above Deprivation (WAD)	20 (6.8)	17 (5.3)	6 (20.7)
TOTAL HOUSEHOLDS	295 (100)	320 (100)	29 (100)

If we look at the overall deprivation it reveals that there is a range of class 6 household are well above the deprivation and nearly 75%are concentrated in the just above deprivation.in absolute terms the household is highest in Behlpa . But the

composite scoring brings the real picture and it allow to rest all above arguments and brings forward the same which applicable even in rural areas. Marginal and small farmers are more deprived in all the villages.

Table no.- 7 Deprivation and land holding

CLASSIFICATION OF FARMERS	BEHLPA				FAZALWAS				GABSANPUR			
	AD	MD	JAD	WAD	AD	MD	JAD	WAD	AD	MD	JAD	WAD
MARGINAL (below 1 hec)	-	1 (2.9)	32 (91.4)	2 (5.7)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
SMALL (1-2 hec)	-	-	93 (91.2)	9 (8.8)	-	-	8 (100)	-	-	-	2 (100)	-
SEMI MEDIUM (2- 4 hec)	-	-	12 (80)	3 (20)	-	-	41 (91.1)	4 (8.9)	-	-	6 (100)	-
MEDIUM (4- 10 hec)	-	-	17 (73.9)	6 (26.1)	-	-	6 (46.2)	7 (53.8)	-	-	5 (62.5)	3 (37.5)
LARGE (over 10 hec)	-	-	1 (100)	-	-	-	1 (100)	-	-	-	2 (40)	3 (60)
AD- Abject Deprivation, MD- Moderate Deprivation, JAD- Just Above Deprivation, WAD- Well Above Deprivation Figures in parenthesis are percentages												

One noticeable point here is the village Gabsanpur has high population even in case of medium and large farmers. That is

to say farmers those having a land of nearly 10 hectare is also deprived. This is primarily because of lack of fertile in this Aravali

region. Therefore in the periurban region just land is not the determining factor of the socio-economic wellbeing rather it is the proximity to the urban core which seems playing a larger role in moulding, shaping and transforming the life world of periurban farmer.

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