

Chapter - X
Summary and Conclusions

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SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

The present chapter is devoted to conclude the results obtained from the study. The concluding observations derived from each chapter has been described separately under respective section.

10.1 Soon after the attainment of independence, the attention of development planners in India was focused on economic development. This was necessitated because of persistence of poverty and low level of employment and. Economic growth thus became a major goal of development but in this process the objectives of equity and distributive justice were ignored. In the first two decades of planned development, various policies and programmes were launched for uplift of social and economic development of rural masses. It was assumed that all sections of people would gain from these programmes but this did not happen in reality. The scheduled castes who are one of the major sub set of socially disadvantaged group were subject to severe social and economic disabilities and their condition remained practically the same till recently, in spite of several measures undertaken by the government to improve their conditions in the light of constitutional provisions.

10.2 Barring a few official reports and a few studies made by the Sociologists and social Anthropologists, there are few studies which throw light on the present status of income and well-being of the scheduled castes in comparison to non scheduled castes. Whatever studies have been made are mostly confined to the aspect of untouchability and rarely throw light on various dimensions of social and economic well-being

of scheduled castes either at the micro level or at a macro level. The present study was conceived with a view to partly filling up this gap. Though it was not possible to cover all aspects of their well-being comprehensively, the study made an modest attempt to cover some of the aspects such as ownership of assets, levels of income, consumption expenditure, accessibility to basic household amenities, education and health facilities. Attempt has also been made to evaluate the impact of anti-poverty programmes and policies designed for the benefits of SDG. These basic issues formed the core of present research work.

The objectives underlying the present study included a comparative analysis of (1) Distribution pattern of household income, assets and consumption expenditure, (2) Accessibility to basic household amenities and to educational and health facilities, (3) Inter and Intra-Caste comparison of distribution of assets, income and consumption expenditure and (4) Evaluation of the impact of anti-poverty programmes of the government on the level of living of SDG and to give some suggestions regarding the problems of these households.

10.3 The research study was carried out in district Shimla of Himachal Pradesh. In all a sample of 250 households, 135 from SCs and 115 from NSCs selected from nine scheduled caste concentrated villages of nine panchayats selected from three blocks; Theog, Jubbal and Kotkhai and Mashobra. These households were surveyed to obtain the required information. The sample households in each group belonged to three size classes, viz marginal, small and medium. The primary data collected has been classified in homogeneous groups and simple averages and percentages have been calculated. In order to test the significance of the results t-test and Tukey

test have been applied to the data in order to satisfy the objectives outlined in the study.

10.4 Among the various indicators of socio-economic characteristics, the average family size for different size classes of households reveals that there exists a positive association between size class of holdings and average family size for the households belonging to AG. Whereas, no clear relationship of family size with the size class was noticed in case of the households belonging to SDG. Small and medium size class households in the Socially Advantaged Group tend to have a smaller family size as compared to their counterparts of Socially Disadvantaged Group, whereas, family size of marginal size class households of AG is larger as compared to SDG households. In overall, households belonging to AG has larger average family size than the SDG in the study area.

A comparison of sex-ratio shows that the ratio of females per thousand of males is lower in each size class of the households of advantaged group as compared to that of the households of SDG.

Comparatively, the proportion of active labour force does not reveal any considerable variations neither between two groups nor among various size classes within the each group the sampled households. In other words, endowment of households with respect to labour resource is almost similar for both the groups.

The inter and intra-group comparison of literacy ratio reveal that the households of Advantaged Group are ahead of their counterparts of Socially Disadvantaged Group in terms of literacy among males and females and also for the overall population as a whole. This may be attributed to the fact that the households of the advantaged group are having better

accessibility to the educational facilities as well as greater awareness among the parents.

The average size of holdings is also larger for each size class of households of socially advantaged group in comparison to its counterparts belonging to socially disadvantaged group. It is only very recently that scheduled castes were able to acquire some land for personal cultivation. Average size of land holding in case of socially advantaged group is more than double than their counterparts of socially disadvantaged group. Finally, the aforementioned comparative analysis of the socio-economic characteristics of the households of the two groups under reference reveals no considerable differences except for literacy and land holdings.

10.5 Access of the sample households to educational facilities among the SDG households is lower than AG households. The literacy and educational levels of the SDG households are far behind than the other group. The drop-out from the school system before completing their intended year of schooling is observed in SDG households only. The prevalence of the extreme social backwardness has been observed from the educational profile of the households of SDG. The backwardness in access to education is found higher in SDG households as compared to AG households. However, at primary level, access to education of SDG is better than AG households. It is also conspicuous that the drop out is prevalent rate among the school going children in the age group of 6-14 under the marginal size class of households in SDG only. While, this tendency is not seen in case of other respective size classes of households belonging to SDG and AG. Further the results reveal a higher percentage of the children receiving education in the public/convent schools among the households belonging to AG. Moreover, the households belonging to the

SDG have also started sending their children to above mentioned schools so as to provide access to better educational facilities to their wards. The reasons for this educational backwardness among scheduled caste households could be due to lack of education among parents of the children, lack of educational institution nearer to their habitation and lack of awareness of the availability of educational assistance among the SDG households.

Indicators relating to the accessibility to health facilities among the sample households of socially disadvantaged and advantaged group reveal that the households of SDG are lagging behind their counterparts of AG, in respect of indicators such as knowledge about methods of family planning, assistance of mothers at delivery, knowledge about immunization and awareness about nutrition and food habits. Sharp differences has been observed regarding acquisition of knowledge about nutrition and food habits among the households belonging to SDG and AG. Some anemic women were found among the families of the SDG only who were in regular intake of iron tablets, whereas, no case of anemic woman was reported by the households belonging to AG. The prevalence of illness is also seen higher in case of the household belonging to SDG as compared to AG.

The regarding access to household amenities such as safe drinking water and electricity, the marginal size class of households belonging to SDG are situated far behind than their counterparts under AG. Whereas, small and medium size class of households of both the groups are having similar level of access to these amenities. Sharp differences have also been observed with respect to the access to other household amenities, namely, separate kitchen, separate bathroom and toilets between the two groups across various size classe of

households. The study observe wide gap with respect to the access to toilets facilities between the households of SDG and AG. This trend may be resultant of lack of awareness about environment pollution and habit of cleanliness among the households of SDG. The extent of accessibility to information and communication facilities among respective size classes of households belonging to SDG is observed lower as compared to the households under AG. The access to basic household amenities among SDG households is inadequate and reflects the poor quality of their social well-being as compared to AG counterpart..

10.6 The results of the study pertaining to distribution pattern of household productive assets among all size class of households in both the groups has suggested land to be the most important productive asset. The absolute value of land owned by marginal, small and medium size class of households in AG is found to be higher as compared to respective SDG households. Livestock has been identified as the second most important productive asset both for SDG and AG households. However, the absolute and proportionate value of livestock was found higher among the households belonging to advantaged group as compared to SDG households. The ownership of milch animals is found lower in value terms among the households of SDG, but, due to higher ownership of high valued mules and horses make SDG better placed. The lower position of SDG in the ownership of live stock may be attributed to non-availability of grass lands, which are mainly used for the livestock feeding. The agricultural implements and machinery account for a smaller proportion of the value of productive assets, yet, there exists a significant difference in their relative value between the two groups.

The distribution pattern of all household assets has brought out the predominance of productive assets over the household durables in case of marginal, small and medium households of both the groups under reference. Whereas, the value of household durables such as furnishing articles, electrical appliances utensils and beddings which are considered as one of the important indicators of the level of living, accounts for a negligible share in the total value of household assets among the sample households of both the groups under reference. In case of households belonging to SDG, the share of productive assets are estimated at 74.52 as against 25.48 of household durables including buildings, while, the corresponding ratios for the households of AG were 75.37 and 24.63 respectively.

Extent of disparities in the ownership household assets has been tested statistically. It is evident from the results obtained that marginal category of households belonging to SDG and AG differ significantly with respect to ownership of various assets such as Land, Implements and buildings. This category of households belonging to SDG and AG also differ significantly with respect to ownership of total productive assets and all assets as well. The ownership of other assets does not reveal any significant difference. For small category of households significant difference is observed in respect of the ownership of Land, Implements, livestock, household durables and buildings. Ownership of total productive assets and all assets reveal the significant differences among the households belonging to small size class of SDG and AG. However, medium category of households belonging to both the group under study differ significantly in respect to the ownership of all kind of household assets except that of Machinery, household durables and buildings. For all households belonging to SDG and AG, the study observed that

all households differ significantly from each other with respect to ownership of all types of assets with the exception of machinery.

The inter-class analysis with respect to ownership of productive assets among the households belonging to SDG it may be observed that there is significant differences among the three categories of households i.e. marginal, small and medium. But in case of household durables, there is no significant difference in the ownership pattern among the three categories of households. In case of buildings, significant difference has been observed between marginal and medium categories of households. Significant difference is also observed between small and medium categories of households. However, there is no significant difference between marginal and small categories of households, suggesting that these two categories enjoy more or less similar position with respect to ownership of buildings. All the three categories of households belonging to SDG differ significantly from each other in the distribution of total household assets.

In case of the ownership of the productive assets, the results suggests significant differences among the three categories of households i.e. marginal, small and medium belonging to Socially Advantaged Group. But in case of household durables, the study finds no significant difference between the small and medium category of households, while, Marginal-Small and Marginal-Medium categories differ significantly from each other. Regarding the position of builingds in the assets significant differences has been observed between marginal and medium categories of household, as well as between marginal and small categories of households. However, the study finds no significant difference between medium and small categories of

households, which can be taken to mean that the households belonging to these two categories are at more or less similar level in respect of contribution of buildings in the total assets. The study revealed that all the three categories of households belonging to AG differ significantly from each other in the distribution of all household assets.

The analysis of distribution pattern of all household assets within the various sub-castes of the SC reveals that the value of assets owned is highest in case of the households belonging to the Kolis, followed by the Chanals, Lohars and the Rehars. However, Chamars are situated at the bottom with respect to value of all assets. The study further observed that even though the households belonging to caste Chamar own some land holding but most of their land has not been put under cultivation and majority of these households are still engaged in traditional caste-based profession.

10.7 The composition of household income as brought by the results of the study revealed following important conclusions. First, in case of AG households, farm income has contributed more than 80.38 percent of the total household income revealing agrarian nature of these households economies. Further, the percentage share of farm income to the total household income comes to 45.06 in case of SDG households. The contribution of farm income to the total household income tends to increase with an increase in the size of holdings for both the groups of households under study. Second, among the non-farm sources of income, services accounted for a remarkable share in SDG group of households under reference inspite of presence of higher literacy among AG households as compared to SDG households. The contribution of services account for 47.14 percent of total household income among SDG households while, this share is

18.07 percent of the total income of AG households. Moreover, higher share of income from wage work is seen in case of SDG households which may be attributed to poor resource endowment. In the absence of gainful self-employment opportunities and due to the smallness of landholdings and low level of literacy compel these people to work as wage labour in farm and non-farm activities for their livelihood, in contrast to the advantaged group households who derive higher income from farm cultivation. The study found that the scheduled castes were denied the right of bargaining for higher wages and had to accept what ever was paid to them. The SDG household even had to perform number of duties in villages without any remuneration. Business/trade and household industry activities have contributed slightly higher proportion of household income of SDG than AG households. The households of AG were found to be ahead of the SDG households in terms of average household income from farm activities. The study reveals that average household income of the households of AG was higher across each size class of households than SDG households.

The size class wise comparison of per capita income suggest that for respective size class, the per capita income of AG households is higher than the SDG households. The per capita income has tendency to increase with an increase in the size of holdings for both the groups i.e. SDG & AG.

The study further observed that levels of income and the sources of income within the sub-castes under the SC category, sub-caste namely, the Kolis derived the highest income from the agricultural activities followed by the Lohars, Rehars and chanals in the descending order. However, the Chamars earned the lowest amount from this source of household income. The share of non-farm income to the total

household income in absolute terms was highest in case of the households belonging to the Chanals followed by the Kolis, Lohars, Rehars and the Chamars respectively. The tendency was mainly due to the reason that the income from the services was found as a major source of non-farm income in case of the households belonging to the Chanals sub-caste. The average household annual income of Kolis was the highest (Rs. 72752) per annum followed by Chanals, Lohars, Rehars and Chamars.

The significance of differences in the average household annual income among a marginal, small and medium categories of sample households belonging to Socially Disadvantaged and Advantaged Groups has been tested statistically. The results suggest that marginal category of households differ significantly with respect to farm income and total income. However, annual income earned from non-farm activities by the marginal households belonging to SDG and AG does not reveal any significant difference. For small category of households, significant difference is depicted with respect to farm income and total income. Medium category of households belonging to SDG and AG does not differ significantly with respect to farm income, non-farm income as well as total annual income. This result suggests that the households belonging to medium category are earning almost equal amount from farm and non-farm activities. The differences in the mean values of farm income and total income are significant among the sample households belonging to Socially Disadvantaged and Advantaged groups. Whereas, the differences are not significant in case of Non-farm Income. This tendency suggests that the households belonging to SDG and AG are placed more or less at similar level with respect to contribution of non-farm income.

The results pertaining to inter-class disparities in the levels of income of the households situated in the two groups under reference reveal that, the farm income and total income differ significantly between the marginal-medium and small-medium categories of households belonging to Socially Disadvantaged Group. However, no significant difference has been observed with respect to non-farm income for all size classes of households. In case of AG households, significant difference in the farm income and total income has been observed between marginal and medium size classes of households. Whereas, no significant difference has been observed between any two size classes with respect to non-farm income. The study noted that income from farm activities appear to be solely responding for causing income inequalities across the various categories of households. From these observation the study suggests that the inequalities in the ownership of productive assets especially land is mainly responsible for causing inequalities in the income levels of households belonging to SDG & AD respectively.

10.8 The pattern of consumption expenditure across the two social groups under study reveals small intra and inter-class differences. The results suggest that the percentage share of household consumption expenditure on food items was higher among the households falling in respective size class of SDG as compared to the AG counterpart. In absolute terms, the expenditure on food items was higher in case of households belonging to AG. Contrary to above, the percentage share of household expenditure on non-food requirements was lower among the households falling in the SDG as compared to the AG counterpart. Further, of the total household consumption expenditure on food items, 31.11 and 28.01 percent is spent on cereals by the households falling under SDG & AG respectively. Comparatively, it is observed that consumption

expenditure of the AG households on the cereals was lower than SDG. Among the non-food items, the percentage expenditure incurred on clothing and footwear and other items which include expenditure on beedi, tobacco, wine etc. is higher among the households of SDG in comparison to AG households. The study observed that most of the rural scheduled castes were under debt due to their poor earnings, on the one hand and habitual of higher spending on liquor, gambling and celebration of fairs and festivals on the other. The results of the study suggest that the percentage of expenditure on fuel and light, education, sports and toys, medical services and sickness, toilet and cosmetics was found higher among the households of AG than the SDG counterpart. For both the group of households, total consumption expenditure on food and non-food items show increasing tendency with an increase in the size of land holdings. The results pertaining to pattern of consumption expenditure clearly indicate that the proportionate spending on food items tends to decline with the increase in the size category of holdings. It was observed that the marginal and small categories of households tends to spend higher proportion of consumption expenditure on food items following Engel's Law of consumption.

The pattern of household consumption expenditure among the sub-castes of SC households clearly indicates that the percentage of total household consumption expenditure on food items was highest among the households falling in the sub-caste namely, Chamars, followed by the Lohars, Rehars, Kolis and Chanals. The consumption expenditure is highest in the case of sub-caste, namely, the Kolis followed by Rehars, Chanals, Lohars and the Chamars in the descending order. It is also evident from the results pertaining to assets ownership, household income and consumption expenditure, that in the

caste hierarchy within the SCs, the Chamar sub-caste is placed at the bottom and the Kolis are located at the top. Whereas, no considerable disparities have been observed among the other sub-castes.

The results of statistical test suggest that marginal size class of households differ significantly with respect to the monthly consumption expenditure on food and non-food items, also, significant differences have been observed in case of total monthly expenditure incurred by the marginal size class of households belonging to SDG and AG. Further, the small size class of households differ significantly in the monthly consumption expenditure incurred on non-food items. Moreover, significant differences have been observed with respect to average monthly expenditure incurred by small size class of households belonging to SDG and AG. The values obtained from the test indicate that differences with respect to food expenditure, non-food expenditure and total expenditure, are not statistically significant in case of the medium category of households, indicating that the households belonging to both the groups have more or less similar level of consumption expenditure. All households belonging to SDG and AG differ significantly with respect to food expenditure, non-food expenditure and total consumption expenditure as well.

The results of the statistical test used to measure the disparities in the monthly consumption expenditure on food and non-food items among the marginal, small and medium size class of households within the SDG revealed that in case of expenditure incurred on non-food items significant differences have been observed between marginal and medium size class of households. Similar results are depicted for the total consumption expenditure as well. In the rest of the combinations of size classes no significant differences have

been observed with respect to average monthly consumption expenditure as well as expenditure incurred on food and non-food items. The study noticed that consumption expenditure on non-food items made by the households of AG, show significant differences for the combination of marginal-medium size class of households. Similar results are depicted for total consumption expenditure in the above mentioned category. In the rest of the combinations of size class of households, no significant differences have been observed with respect to average monthly consumption on food and non-food items among the AG households.

10.9 The results pertaining to appraisal of the programmes and policies suggest that nearly 18.52 percent of marginal size class households from SDG have received five bighas of land each free of cost from the government under the allocation of land to landless scheme. However, no household has reported to receive financial assistance in the form of subsidy/loan from the government for purchase of farm implements, seeds, pesticides and fertilizers. The study finds that only 5.62, 29.63, 26.31 and 13.33 percent of households belonging to marginal, small, medium and all size classes under SDG have reported receipt of subsidy for the purchase of live stock, while, no subsidy was disbursed to provide balanced food to the cattle. The study found that 4.49, 22.22, 52.63 and 14.81 percent of households among SDG belonging to marginal, small, medium and all size classes respectively have benefited from the subsidy provided to establish the orchards by the department of horticulture. The above subsidy has been made available on the consumable inputs like, purchase of plants and labour for digging pits etc. The results with respect to the impact of IAY, GKY and RAY suggests that 22.44, 51.85, 10.53 and 26.67 percent of households from marginal, small, medium and all size classes respectively have reported receipt

of assistance for house construction. The credit scene, as emerged from the results indicate that only 5.62, 29.63, 52.63 and 17.04 percent of households belonging to marginal, small, medium and all categories of SDG households have received financial assistance from commercial and cooperative banks through Himachal Pradesh Scheduled Caste Scheduled Tribe Development Corporation at lower rate of interest for purchasing Maruti Van, Mini buses or Mini trucks.

The appraisal of various education programmes suggest that almost all the households situated in SDG have received benefits under the schemes namely free text-books upto matric standard, free uniforms upto primary classes and post-matric scholarship for the SC children. Whereas, no household has reported availing of assistance like free hostel and coaching classes for SCs among the sample households of SDG in the study area under reference. The emerging picture with respect to accrual of benefits and assistance mentioned above, during the field survey, it was observed that koli sub-caste among the scheduled caste had taken a lead in accessing the benefits from various programmes and policies. The dominance of koli caste in the SDG is attributed mainly to adoption of modern attitudinal and cultural traits on the one hand and superior economic position on the other.

It is suggested that access to educational facilities should be enhanced to the households belonging to SDG upto higher level of education. The coverage of the housing schemes should be extended to more and more households. More and more households should be distributed land of better quality under landless scheme. Government should provide soft subsidised loans to the households of SDG through banks and other financial institutions. Further, functioning of the administrative set up should be improved in implementing the

various programmes meant for the households of SDG in true spirit. As majority of households belonging to SDG were not aware of the policies and programmes designed for their betterment, hence, it is suggested that awareness among these households should be enhanced by supplying printing material containing constitutional provisions and specific programmes meant for them through public representatives and NGOs. The government interventions should ensure active participation of SDG as a stakeholder in the development process through awareness, education and communication to promote equity.

The results of the study suggest that due to better resource endowment, remunerative sources of income, favourable consumption pattern, better access to basic amenities, education and health facilities, communication facilities provide impetus to attain better socio-economic well-being among households of advantaged group as compared to socially disadvantaged group households.