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RESEARCH ARTICLE

Socio-economic Security in Rural Areas of Bundelkhand: A Household Level Analysis

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ABSTRACT

The term social security has been used to refer to the result achieved by a comprehensive and successful series of measures for protecting the public (or a large sector of it) from the economic distress that, in the absence of such measures, would be caused by the stoppage of earnings in sickness, unemployment or old age and after death; for making available to that same public, medical care as needed; and for subsidising families bringing up young children. The study was conducted purposively in Bundelkhand region, which comprises of Uttar Pradesh (7 districts) and Madhya Pradesh (6 districts). Two districts from each state viz. Lalitpur and Banda from Uttar Pradesh, whereas, Datia and Damoh from Madhya Pradesh were selected. Then, two blocks from each district were selected randomly. Two villages from each block and 20 respondents from each village were randomly selected; thus, making the total sample size of 320 respondents for the study. Results show that the majority (59.26%) of the respondents among marginal farmers had low social security, followed by medium and high social security i.e. 33.34 and 7.40 per cent respectively. The variables such as education, social participation, annual income and extension contact had positive and highly significant relationship with economic security at the 1 per cent level of significance. The results showed that 55.30 per cent variability towards economic security was due to independent variables included in the study and the remaining was due to some other factors. The fitted regression model was observed to be significant at the 1 per cent level of significance.

Key words: Households; Social; Bundelkhand; Employment; Livelihood.

Socio-economic security may be defined as constituting measures that enhance social capabilities, ensure economic security and enable the vulnerable sections of the population to survive. The provision of minimum levels of income constitutes not only a necessity for survival, but also an essential prerequisite for the acquisition of education, health and nutrition that lead to enhancing social capabilities as well. Contrary to the neoclassical paradigm of economic growth, the paradigm of sustainability assumes the necessity to consider three types of goals while considering development plans—that is, economic, social, and environmental goals (UN, 1987; Emas, 2015; Sachs, 2008). The three-dimensional structure of the sustainability concept allows and understanding of the interdependencies occurring between differing aspects of life in the course of economic and social

development, putting an emphasis on the need to find a balance between obtaining various, even contradicting, goals (Bardy et al., 2015; UN, 2015; Jiliberto, 2004; Sadok et al., 2008; Ciegis et al., 2009). To decrease the migration of rural people, there is a need to secure their livelihoods. So, there is a need to study the level of their livelihood security. Livelihood diversification or dependence on many sources of income generation, might become one of the most essential possibilities for enhancing farmers' livelihoods (Chauhan et al., 2022). The reason of highest mean income earned from the dairy was due to high demand of milk in the market and respondents were competent enough to do dairy as an enterprise with a great success. As far as the poultry enterprise was concerned, there was quick growth of the chicks, faster return from the investment and high demand of poultry meat in the market (Goswami

and Solanki, 2022). From the effect of COVID-19 on socioeconomic status of entrepreneurs, it was found that there was no significant difference in family structure, education of respondents in before and during pandemic situation (Kumari and Babel, 2022).

The concept of socio-economic security proposed here is also distinct from the conventional social security definition of ILO as it includes, in addition to ILO measures, various measures to enhance the *social and economic capabilities* of people. It is also distinct from the socio-economic security concept proposed by the ILO (ILO, 1999; Standing, 1999). The ILO definition of socio-economic security comprises seven main components, viz., labour market security, employment security, job security, work security, skill reproduction security, income security, and representation security. Dreze and Sen (1989) argued that the provision of social security in developing countries needs to be viewed from a broader perspective and ‘essentially as an objective to be pursued through public means rather than as a narrowly defined set of particular strategies’. Osmani (1991) sets out valid reasons for this situation in South Asian countries. Firstly, on account of the pervasive poverty in such countries, the scale on which social security is to be provided is enormous. Ahmad (1991), Burgess and Stern (1991), as well as Guhan (1992) emphasised the tackling of persistently low incomes as an important objective of social security.

The term social security has been used to refer to “the result achieved by a comprehensive and successful series of measures for protecting the public (or a large sector of it) from the economic distress that, in the absence of such measures, would be caused by the stoppage of earnings in sickness, unemployment or old age and after death; for making available to that same public, medical care as needed; and for subsidising families bringing up young children” (ILO, 1958). It is useful in this context to refer to Anand and Ravallion (1993) who identify three routes that link human development with aggregate affluence. These are a) capability expansion through economic growth, b) capability expansion through poverty reduction, and c) capability expansion through provision of social services. The analysis of Anand and Ravallion of the distinct, but related, routes to enhancing capabilities sets the discussion of socio-economic security against a backdrop of macro policy and economic growth.

What is intriguing is that the prevalence of poverty remained high even among those employed, pointing

to considerable underemployment and the poor quality of employment secured. Thus, the incidence of poverty in 1993/94 was 49.4 per cent among rural casual labor and even higher at 57 per cent among urban casual workers (Sharma, 1999) pointing to the poor quality of such employment. The importance of employment for consumption has been highlighted by Gupta (1999), who estimated that in 1997, the contribution of employment to the increase in per capita consumption of the rural poor in India was as high as 82 per cent. Bundelkhand is one of the backward regions in terms of socio-economic indicators of India. It is drought prone region and it also faces enormous problems of low rainfall, low agricultural and animal productivity, water crisis, soil erosion, degradation of water resources, fodder crisis, high rate of mortality in cattle, non sustainable sources of livelihoods, etc. Hence an effort was made to understand the socio-economic status of farm households in Bundelkhand with the following objectives.

- i. To assess the social and economic security of farm households
- ii. To study the factors affecting social and economic security of the respondents

METHODOLOGY

The present study was undertaken with the key objective of understanding social and economic aspects of dairy households. The ex-post facto research design was used for the present study. The study was conducted during 2018-19 to 2020-21 purposively in Bundelkhand region, which comprises of Uttar Pradesh (7 districts) and Madhya Pradesh (6 districts). Two district from each state viz. Lalitpur and Banda from Uttar Pradesh, whereas, Datia and Damoh from Madhya Pradesh selected. Then, two blocks from each district were selected randomly. Two villages from each block were randomly selected. The selection of respondents is a crucial task, hence due care was taken while selecting the respondents. From each selected village a list of dairy farmers based on land holding was prepared and respondents were selected based on proportionate stratified random sampling method. From each village 20 dairy farmers were selected proportionately from the prepared list. Thus, a total of 320 dairy farmers was selected for the study. An index was constructed to measure social and economic security of dairy farmers based on extensive review of literature and consultation with the extension experts. Data were

gathered through personal interview method with the help of the structured interview schedule. The collected data were quantified and analyzed. Further, correlation test was used to calculate the r - value to know the relationship between social and economic security and independent variables. Multiple Regression was done to determine the extent of contribution of selected independent variables on social and economic security.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Social security of the households: The data in the Table 1 show that the majority (59.26%) of the respondents among marginal farmers had low social security, followed by medium and high social security i.e. 33.34 and 7.40 per cent respectively. A similar trend was followed among small farmers where, the majority of the respondents had a low level of social security, i.e. 52.70 per cent, followed by medium and high health security i.e. 37.84 and 9.46 per cent respectively. Among semi-medium farmers the majority (>80%) of the respondents had low to medium level of social security.

The majority (36.84%) of the respondents among medium farmers had a medium level of social security, whereas among large farmers the majority (63.34%) of the respondents had a high level of social security. The social security of the respondents was assessed in terms of their social status and social participation. The marginal, small and semi-medium farmers had limited income sources and enjoy little social participation, whereas medium and large farmers are actively involved in social organizations and had a well developed social network.

Relationship between independent characteristics and social security: The relationship between independent variables with the social security of the respondents was furnished in the Table 2. The variables such as education, social participation, annual income and extension contact had positive and highly significant relationship with economic security at 1 per cent level of significance.

The other variables such as land holding and livestock holding were found to have positive and significant relationship with the social security of the respondents at the 5 per cent level of significance. The left behind variables like age, experience in dairying, occupation, milk production and mass media exposure had positive and non- significant relationship with the social security, whereas, milk sale had negative and

Table 1. Distribution of respondents according to social security (N=320)

Category of social security index	No.	%
<i>Marginal (n= 81)</i>		
Low (<0.46)	48	59.26
Medium (0.46 – 0.72)	27	33.34
High (>0.72)	6	7.40
<i>Small (n= 74)</i>		
Low (<0.46)	39	52.70
Medium (0.46 – 0.72)	28	37.84
High (>0.72)	7	9.46
<i>Semi-medium (n=78)</i>		
Low (<0.46)	28	35.90
Medium (0.46 – 0.72)	37	47.43
High (>0.72)	13	16.67
<i>Medium(n=57)</i>		
Low (<0.46)	16	28.08
Medium (0.46 – 0.72)	21	36.84
High (>0.72)	20	35.08
<i>Large (n=30)</i>		
Low (<0.46)	4	13.33
Medium (0.46 – 0.72)	7	23.33
High (>0.72)	19	63.34

Table 2. Correlation between independent variables and social security (N=320)

Variables	(r)
Age	0.081 ^{NS}
Education	0.469**
Experience in dairying	0.215 ^{NS}
Social participation	0.476**
Occupation	0.105 ^{NS}
Land holding	0.394*
Livestock holding	0.337*
Annual income	0.415**
Milk production	0.118 ^{NS}
Milk sale	-0.216 ^{NS}
Mass media exposure	0.184 ^{NS}
Extension contact	0.518**

**Significant at 1% level of significance

*Significant at 5% level of significance;

NS: Non significant

non- significant relationship with the social security.

Regression between independent characteristics and social security: The contribution of independent variables towards dependent variable, i.e. social security was illustrated in the Table 3. The findings conveyed that the independent variables such as age, social participation, annual income and extension contact significantly contributing towards social security at

Table 3. Multiple regression between independent variables and social security (N=320)

Variables	(b) value	"t" value
Age	0.118	2.857**
Education	-0.058	1.985*
Experience in dairying	0.162	2.286*
Social participation	0.009	4.742**
Occupation	-0.024	0.871 ^{NS}
Land holding	0.037	1.267 ^{NS}
Livestock holding	-0.063	1.030 ^{NS}
Annual income	0.179	4.239**
Milk production	0.008	1.693 ^{NS}
Milk sale	-0.094	2.358*
Mass media exposure	0.065	0.967 ^{NS}
Extension contact	0.183	3.254**
R ² = 0.574; F stat= 11.513**		
** Significant at 1% level of significance		
* Significant at 5% level of significance		
NS: Non significant		

the 1 per cent level of significance. The other variables like education, experience in dairying and milk sale significantly contributing towards social security at the 5 per cent level of significance. The results showed that 57.40 per cent variability towards social security was due to explained or undertaken variables included in the study and the remaining was due to some other factors. The fitted regression model was observed to be significant at the 1 per cent level of significance.

Economic security of the households: Table 4 revealed that among the marginal farmers the majority (59.26%) of the respondents had a low economic security, followed by medium and high economic security i.e. 23.45 and 17.29 per cent respectively. The majority of the respondents among small farmers had a medium level of economic security, i.e. 45.94 per cent, followed by low and high economic security i.e. 37.84 and 16.22 per cent respectively. Among semi-medium farmers majority (>84%) of the respondents had low to medium level of economic security. Medium and large farmers follow a similar trend where the majority of the respondents had medium to high level of economic security. The above results show that among the marginal, small and semi-medium farmers the majority of the respondents had low to medium level of economic security, whereas medium and large farmers had medium to high level of economic security that might be due large land holding size of the farmers and diversified farms providing high income leads to high economic security.

Table 4. Distribution of respondents according to economic security (N=320)

Category of economic security index	No.	%
<i>Marginal (n= 81)</i>		
Low (<0.36)	48	59.26
Medium (0.36 – 0.67)	19	23.45
High (>0.67)	14	17.29
<i>Small (n= 74)</i>		
Low (<0.36)	28	37.84
Medium (0.36 – 0.67)	34	45.94
High (>0.67)	12	16.22
<i>Semi-medium (n=78)</i>		
Low (<0.36)	25	32.05
Medium (0.36 – 0.67)	41	52.57
High (>0.67)	12	15.38
<i>Medium (n=57)</i>		
Low (<0.36)	21	36.84
Medium (0.36 – 0.67)	13	22.80
High (>0.67)	23	40.36
<i>Large (n=30)</i>		
Low (<0.36)	8	26.67
Medium (0.36 – 0.67)	9	30.00
High (>0.67)	13	43.33

Relationship between independent characteristics and economic security: The relationship between independent variables with the economic security of the respondents was furnished in the Table 5. The variables such as experience in dairying, occupation, land holding, annual income and milk sale had positive and highly significant relationship with economic security at the 1 per cent level of significance. The other variables such as livestock holding, milk

Table 5. Correlation between independent variables and economic security (N=320)

Variables	(r)
Age	0.137 ^{NS}
Education	0.117 ^{NS}
Experience in dairying	0.438**
Social participation	0.127 ^{NS}
Occupation	0.412**
Land holding	0.482**
Livestock holding	0.329*
Annual income	0.597**
Milk production	0.362*
Milk sale	0.416**
Mass media exposure	0.352*
Extension contact	0.084 ^{NS}
** Significant at 1% level of significance	
* Significant at 5% level of significance;	
NS: Non significant	

Table 6. Multiple regression between independent variables and economic security (N=320)

Variables	(b) value	"t" value
Age	0.018	1.826 ^{NS}
Education	0.084	3.117**
Experience in dairying	0.126	1.027 ^{NS}
Social participation	-0.107	1.257 ^{NS}
Occupation	0.114	0.174 ^{NS}
Land holding	0.081	2.976**
Livestock holding	0.026	2.081*
Annual income	0.181	4.352**
Milk production	-0.015	2.079*
Milk sale	0.131	0.841 ^{NS}
Mass media exposure	0.089	1.842 ^{NS}
Extension contact	-0.197	2.478*

$R^2 = 0.553$;
F stat = 19.362**

** Significant at 1% level of significance, * Significant at 5% level of significance, NS: Non significant

production and mass media exposure were found to have positive and significant relationship with the economic security of the respondents at the 5 per cent level of significance. The left behind variables like age, education, social participation and extension contact had positive and non-significant relationship with the economic security.

Regression between independent characteristics and economic security : The contribution of independent variables to their dependent variable was illustrated in the Table 6. The findings conveyed that the independent variables such as education, land holding and annual income significantly contributing towards economic security at the 1 per cent level of significance. The other variables like livestock holding, milk production and extension contact significantly contributing towards economic security at the 5 per cent level of significance. The results showed that 55.30 per cent variability towards economic security was due to independent variables included in the study and the remaining was due to some other factors. The fitted regression model was observed to be significant at the 1 per cent level of significance.

CONCLUSION

The social security of the respondents was assessed in terms of their social status and social participation. The marginal, small and semi-medium farmers had limited income sources and enjoy little social participation, whereas medium and large

farmers are actively involved in social organizations and had a well developed social network. It can be concluded that among the marginal, small and semi-medium farmers the majority of the respondents had low to medium level of economic security, whereas medium and large farmers had medium to high level of economic security that might be due large land holding size of the farmers and diversified farms providing high income leads to high economic security. The independent variables such as age, social participation, annual income and extension contact significantly contributing towards social security. More than half of the variability towards economic security was due to independent variables included in the study and the remaining was due to some other factors.

CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

The authors have no conflicts of interest.

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