

Socio-Economic Indicators among Backward-Class Citizens in Uttarakhand

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Abstract

There is a clear pattern emerging from the above analysis of the recent data on educational and economic backwardness among BCCs in Uttarakhand. This data points to that, the BCCs are economically and socially vulnerable as compared to the forward cast in Uttarakhand. Secondly, like the findings of the earlier studies based on the data available from other national surveys, the differences between BCCs and other forward castes continue to remain significant for many indicators as discussed above. Finally, it is important to address these socio-economic indicators differences, through appropriate policies and programs targeting the BCCs, so that such differences and inequity existing in society can be removed by making them available an opportunity to participate in the decision-making process through appropriate political reservations in the local self-government bodies.

Reference to this paper
should be made as
follows:

Received: 30.11.2024
Approved: 24.12.2024

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Citizens in Uttarakhand

Vol. XV, No.2
Article No.29,
pp. 291-297

Similarity Check: 10%

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DOI: [https://doi.org/
10.31995/
jgv.2024.v15i01.029](https://doi.org/10.31995/jgv.2024.v15i01.029)

Backward Class Citizens (BCC) are typically viewed as economically and socially disadvantaged across various key indicators of progress and welfare. This is further supported by studies that present various data points based on social classes.

1.1 In this context, it was important for the Commission to understand the backwardness among OBCs with the latest available data sets. For this purpose, the data from the latest round of National Family Health Survey-5 (NFHS-5) carried out during 2019-21 was examined for the economic and educational differences among various social groups.

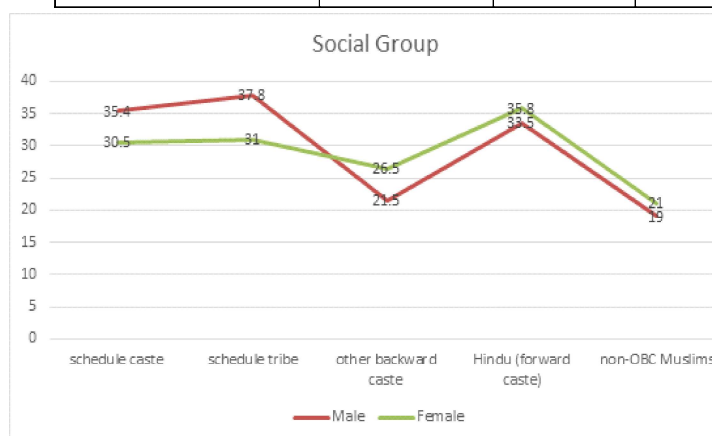
1.2 NFHS-5 (2019-21) is the fifth survey in the NFHS series, which provides essential data on health and family welfare indicators. Along with the health indicators, the survey also provides data on educational status, asset holdings of the household, etc. by background characteristics of the population under the survey. NFHS is aligned with the Demographic Health Surveys (DHS) taking place in over 90 countries and can provide comparable global indicators. NFHS data are based on self-reporting by the members of the household. NFHS-5 fieldwork was conducted from June 2019 to April 2021 (two phases). Covering all the states and UTs, and gathered information from 636,699 households, 724,115 women, and 101,839 men. NFHS-5 fieldwork for Uttarakhand was conducted in all 13 districts of the state. Information was gathered from a total of about 12,169 households, out of which there were 13,280 women between the age of 15-49 (including 1,192 women who were interviewed in PSUs in the state module) and about 1,586 men who were between the age of 15-54. Furthermore, The analysis has also used the NFHS-5 classification of social groups (SC, ST, OBC, and Others).

2. Educational Status

2.1 According to the NFHS-5, about Eighteen percent of the households in Uttarakhand have household heads who belong to a scheduled caste, three percent belong to a scheduled tribe, and twenty-six percent belong to the other backward class. More than half (52%) of household heads do not belong to a scheduled caste, a scheduled tribe, or other backward class. It may be noted that NFHS captures the information based on the reporting of the households whether they belong to a particular social group.

2.2 It has been observed that Preschool attendance is highest among households not belonging to scheduled caste, scheduled tribes, and other backward class households (38%), slightly lower among scheduled tribe households (34%), and lowest in households belonging to another backward class (24%).

Soci Social Group	MALE	FEMALE	TOTAL
Scheduled Caste	35.4	30.5	32.8
Scheduled Tribe	37.8	31	33.9
Other Backward Class	21.5	26.7	23.9
Hindu Hindu	33.5	35.8	34.6
Non-OBC Muslim	19	21	20



Source: NFHS-5

2.3 It can be observed from the above table and graph that the pre-school attendance of women is less than that of their male counterparts the only exception here being in the other backward section, where the proportion of females attending pre-school is higher than their male counterparts. It can also be observed that the pre-school attendance levels are lowest in the other backward classes as they consistently show lower percentages compared to the other groups.

3 Economic Backwardness

3.1 Economic backwardness will be discussed by discussing the percentage share of the area owned by different social groups. According to NSS-77, 10.2% of the land was owned by households belonging to schedule caste with the average area owned being just 0.242 ha. Per household. The percentage of land owned by households belonging to scheduled tribes is 14.1% with an average area owned 0.586 ha. Per household and lastly, other backward classes own about 47.1% of the land with the average area owned being 0.543 ha per household. However, per capita income figures are not available by social groups.

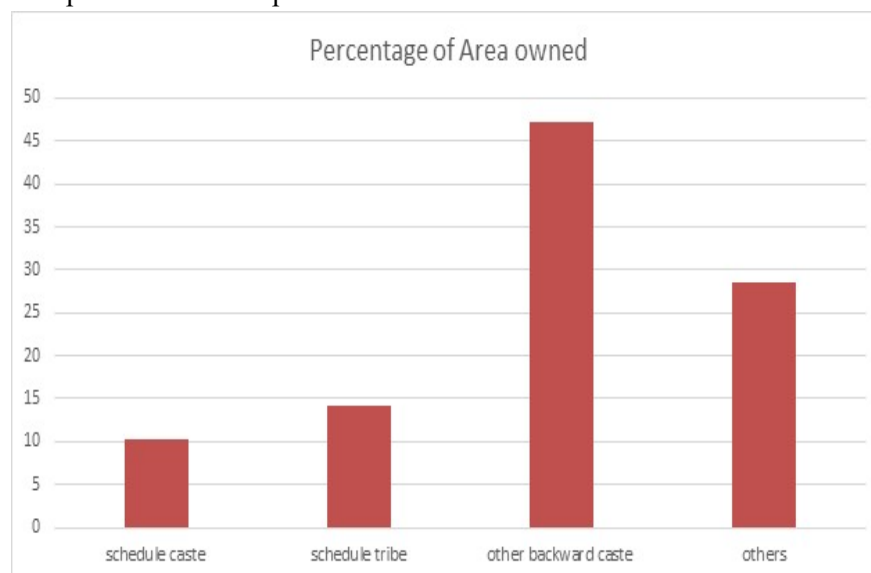
3.2 From the above figures we can see that the percentage of land owned by scheduled caste households is much less compared to other backward castes with a very less average area owned per household i.e. 2.42 ha whereas the average area owned per household is about 0.512 ha. Moreover, the average area owned by forward castes is much higher than other social groups at about 0.677 ha per household which clearly shows the economic backwardness of backward social groups.

Table 2: Ownership holdings of land by Social Groups distribution among social categories in Uttarakhand, 2018-19

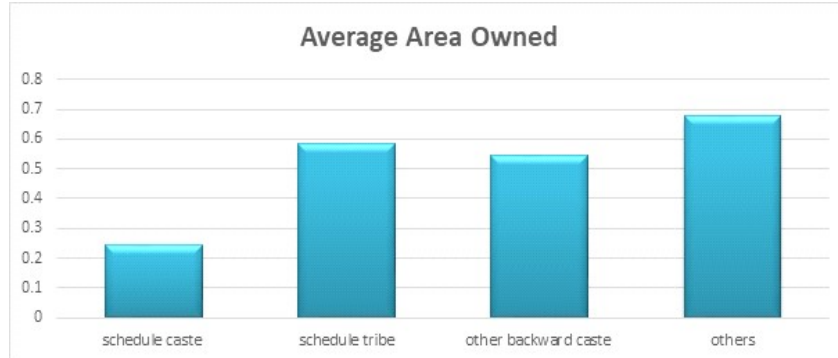
Social Categories	Percentage share of land owned	Average area owned
Scheduled Caste	10.2	0.242
Scheduled Tribe	14.1	0.586
Other Backward Class	0.543	0.543
Others	28.5	0.677

Source: Computed from the NSS-77

Given below are graphs providing a pictorial representation of the data mentioned above to provide a clearer picture of the above-mentioned data.



Source: Computed from NSS-77



Source: Computed from NSS-77

1.1 OWNERSHIP OF ASSETS

Here we are considering the percentage of men and women from backward classes who own assets such as houses. Owning a home can be a good way to assess the economic condition among the lower cases and help in providing a clearer picture of their economic condition and assess their needs.

3.3 (a) According to NFHS-5, the percentage of women owning a home (alone or jointly) was 28.1% while it was 48.8% for men. This percentage was lower in schedule tribes with 19.5% women owning homes and 37.9% men belonging to schedule tribes owning a house. In other backward classes, 25.9% of women own a home while 54.9% of men own homes.

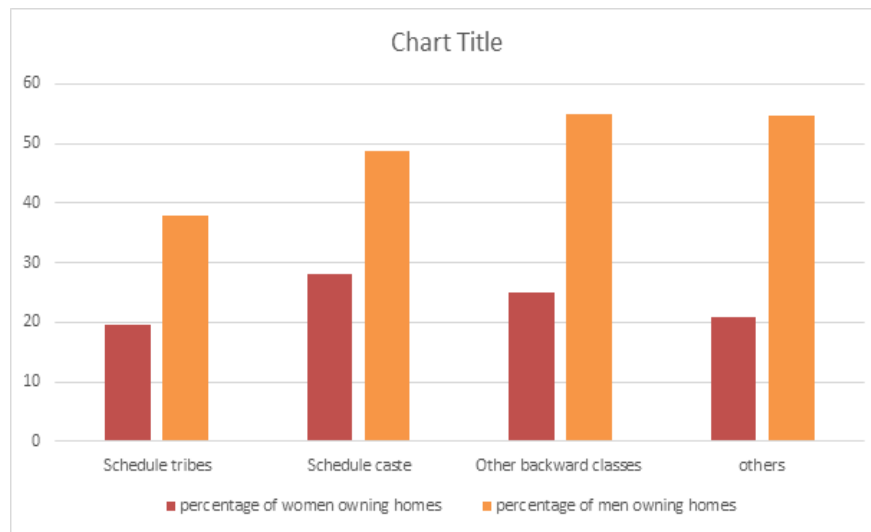
TABLE 3: Ownership of assets among different Social Categories and distribution among men and women in Uttarakhand, 2018-19

Social Group	Percentage of women owning homes (alone or jointly)	Percentage of men owning homes (alone or jointly)
Schedule Caste	28.1	48.8
Schedule Tribes	19.5	37.9
Other backward classes	25.9	54.9
Others	20.8	54.7

Source: computed from NFHS-5

(b) from the above table, we can assess that Scheduled Tribe women have lower house ownership rates compared to Scheduled Caste and OBC women. However, Scheduled Tribe men also show lower rates compared to other groups, indicating broader property ownership challenges within the ST group. Scheduled Caste women and men own land at rates slightly above Scheduled Tribe counterparts but below

OBC members. OBC women and men have the highest land ownership rates, which may indicate comparatively better access to resources. This data suggests that among disadvantaged social groups, Scheduled Tribe individuals, especially women, face the most limitations across property ownership. While OBC individuals have comparatively higher property ownership, especially for land.



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