



ANALYSIS OF INCOME INEQUALITIES AMONG DALIT WOMAN LABOUR HOUSEHOLDS IN RURAL PUNJAB

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Abstract: The present study reveals that the Dalit woman labour households, on an average, earn Rs. 75682.14 annually in the rural areas of Punjab. This income is found to be the highest, i.e., Rs. 80113.53 in Doaba; and the lowest, i.e., Rs. 72919.62 in Majha. It is Rs. 75116.21 in Malwa. The annual per capita income of these households comes to Rs. 16445.70 in Punjab. It is Rs. 17843.81, 16543.45, and 15315.56 in Doaba, Malwa, and Majha respectively. However, when we work out per capita, per day income it comes to be Rs. 48.49, 45.32, and 41.96 in these regions respectively. It is too low to meet their basic needs. There are more disparities in the distribution of per capita income in comparison to that of household income among these Dalit woman labourers in all the three regions of Punjab.

Keywords: Dalit, woman labourers, rural Punjab, MGNREGA, informal sector, Lorenz curves.

The most important task of planned development in India is to raise the living standard of people through increased employment and income (Kaur and Singh, 2013). Even our national leaders and the successive governments have brought about a number of reforms with the specific objective of alleviating poverty among the downtrodden masses especially in the backward communities. Despite all these efforts, even now they continue to remain marginalized from enjoying the fruits of development (Mathew, 2003). Due to the ignorance, illiteracy, poverty, and official apathy these advantages are not fully made use of by Dalits especially the Dalit women. The lives of Dalit women are largely circumscribed by their poverty and

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lack of access to productive resources like land, financial resources, or educational qualifications. As a result of this, in all the states, an overwhelming majority of the Dalit women work outside their homes, most often as agricultural labourers (Rao, 2011). Even in a state like Punjab which has a unique development experience with social indicators like literacy, birth rate, death rate, and health status, the Dalit woman labour class, especially those living in the rural areas is still experiencing levels of living much below that of the general population. The rural labour households are characterized by a decline in their earning, low income, low consumption, and high debt (Mahapatra, 2007).

During the last three decades, especially since the early 1990s as a part of the neo-liberal wave of globalization, there has been a general increasing tendency in the number of labour households. This has resulted because of the stagnation or slow growth and continuously increased use of machinery or herbicides in the agricultural sector and jobless growth in the non-agricultural sector. The income level of the labour class continues to be relatively low because of casual nature of employment. Income of the Dalit male labourers is not enough to meet the basic needs of their families. As a result, the Dalit woman labourers have to supplement the income of their husbands. A general pattern is that work participation rate has a declining trend with rising economic status of rural women, clearly reflecting the economic distress that compels poor women to work (Srivastava and Srivastava, 2010; Kelkar, 2011).

A number of studies (Jain, 2016; Dar, 2014; Kavita and Kumar, 2013; GoI, 2008; Rajasekhar *et al.*, 2007; Balakrishnan, 2005; Sandhu, 2002; Tuteja, 2000; Padma, 1999; Rani *et al.*, 1990) indicate that almost all the woman labourers are Dalit, illiterate, unskilled, and economically weak. Because of the economic compulsion, the Dalit women are employed in the unorganized sector, where they work as labourers in agriculture, construction work, factory work, and other household and marginal works as daily wage workers (Jain *et al.*, 1997). Women from poor families accept any economic work to assist their family even under very inferior working conditions. They are mainly supplementary earners, and their stay in labour force is of temporary nature which declines with the improvement in the economic conditions of the family (Goswami, 2013). They have a few opportunities to seek employment in the non-agricultural sector. They can find employment only in occupations which need skill of very low level. Some of them are exploited economically as well as physically.

Being an agrarian state, agriculture has played a pivotal role in the economic development of the state of Punjab. Through the Green Revolution

since the mid-sixties, the state has achieved a top most place for its higher economic growth. But this success could not achieve sustainable economic growth as the state has lagged much behind since 1991-92 on various fronts. No doubt, the mechanisation, modernisation and technological changes have boosted employment, but these have also created huge unemployment among the labourers, especially woman workers (Kaur and Kaur, 2017). Employment in agriculture is casual and uncertain. Because of this, the Dalit woman labourers have to remain under low levels of living.

OBJECTIVES

In the present study, an endeavour has been made to analyse the inequalities in the levels, patterns and distribution of income among the Dalit woman labour households in the rural areas of Punjab. More specifically, the aims are:

- 1) to estimate per household and per capita income of the Dalit woman labourers;
- 2) to analyse the patterns of income earned from various sources by the Dalit woman labour households; and
- 3) to examine the inequalities in the distribution of household and per capita income prevailing among the Dalit woman labour households.

DATA AND METHODOLOGY

The present study based on multi-stage systematic random sampling technique is related to the year 2016-17. For the purpose of present study, four districts have been selected from the three geographical regions of Punjab, viz. Majha, Doaba and Malwa. Majha and Doaba comprise four districts each whereas Malwa forms a major part of the Punjab state and consists fourteen districts. Amritsar district has been selected from the Majha region; Jalandhar district from the Doaba region; whereas two districts, viz. Mansa and Fatehgarh Sahib, have been selected from the Malwa region. The map of the study area is depicted in Figure 1.

At the next stage, one village from each development block of the selected districts has been chosen on the basis of random sampling technique. From these villages, 927 Dalit woman labour households have been randomly selected and investigated by taking 20 per cent households from the total number of Dalit woman labour households. Out of these 927 respondent households, 340 households belong to Malwa region, 243 to Doaba region and 314 to Majha region. The required primary data have been collected from the sampled households through the well prepared

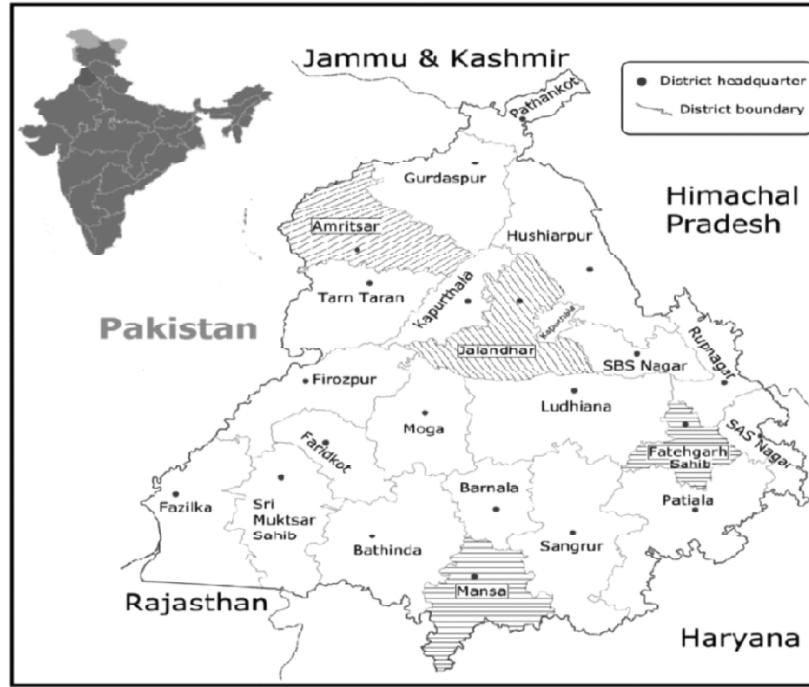


Figure 1: Map of the Study Area

questionnaire. Since the majority of the Dalit woman labourers were illiterate, it was decided to fill questionnaires-cum-schedules through the interview method. The results have been analysed by using the mean values and percentages. Gini coefficients and Lorenz curves have also been used to support the findings of the study.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Levels of Household Income

The economic status of the labour families is mainly ascertained from their various sources of income, such as income from hiring out labour in agriculture and other sources of income including hiring out labour in construction work, brick-kiln work, domestic work, dairying, piggery and poultry, livestock and so on. Majority of the rural population, especially the labour class people do not have handsome sources of income which compel them to lead a miserable life (Singh *et al.*, 2019a).

The mean values of income earned from various sources by the Dalit woman labour households are given in Table 1. The table reveals that an average Dalit woman labour household earns Rs. 75682.14 annually in rural

Punjab. The Dalit woman labour households, on an average, earn Rs. 18987.97 by hiring out labour on contractual and casual basis in agriculture. It has been observed during the field survey that not even a single Dalit woman in the sample is employed in agriculture as a contractual labourer. This is because of the reason that women have to look after their children, and attend all their domestic chores at home also. It has also been observed that hiring out woman labour on contractual basis is not considered good on the ground that such workers are supposed to stay at farm even during the nights. Therefore, the income from hiring out contractual labour in agriculture is solely earned by the male labourers. However, the income from hiring out casual labour in agriculture is earned by both male and female labourers.

One of the important findings of the study is that the all Dalit woman labour households have reported that they have no ownership of land. They are all landless households. For these Dalit households, the main source of earning is labour force of the earning members. For a landless worker, it is solely his/her body that earns a living (Ledesm, 1982). Their landlessness and lack of assets add to their woes as they do not have other alternative sources of earnings except hiring out their labour (Uppal *et al.*, 2018).

It is deplorable that income from hiring out labour on contractual and casual basis in agriculture, i.e., Rs.18987.97 is too low to meet the basic needs of the Dalit woman labour households. This is the reason that the earning members of these households also struggle to supplement their income from other sources. Income earned from other sources comes to Rs. 53935.29 which is contributed by male as well as female labourers. Among the other sources, income from hiring out labour in construction work is a significant source, explaining the existing level of household income of the Dalit woman labourers in rural Punjab. This is followed by income from salaries, hiring out labour under MGNREGA, self-employment, hiring out labour as domestic servants, white-washing work, autorickshaw / rickshaw pulling, hiring out labour in brick-kiln work, working as drivers, livestock, labour in grain market, dairying, vending vegetables/fruits, and tailoring.

It is pertinent to note that the Dalit woman labour households earn Rs. 5710.04 annually by hiring out labour under MGNREGA in rural Punjab. This small amount of income exposes the claim of the government that 100 days of employment in a year will be provided to every household living Below the Poverty Line under MGNREGA (Pal and Singh, 2015). This corroborates the findings of another study (Singh *et al.*, 2019b) that MGNREGA failed to generate employment as per its provisions. The scheme could not significantly contribute towards the income of beneficiary

households in rural Punjab. the factors such as less awareness about entitlement of benefits, irregularities in the issue of job cards, lack of funds, and non-payment or irregular payment of wages have contributed to the exit of Dalit households from the MGNREGA programme (Manjula and Rajasekhar, 2015).

An average Dalit woman labour household receives Rs. 2758.88 as transfer income. Transfer income includes the income from pensions, scholarships, and help from relatives/friends. Under this source, pensions are relatively more important, and an average Dalit woman labour household receives Rs. 2101.40 in the form of pensions. On the other hand, income from the help extended by relatives/friends is a paltry sum of Rs. 43.32 which indirectly indicates towards the poor economic condition of even relatives and friends.

Table 1
Levels of Income of Dalit Woman Labour Households
(Mean Values in Rs., Per Annum)

S. No.	Source	Malwa	Doaba	Majha	Punjab
1.	Income from hiring out labour in agriculture				
A.	On contractual basis				
	(a) Cash	2994.59	493.83	2137.58	2048.76
	(b) Kind			0.00	
	(i) Agricultural produce	181.08	32.92	121.02	121.90
	(ii) Meals	208.92	24.69	152.87	141.64
	(iii) Tea and milk	144.86	16.46	85.99	91.26
	(iv) Clothes and other things	56.76	8.23	35.03	36.68
B.	On casual basis				
	(a) Cash	16902.97	15893.21	16067.36	16355.23
	(b) Kind			0.00	
	(i) Agricultural produce	140.27	115.43	66.88	108.90
	(ii) Meals	0.00	0.00	19.11	6.47
	(iii) Tea and milk	35.14	74.07	44.59	48.54
	(iv) Clothes and other things	29.73	16.46	36.62	28.59
	Sub-total (1)	20694.32	16675.31	18767.04	18987.97
2.	Income from other sources				
	(a) Hiring out labour in construction work	13711.49	19719.34	17525.48	16578.26
	(b) Hiring out labour in brick-kiln work	1640.54	1391.36	2611.46	1904.10
	(c) Hiring out labour as domestic servants				
	(i) Cash	2927.03	3584.36	4110.83	3500.32
	(ii) Kind	1166.67	982.30	1014.33	1066.74
	(d) Hiring out labour under MGNREGA	8058.68	4806.57	3641.72	5710.04

contd. table 1

S. No.	Source	Malwa	Doaba	Majha	Punjab
(e)	Self-employment	4525.68	6046.91	5073.25	5109.92
(f)	Dairying	1290.59	1668.72	603.82	1157.09
(g)	Piggery and poultry	35.46	51.85	17.20	33.57
(h)	Livestock	1570.27	1948.15	1821.66	1754.48
(i)	Salaries	7457.30	6597.12	5348.41	6517.48
(j)	Working as drivers	1575.68	2374.49	1896.82	1893.85
(k)	Vending vegetables/fruits	1362.16	1834.57	0.00	1024.60
(l)	White-washing work	2348.65	3960.91	1682.17	2545.52
(m)	Remittances	0.00	345.68	0.00	90.61
(n)	Mid-day meal worker/ <i>asha</i> worker/ <i>anganwari</i> worker	0.00	744.03	291.72	293.85
(o)	Tailoring	389.19	1477.37	695.54	778.21
(p)	Autorickshaw/rickshaw pulling	243.45	2404.94	4335.03	2195.98
(q)	Labour in grain market	1359.46	1590.53	673.36	1187.63
(r)	Others*	1107.68	575.69	0.00	593.03
	Sub-total (2)	50769.97	62104.89	51342.79	53935.29
3.	Transfer Income				
(a)	Income from pensions	2589.19	1209.88	2216.56	2101.40
(b)	Scholarships	981.65	123.46	560.87	614.16
(c)	Help from relatives/friends	81.08	0.00	32.36	43.32
	Sub-total (3)	3651.92	1333.33	2809.79	2758.88
	Total (1+2+3)	75116.21	80113.53	72919.62	75682.14

Source: Field Survey, 2016-17*Others include income from tree cutting, cooking in functions, catering, ritual ceremonies, tuition work etc.

The table further depicts that average annual income of the Dalitwoman labour households is the highest, i.e., Rs. 80113.53 in Doaba; and the lowest, i.e., Rs. 72919.62 in Majha. It is Rs. 75116.21 in Malwa. The reason for the highest average annual household income in Doaba is that income from the other sources such as hiring out labour in construction work, self-employment, white-washing work, working as drivers, dairying, tailoring, mid-day meal worker/*ashaworker/anganwari* worker, and remittances is higher as compared to the other two regions. The table further shows that the Dalitwoman labour households, on an average, earn only Rs. 20694.32 in Malwa and Rs. 18767.04 in Majha from hiring out labour (both on contractual as well as casual basis) in agriculture. However, in Doaba, the annual household income is Rs. 16675.31 from this source of income. It has been observed during the field survey that in Malwa relatively more male members of the Dalitwoman labour households are working as contractual labourers in the agricultural sector as compared to the other two regions. That is the reason for the highest household income from hiring

out labour (both on contractual as well as casual basis) in agriculture in Malwa as compared to the other two regions.

It has been further observed during the field survey, that the earning members of respondent households get only seasonal work in agriculture. Most of the time, they have to remain unemployed or search for other sources of income in all the three regions. Due to the lack of permanent sources of income and more dependence on casual wages, the Dalit labour households often face the problem of low income and high incidence of poverty (Jain, 2016). Another research study (Kaur and Mavi, 2015) has also shown the similar phenomenon that usually the male members of the agricultural labour households migrate to other places for better paid work, but the Dalit woman labourers are forced to accept the low-paid work in the village itself as they cannot migrate as easily as men. The table shows that income earned from other sources is the highest of Rs. 62104.89 in Doaba; and the lowest, i.e., 50769.97 in Malwa. It is Rs. 51342.79 in Majha.

Among the other sources, hiring out labour in construction work is the major source of income in all the three regions. Income from this source is the highest, i.e., Rs. 19719.34 in Doaba; and the lowest, i.e., Rs. 13711.49 in Malwa. It is Rs. 17525.48 in Majha. The next main source of income of the Dalit woman labour households is income from salaries, followed by hiring out labour under MGNREGA, self-employment, domestic servants, white-washing work, autorickshaw/rickshaw pulling, hiring out labour in brick-kiln work, and working as drivers in all the three regions. An average Dalit woman labour household earns a very small amount of income from piggery and poultry, remittances, mid-day meal worker/*asha* worker/*anganwari* worker, and others in all the three regions. An average Dalit woman labour household receives Rs. 3651.92, 2809.79, and 1333.33 as transfer income in Malwa, Majha, and Doaba respectively. Under this source, pensions are relatively more important in all the three regions of the state.

Patterns of Income

The relative shares of income of the Dalit woman labour households from the different sources are exhibited in Table 2. The factors such as mechanization of agricultural operations, use of herbicides, and increasing number of small and marginal farm-size categories have reduced the opportunity of working for the rural labour class in the agricultural sector. The data shown in the table reveals that the Dalit woman labour households earn only 25.09 per cent of their total household income from hiring out labour (contractual as well as casual) in agriculture. This supports the fact

that the stagnation of agriculture has also adversely affected the income pattern of rural labour class. It is worth mentioning that the income from hiring out contractual labour in agriculture consists of 3.23 per cent of the total household income which is solely earned by male labourers. However, the income from hiring out casual labour in agriculture (21.86 per cent) is earned by both male and female labourers. The higher proportion of casual labour in comparison to contractual labour also reveals that seasonal employment prevails in the agricultural sector. During the slack agricultural season, the Dalit woman labourers depend on rural non-farm activities as the secondary source of income. This corroborates the Vaidyanathan's (1986) assertion that the labour absorption capacity of the agriculture is limited, and the rural labourers are migrating from farm to non-farm activities.

Table 2
Patterns of Income of Dalit Woman Labour Households (Percentage of Total Income)

<i>S. No.</i>	<i>Source</i>	<i>Malwa</i>	<i>Doaba</i>	<i>Majha</i>	<i>Punjab</i>
1.	Income from hiring out labour in agriculture				
	A. On contractual basis				
	(a) Cash	3.99	0.62	2.93	2.71
	(b) Kind				
	(i) Agricultural produce	0.24	0.04	0.17	0.16
	(ii) Meals	0.28	0.03	0.21	0.19
	(iii) Tea and milk	0.19	0.02	0.12	0.12
	(iv) Clothes and other things	0.08	0.01	0.05	0.05
	B. On casual basis				
	(a) Cash	22.50	19.84	22.03	21.61
	(b) Kind				
	(i) Agricultural produce	0.19	0.14	0.09	0.14
	(ii) Meals	0.00	0.00	0.03	0.01
	(iii) Tea and milk	0.05	0.09	0.06	0.06
	(iv) Clothes and other things	0.04	0.02	0.05	0.04
	Sub-total (1)	27.55	20.81	25.74	25.09
2.	Income from other sources				
	(a) Hiring out labour in construction work	18.25	24.61	24.03	21.91
	(b) Hiring out labour in brick-kiln work	2.18	1.74	3.58	2.52
	(c) Hiring out labour as domestic servants				
	(i) Cash	3.90	4.47	5.64	4.63
	(ii) Kind	1.55	1.23	1.39	1.41
	(d) Hiring out labour under MGNREGA	10.73	6.00	4.99	7.54
	(e) Self-employment	6.02	7.55	6.96	6.75
	(f) Dairying	1.72	2.08	0.83	1.53
	(g) Piggery and poultry	0.05	0.06	0.02	0.04

contd. table 2

S. No.	Source	Malwa	Doaba	Majha	Punjab
	(h) Livestock	2.09	2.43	2.50	2.32
	(i) Salaries	9.93	8.23	7.33	8.61
	(j) Working as drivers	2.10	2.96	2.60	2.50
	(k) Vending vegetables/fruits	1.81	2.29	0.00	1.35
	(l) White-washing work	3.13	4.94	2.31	3.36
	(m) Remittances	0.00	0.43	0.00	0.12
	(n) Mid-day meal worker/ <i>asha</i> worker/ <i>anganwari</i> worker	0.00	0.93	0.40	0.39
	(o) Tailoring	0.52	1.84	0.95	1.03
	(p) Autorickshaw/rickshaw pulling	0.32	3.00	5.94	2.90
	(q) Labour in grain market	1.81	1.99	0.92	1.57
	(r) Others	1.47	0.72	0.00	0.78
	Sub-total (2)	67.59	77.52	70.41	71.27
3.	Transfer Income				
	(a) Income from pensions	3.45	1.51	3.04	2.78
	(b) Scholarships	1.31	0.16	0.77	0.80
	(c) Help from relatives/friends	0.10	0.00	0.04	0.06
	Sub-total (3)	4.86	1.67	3.85	3.64
	Total (1+2+3)	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00

Source: Computed from Table 1

The Dalit woman labour households earn 71.27 per cent of the total household income from other sources in the rural areas of Punjab. Among the other sources, a major proportion, i.e., 21.91 per cent of the total household income is earned from hiring out labour in construction work. The next important source of income for an average Dalit woman labour household is income from salaries; and its relative share is 8.61 per cent. Income from hiring out labour under MGNREGA (7.54 per cent) ranks next in the order of importance. During the field survey, it has been observed that the participation of female labourers is comparatively more than male labourers in the work under MGNREGA. This is because of the fact that work under MGNREGA is, generally, available within the native village; and its nature suits the woman labourers. Moreover, woman labourers get equal wages to men for their work under this scheme, unlike almost all other forms of work in the rural areas (Chandrasekhar and Ghosh, 2011).

The next important source of income is self-employment; and its relative share is 6.75 per cent. Income from hiring out labour as domestic servants (6.04 per cent) ranks next in order for an average Dalit woman labour household. But domestic woman labourers get a paltry sum for the unpleasant work they perform (Tripathy, 1996; Abhishek *et al.*, 2014). As there is no minimum wage fixed for the domestic workers under the

Minimum Wages Act, the employers are free to pay what they want, irrespective of quantum and hours of work (Mahadevan, 1989). This is followed by income from white-washing work (3.36 per cent), autorickshaw / rickshaw pulling (2.90 per cent), hiring out labour in brick-kiln work (2.52 per cent), working as drivers (2.50 per cent), livestock (2.32 per cent), labour in grain market (1.57 per cent), dairying (1.53 per cent), vending vegetables/fruits (1.35 per cent), and tailoring (1.03 per cent). Besides this, a very small proportion of the total household income (less than one per cent) is earned by the Dalitwoman labour households from piggery and poultry, remittances, mid-day meal worker/*asha* worker/*anganwari* worker, and others.

The table further shows that the Dalitwoman labour households receive 3.64 per cent of the total income as transfer income. Under this source, pensions are more important; and an average Dalit woman labour household receives 2.78 per cent of the total income in the form of pensions. The next important source of income is scholarships; and its relative share is 0.80 per cent. On the other hand, the share of income from relatives/friends in the form of help is only 0.06 per cent which is least important. It clearly reflects the overall economic position of the relatives and friends, and also weakening of the social relations due to materialistic and individualistic approach of the people in the present time.

The region-wise analysis shows that a major proportion of the total income of the Dalitwoman labour households comes from hiring out both contractual and casual labour in agriculture in Malwa and Majha. However, this pattern is not noticed in Doaba. In Doaba, the major part of the total income comes from hiring out labour in construction work. The proportionate share of annual income from hiring out labour (both contractual as well as casual) in agriculture is the highest in Malwa (27.55 per cent), followed by Majha (25.74 per cent) and Doaba (20.81 per cent). This is because of the fact that income from hiring out contractual labour in agriculture is comparatively more prevalent in Malwa as compared to the other two regions. This turns out to be a regular source of income for the Dalit woman labour households in this region. Further, less than 30 per cent of annual income from agriculture in all the three regions brings out the fact that income from agriculture is not enough to meet the basic needs of the Dalit woman households. As a result, the earning members of Dalit woman labour households have to search for other sources of income.

The table further shows that the Dalit woman labour households earn 77.52, 70.41, and 67.59 per cent of the total household income from other sources in Doaba, Majha, and Malwa respectively. In the case of other

sources, major proportion of the total income of the Dalit woman labour households is earned from hiring out labour in construction work. The relative share of income from this source is the highest in Doaba (24.61 per cent), followed by Majha (24.03 per cent), and Malwa (18.25 per cent). The second important source of income for an average Dalit woman labour household in Malwa is the income from hiring out labour under MGNREGA. The share of income from this source is 10.73 per cent in Malwa. The corresponding percentages in Doaba, and Majha are 6.00 and 4.99 respectively. The next important source is the income from salaries in all the three regions. The share of income from this source is as high as 9.93 per cent in Malwa, followed by 8.23 per cent in Doaba, and 7.33 per cent in Majha. This is followed by income from self-employment, hiring out labour as domestic servants, white-washing work, autorickshaw / rickshaw pulling, hiring out labour in brick-kiln work, working as drivers, livestock, piggery and poultry, remittances and mid-day meal worker / *asha* worker / *anganwari* worker in all the three regions. Besides this, the Dalit woman labour households, on an average, receive 4.86, 3.85 and 1.67 per cent of the total income as transfer income in Malwa, Majha, and Doaba respectively. Under this source, the share of income in the form of pensions is more important in all the three regions; and the share of income from relatives/ friends as a help is meagre.

Per Capita Income

In the above discussion, we have analysed the levels and patterns of household income of the Dalit woman labourers in rural Punjab. Since the family size across the Dalit woman labour households varies, therefore, it becomes relevant to look into the per capita income levels. The data given in Table 3 exhibits that the average per capita income of the Dalit woman labour households is Rs. 16445.70 per annum. The per capita income from hiring out contractual and casual labour in agriculture accounted for Rs. 530.26 and 3595.81 respectively.

Among the other sources, annual per capita income from hiring out labour in construction work is an important source. The Dalit woman labour households earn on an average Rs. 3602.45 from this source in rural Punjab. This is followed by the per capita income from salaries, hiring out labour under MGNREGA, self-employment, hiring out labour as domestic servants, white-washing work, autorickshaw / rickshaw pulling, hiring out labour in brick-kiln work, working as drivers, livestock, labour in grain market, dairying, and vending vegetables/fruits amounting Rs. 1416.24, 1240.79, 1110.38, 992.42, 553.14, 477.19, 413.76, 411.53, 381.25, 258.07, 251.43 and 222.64 respectively. A very small amount of average annual per capita

income (i.e., less than Rs. 200) is earned from other sources such as income from piggery and poultry, remittances, mid-day meal worker/*asha* worker/*anganwari* worker, tailoring, and others. Further, an average Dalit woman labour household receives Rs. 599.50 annually in the form of transfer income. Annual per capita income from pensions (Rs. 456.63) is an important source of the transfer income, followed by scholarships (Rs. 133.46).

Table 3
Per Capita Income of Dalit Woman Labour Households (In Rs., Per Annum)

S. No.	Source	Malwa	Doaba	Majha	Punjab
1.	Income from hiring out labour in agriculture				
A.	On contractual basis				
	(a) Cash	659.52	109.99	448.96	445.19
	(b) Kind	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
	(i) Agricultural produce	39.88	7.33	25.42	26.49
	(ii) Meals	46.01	5.50	32.11	30.78
	(iii) Tea and milk	31.90	3.67	18.06	19.83
	(iv) Clothes and other things	12.50	1.83	7.36	7.97
B.	On casual basis				
	(a) Cash	3722.68	3539.92	3374.68	3553.98
	(b) Kind	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
	(i) Agricultural produce	30.89	25.71	14.05	23.66
	(ii) Meals	0.00	0.00	4.01	1.41
	(iii) Tea and milk	7.74	16.50	9.36	10.55
	(iv) Clothes and other things	6.55	3.67	7.69	6.21
	Sub-total (1)	4557.68	3714.12	3941.71	4126.08
2.	Income from other sources				
	(a) Hiring out labour in construction work	3019.79	4392.12	3680.94	3602.45
	(b) Hiring out labour in brick-kiln work	361.31	309.90	548.49	413.76
	(c) Hiring out labour as domestic servants	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
	(i) Cash	644.64	798.35	863.41	760.62
	(ii) Kind	256.94	218.79	213.04	231.80
	(d) Hiring out labour under MGNREGA	1774.83	1070.57	764.88	1240.79
	(e) Self-employment	996.73	1346.84	1065.55	1110.38
	(f) Dairying	284.24	371.68	126.82	251.43
	(g) Piggery and poultry	7.81	11.55	3.61	7.29
	(h) Livestock	345.83	433.91	382.61	381.25
	(i) Salaries	1642.38	1469.39	1123.34	1416.24
	(j) Working as drivers	347.02	528.87	398.39	411.53
	(k) Vending vegetables/fruits	300.00	408.62	0.00	222.64
	(l) White-washing work	517.26	882.22	353.31	553.14
	(m) Remittances	0.00	76.99	0.00	19.69
	(n) Mid-day meal worker/ <i>asha</i> worker/ <i>anganwari</i> worker	0.00	165.72	61.27	63.85

contd. table 3

S. No.	Source	Malwa	Doaba	Majha	Punjab
(o)	Tailoring	85.71	329.06	146.09	169.10
(p)	Autorickshaw/rickshaw pulling	53.62	535.66	910.50	477.19
(q)	Labour in grain market	299.40	354.26	141.43	258.07
(r)	Others	243.95	128.22	0.00	128.86
	Sub-total (2)	11181.48	13832.71	10783.70	11720.12
3.	Transfer Income				
(a)	Income from pensions	570.24	269.48	465.55	456.63
(b)	Scholarships	216.20	27.50	117.80	133.46
(c)	Help from relatives/friends	17.86	0.00	6.80	9.41
	Sub-total (3)	804.29	296.98	590.15	599.50
	Total (1+2+3)	16543.45	17843.81	15315.56	16445.70

Source: Computed from Table 1

The average family size is the largest, i.e., 4.76 in Majha and the smallest, i.e., 4.49 in Doaba. It is 4.54 in Malwa. Since the family size varies from region to region, it becomes relevant to compare the per capita income levels of the Dalit woman labour households across these regions. Table 3 displays that there are considerable variations in the levels of per capita income across the regions. For example, the annual per capita income is the highest, i.e., Rs. 17843.81 in Doaba, and the lowest, i.e., Rs. 15315.56 in Majha. For Malwa, it is Rs. 16543.45. This is because of the fact that the average family size is the smallest in Doaba, and the largest in Majha. Therefore, a negative relationship exists between per capita income and family size. Larger the family size, lesser would be the per capita income. The level of household income for an average Dalit woman labour household is also higher in Doaba, followed by Malwa, and Majha.

The table further shows that an average Dalit woman labour household earns a major part of its annual per capita income, i.e., Rs. 4557.68 and 3941.71 by hiring out labour (both contractual as well as casual) in agriculture in Malwa and Majha respectively. However, in Doaba, the annual per capita income of Rs. 3714.12 from this source appears at the second rank. In this region, per capita income (Rs. 4392.12) from hiring out labour in construction work gets the first rank. In Malwa and Majha, the second major source of per capita income of the Dalit woman labour households is income from hiring out labour in construction work amounting to Rs. 3019.79 and 3680.94 respectively. Besides this, the remaining income of Dalit woman labour households comes from salaries, hiring out labour under MGNREGA, self-employment, hiring out labour as domestic servants, white-washing work, autorickshaw/rickshaw pulling, hiring out labour in brick-kiln work, working as drivers, vending

vegetables/fruits, dairying, labour in grain market, tailoring, piggery and poultry, remittances, mid-day meal worker/*asha* worker/*anganwari* worker, and others in all the three regions. The table further shows that the Dalit woman labour households, on an average, receive Rs. 804.29, 590.15, and 296.98 as transfer income in Malwa, Majha, and Doaba respectively. Under this source, pensions are relatively more important in all the three regions of the state.

DISTRIBUTION OF HOUSEHOLD INCOME

The data pertaining to distribution of income among the Dalit woman labour households is exhibited in Table 4. It is evident from the table that inequalities exist in the distribution of household income among the Dalit woman labour households in rural Punjab. For example, the bottom 10 per cent households share only 4.47 per cent, whereas the top 10 per cent households share 18.69 per cent of the total income. This is more than four times the income of the bottom 10 per cent households. Similarly, the top 20 per cent households claim almost the same amount of household income (33.82 per cent) to that of the bottom 50 per cent households (33.85 per cent). The value of Gini coefficient for the Dalit woman labour households in rural Punjab is found to be 0.2284.

Table 4
Distribution of Annual Income among Dalit Woman Labour Households

<i>Cumulative percentage of households</i>	<i>Cumulative percentage of household income</i>			
	<i>Malwa</i>	<i>Doaba</i>	<i>Majha</i>	<i>Punjab</i>
10	3.82	4.37	5.21	4.47
20	8.39	9.61	10.93	9.64
30	14.71	16.85	18.74	16.78
40	22.77	25.31	26.97	25.08
50	31.48	34.13	35.95	33.85
60	41.67	44.08	46.29	44.01
70	51.82	54.76	56.83	54.47
80	63.48	66.27	68.79	66.18
90	79.04	81.32	83.57	81.31
100	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00
Gini coefficient	0.2656	0.2266	0.1934	0.2284

Source: Field Survey, 2016-17

The region-wise distribution of household income among the Dalit woman labourers depicts that the bottom 50 per cent of the households

account for 31.48 per cent of the total household income in Malwa. The corresponding figures for Doaba, and Majha are 34.13 and 35.95 per cent respectively. On the other hand, the top 20 per cent of the Dalit woman labour households claim 36.52, 33.73 and 31.21 per cent in Malwa, Doaba, and Majha respectively. It brings out that disparities in the distribution of household income are relatively more in Malwa in comparison to the other two regions. The value of Gini coefficient is found to be the highest (0.2656) in Malwa, and the lowest (0.1934) in Majha, indicating relatively worse and better patterns of distribution respectively. The value of Gini coefficient is 0.2266 for Doaba.

Figures 2 and 3 display the distribution of household income among the Dalit woman labour households through Lorenz Curve in rural Punjab and the three regions under study respectively.

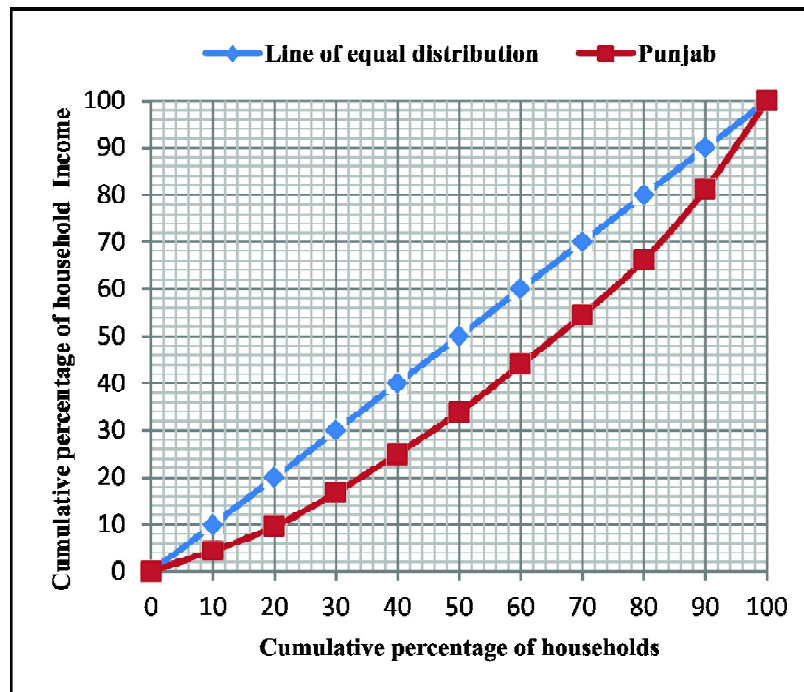


Figure 2: Concentration of Household Income among Dalit Woman Labourers

Note: Based on Table 4

It is evident from Figure 3 that the distribution of household income among the Dalit woman labourers in Malwa is relatively more unequal as the difference between line of equal distribution and the Lorenz curve of this region is the highest. On the other hand, the inequality in the distribution

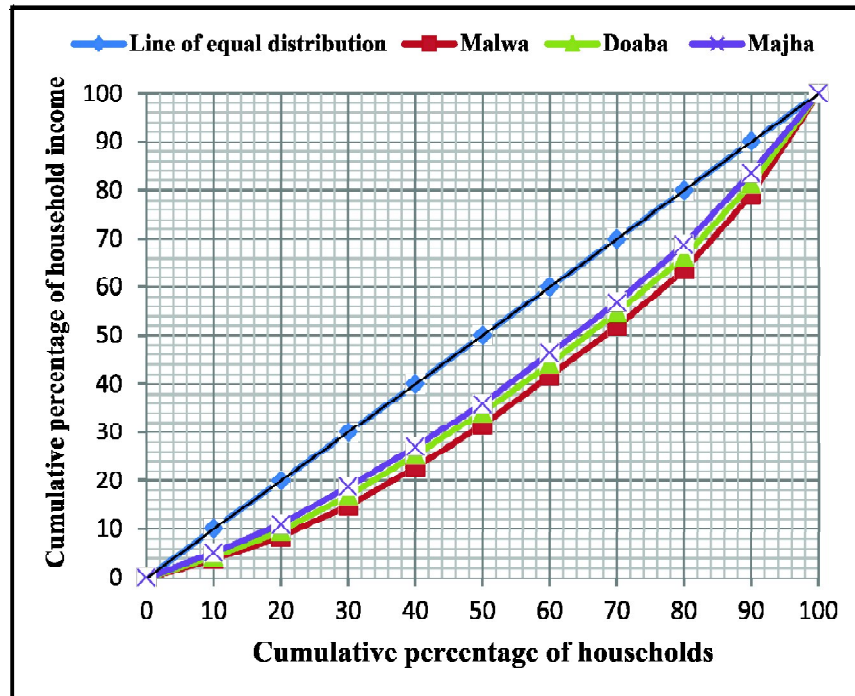


Figure 3: Region-wise Concentration of Household Income among Dalit Woman Labourers

Note: Based on Table 4

of household income among the Dalit woman labourers in Majha is the lowest, having the least difference between the line of equal distribution and the Lorenz curve of this region.

DISTRIBUTION OF PER CAPITA INCOME

The distribution of per capita income among the Dalitwoman labour households is exhibited in Table 5. The table reveals that there are more disparities in the distribution of per capita income in comparison to the household income among the Dalitwoman labourers in rural Punjab. For example, the bottom 10 per cent persons account for only 3.15 per cent of the total per capita income, whereas the top 10 per cent persons account for 21.24 per cent. It is more than 6 times the share of bottom 10 per cent. This very high magnitude of inequality in the distribution is also supported by the value of Gini coefficient that comes to 0.2723.

Table 5
Distribution of Per Capita Income among Dalit Woman Labour Households

Cumulative percentage of persons	Cumulative percentage of per capita income			
	Malwa	Doaba	Majha	Punjab
10	2.38	3.17	3.89	3.15
20	6.81	8.16	9.27	8.08
30	12.45	14.26	15.94	14.22
40	20.42	22.66	24.53	22.54
50	29.42	31.21	33.61	31.41
60	39.17	40.74	42.67	40.86
70	49.58	51.38	53.81	51.59
80	60.86	63.07	65.77	63.23
90	76.43	79.07	80.78	78.76
100	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00
Gini coefficient	0.3049	0.2726	0.2395	0.2723

Source: Field Survey, 2016-17

The region-wisedistribution of per capita income among the Dalitwoman labour households reveals that there are relatively more disparities in the distribution of per capita income in comparison to the household income of the Dalitwoman labourers in all the three regions of Punjab. The table shows that the bottom 40 per cent persons claim only 20.42, 22.66, and 24.53 per cent of total per capita income in Malwa, Doaba, and Majha respectively; while the top 10 per cent appropriate 23.57, 20.93, and 19.22 per cent of the total per capita income in Malwa, Doaba, and Majha respectively. The value of Gini coefficient is found to be the highest (0.3049) in Malwa, and the lowest (0.2395) in Majha revealing relatively worse and better patterns of distribution of the per capita income respectively. The value of Gini coefficient is 0.2726 in Doaba.

The gaps between line of equal distribution and cumulative percentage of per capita incomeas reflected in Figures 4 and 5 clearly highlight the inequalities in the distribution of per capita income of theDalit woman labourers in rural Punjab and among the three regions respectively.

A glance at Figure 5 provides that the distribution of per capita income among the Dalit woman labour households in Malwa is relatively more unequal, whereas it is relatively fair in Majha.

The figuresgiven above clearly reflect that there is relatively more difference of per capita income curve from line of equal distribution than that of household income distribution curve. It indicates that there are more disparities in the distribution of per capita income in comparison to that of

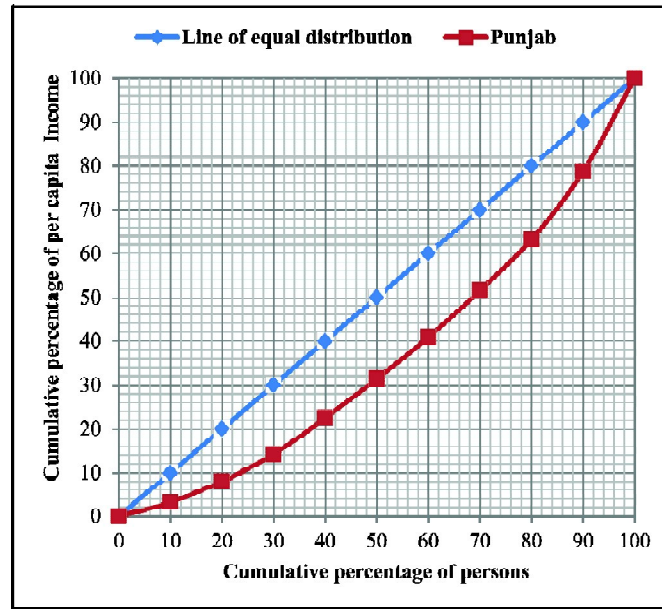


Figure 4: Concentration of Per Capita Income among Dalit Woman Labourers

Note: Based on Table 5

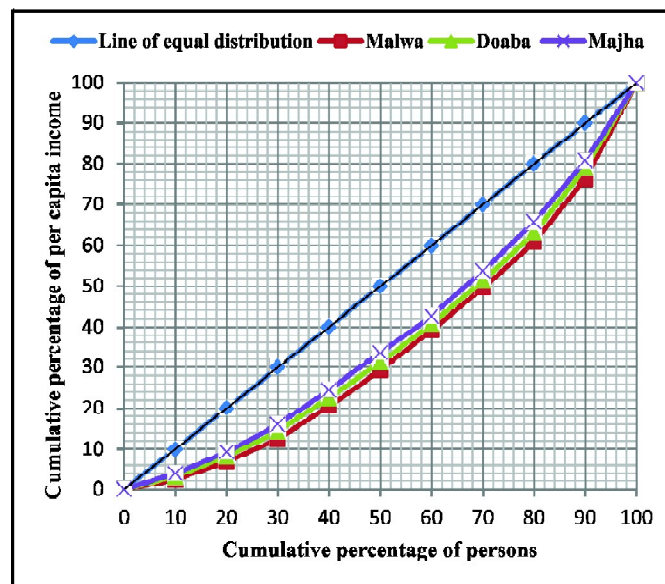


Figure 5: Region-wise Concentration of Per Capita Income among Dalit Woman Labourers

Note: Based on Table 5

household income among the Dalit woman labourers in all the three regions of Punjab.

CONCLUSIONS AND POLICY IMPLICATIONS

The foregoing analysis has clearly brought out that the Dalit woman labour households, on an average, earn a very meagre amount to meet their basic needs. The per capita, per day income is found to be Rs. 48.49, 45.32, and 41.96 in Doaba, Malwa, and Majha respectively. This amount is not sufficient to take even a balanced diet. Therefore, there is urgent need to effectively implement the policies for improving the economic condition of the Dalit woman labour households in the rural areas of Punjab. For it, the agro-based small-scale industries should be established in the rural areas on priority basis. To reduce the seasonal unemployment, the government should effectively implement employment-oriented programmes, especially during the off-season. There is an urgent need to create awareness among the Dalit woman labourers about the various employment programmes meant for them. The government should provide loans to the Dalit woman labour households at a very low rate of interest for the establishment of various income generating ventures. Quality education should be provided to the children of the Dalit woman labourers so that they may get jobs in the non-agricultural sector also which may ultimately lead to improve the economic condition of their families.

The study shows that the levels of household income and per capita income are higher in Doaba. This is because of fact that income from the non-agricultural sector is relatively higher in Doaba as compared to the other two regions. Therefore, the government should develop and establish such types of activities in the other two regions also. Income from hiring out labour under MGNREGA is the highest in Malwa (Rs. 8058.68), followed by Doaba (Rs. 4806.57) and Majha (Rs. 3641.72). So, there is need to implement these type of programmes in the other two regions on a large scale. The proper implementation of MGNREGA would definitely improve the socio-economic conditions of the Dalit woman labour households in Punjab.

The last, but the most important implication of the present study is based on the fact that all the Dalit woman labourers under study are landless. In the rural areas, the main production resource is land. But the Dalit woman labour households are deprived of this productive resource. Therefore, the study highlights the need for land reforms in favour of the Dalits which have had been neglected since the ages. Land reforms in favour of the Dalits can really change their life. The practical example can be seen in BaladKalan village of Sangrur district. In this village, under the aegis of

ZameenPraptiSangharshCommittee, the success of Dalit households' protests is to take control of common land despite having many opposing forces. Because the Dalit households have succeeded in leasing in common land, they are practicing co-operative farming and have acquired a feeling of self-respect. Now the Dalit women have not to go in the fields of large farmers to collect the fodder for their milch animals, and vegetables and foodgrains for self consumption. This successful struggle by the Dalit households has resulted in eliminated many types of exploitation of the Dalit woman labourers in rural Punjab.

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