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## Socio-economic status of beneficiaries associated with global environment facilities project

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### Abstract

This study was undertaken in Rajasthan state to identify the socio-economic status of the selected 113 beneficiaries of project funded by Global Environment Facilities (GEF). Results revealed that majority (69.92%) of respondents were from middle age group, 70.80% of them were from OBC caste category and majority (94.69%) had agriculture as their main occupations. Above 28.32% of the were educated up to middle level and most of them (77.88%) had membership of one organization. Majority (67.26%) of beneficiaries were from medium annual income category and 44.25% were in medium farmer's category of land holding. Regarding family type about 38.94% of project beneficiaries were belonged to joint family.

**Keywords:** Landraces, socio-economic, status, GEF, beneficiaries

### Introduction

Poverty is one of the most pressing issues facing the majority of developing nations in the world. Poverty's consequences have threatened and destroyed numerous countries. The battle against poverty seems never-ending and has plagued societies for ages. "Deprived of income and other resources needed to obtain the conditions of life – the diets, material goods, amenities, standards and services – that enable them to play the roles, meet the obligations and participate in the relationships and customs of their society" is how the UNDP-International Poverty Centre (2006) [6] defines those living in poverty. To stop this threat, governments, local and international organizations, and the international community have launched a number of measures in both developed and developing countries.

For millennia, scholars have acknowledged the significance of socioeconomic circumstances on health (Adler and Rehkopf, 2008) [1]. In any community, the impoverished typically have lower health and shorter lifespans than the wealthy, whether we are talking about the mill towns of Victorian England, the sweatshops of New York during the Gilded Age, or the slums of Mumbai in modern India (Boo K, 2012) [4]. From birth (neonatal outcomes, infant mortality) to working age (e.g., cardiovascular disease, accidents) and old age (functional disability), socioeconomic disparities in health are evident at nearly every stage of life. There is a correlation between higher risks of almost all major causes of premature mortality and lower socioeconomic level (SES) (Smith *et al.*, 1996) [5]. Furthermore, there is a "gradient" in health along the SES hierarchy, meaning that the risks of illness and death decrease with increasing levels of household income, wealth, education, or occupational ranking. This means that socioeconomic disparities in health status are not only a threshold impact of poverty. The middle class is observed to have better health than the lower class practically across the whole socioeconomic status spectrum. (Adler and Stewart, 2010) [2].

The necessity to "more inclusively" grow in order to help those populations that have been left out of the previous high rates of economic expansion (Ghosh, 2010) [8]. The Eleventh Five-Year Plan's rapid poverty reduction strategy is largely based on the effective implementation of various programs, like MGNREGA, in all of India's states. Compared to other forms of public spending, fiscal policy that directly increases the income of unskilled workers in rural areas is expected to be significantly more effective in raising aggregate incomes (Shah *et al.*, 2010) [9]. Inclusion of such schemes in the policies at national level can be vital step due to the fact that these kinds of programmes provide income, employment, awareness which ultimately leads to better socio-economic status of all the stakeholders.

In the specific context to India this menace is very important as it is concerned with the socio-economic situation.

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In our country agriculture is the primary source of livelihood for majority of country's population. This sector contributes 18.3 percent of GDP (Anonymous 2023) [3]. This sector provides occupation to majority of country's population and it is very important to know about the actual situation of each and every stakeholder associated with it. In context to the situational analysis socio-economic status is a very vital aspect to explore about. Agricultural researches are the key contributor to increase production and productivity while the extension is the transporter of every technology from the lab to land. Each year scientists are evolving numerous techniques but these techniques are not reaching the farmers in time. To keep pace with the ever-increasing population and demand, the agriculture sector is always in need to improve production and productivity. If the extension system is more strengthened then the innovations will be reached to their end-users. Adoption of newer technologies may be increased by availing these inventions at the doorstep of its ultimate users. Both developed and emerging nations attempt to give its residents with high-quality socioeconomic means because they understand that the social and economic advancement of the farming community is a necessary condition for growth and development. Research conducted during the period of economic growth and development in more developed nations, such as the United States, Denmark, and Japan, indicates a strong correlation between the quality of societal amenities provided to citizens and economic growth (Thompson, 1981) [7].

**Materials and Methods**

The present study was undertaken in Rajasthan state of India. Rajasthan was purposively selected because the study was conducted under the project entitled "Mainstreaming agricultural biodiversity conservation and utilization in agricultural sector to ensure ecosystem services and reduce vulnerability" funded by Global Environment Facilities (GEF), which is being implemented in three districts of western Rajasthan namely; Jodhpur, Barmer and Jaisalmer. Jodhpur and Barmer districts were selected for the research purpose as they have maximum number of project beneficiaries. Osian (Jodhpur) and Chohtan (Barmer) tehsils were selected for the research purpose as the project was operational in these tehsils. Four core villages of project implementation namely; Mansagar and Govindpura - Osian, Jodhpur and Dhok and Dhirasar - Chohtan, Barmer, were selected purposively. Beneficiaries who were selected in the initiation year of the project and were benefitted by kharif crops (Moongbean, Mothbean, Sesame and Pearl millet), were selected as respondents of this study. Thus, the total 113 respondents were selected for the study.

In this study, a cross-sectional research design was used. It was applied to fact-finding with appropriate analysis. Face-to-face interviews using an interview schedule were used for the study. To ensure consistency and content, the schedule was first created in English, translated into Hindi (the native tongue), and then reverted to English. Mean score was obtained by total scores of each statement divided by total number of respondents.

**Results and Discussion**

An attempt has been made to document the information gathered during the investigation about the socio-economic and personal status of the project beneficiaries, as well as their individual traits, in this section. The following tables present the findings related to the respondents' personal

characteristics, including age, caste, family type, occupation, education, social participation, annual income, and land holding size.

**Age**

The age is the time frame that corresponds to a person's lifetime or active life. The 2011 Population Census Report from the Government of India provided criteria for grouping the respondents into three age-based categories.

**Table 1:** Distribution of respondents according to age (n=113)

S. No.	Age categories	Frequency	Percentage
1	Young (Age below 34)	13	11.50
2	Middle (Age from 34 to 58)	79	69.92
3	Old (Age above 58)	21	18.58
Total		113	100

$X = 46.30, \sigma = 11.95$

Table 1 displays data indicating that the majority of respondents (69.92 percent) fell into the middle age category, followed by the old age category (18.58 percent). A mere 11.50 percent of respondents fell into the young age category.

**Caste**

Caste refers to any class or group of individuals who inherit exclusive privileges and are regarded as socially distinct.

**Table 2:** Distribution of respondents according to caste

(n=113)

S. No.	Caste	Frequency	Percentage
1	SC	6	5.31
2	ST	3	2.65
3	OBC	80	70.80
4	General	24	21.24
Total		113	100

Table 2 shows that the majority of respondents (70.80%) belonged to other backward class category, with general category coming in second with 21.24 percent, scheduled caste in third place with 5.31 percent, and scheduled tribe (ST) caste at the bottom with 2.65 percent of respondents.

**Family type**

The term "type of family" describes a family's size based on the number of members. According to Singh *et al.* (2017) [10]'s adopted scale, the study's family type is divided into three categories based on the number of married couples.

**Table 3:** Distribution of respondents according to family type

(n=113)

S. No.	Family type	Frequency	Percentage
1	Single	42	37.17
2	Joint	44	38.94
3	Extended	27	23.89
Total		113	100

Results of table 3 show that the majority of respondents (38.94 percent) were from joint family, followed by single family (37.17 percent), and extended family (23.89 percent) of respondents.

**Occupation**

It refers to the number of activities in which farmers were involved as a source of income.

**Table 4:** Distribution of respondents according to occupation

(n=113)

S. No.	Occupation	Frequency	Percentage
1	Labourer	0	0.00
2	Caste occupation	1	0.89
3	Agriculture	107	94.69
4	Agriculture + Business	3	2.65
5	Agriculture + Service	2	1.77
Total		113	100

It was revealed in table 4 that majority of the respondents had agriculture as the main occupation (94.69 percent), followed by agriculture + business (2.65 percent) and agriculture + service (1.77 percent) and only 0.89 percent of respondents had caste occupation as their main source of occupation.

**Education**

Education was operationalized as the number of years of formal education attained by the farmers.

**Table 5:** Distribution of respondents according to Education level

(n=113)

S. No.	Education	Frequency	Percentage
1	Illiterate	25	22.13
2	Can read only	5	4.42
3	Can read and write	16	14.16
4	Primary	31	27.43
5	Middle	32	28.32
6	High school	2	1.77
7	Graduate	2	1.77
8	Above graduate	0	0
Total		113	100

It is evident from Table 5 that majority of respondents were having middle level of education followed by primary level, illiterate, can read and write, can read only, high school, and graduate which is 28.32 percent, 27.43 percent, 22.13 percent, 14.16 percent, 4.42 percent, 1.77 percent and 1.77 percent, respectively.

**Size of land holding**

The term "size of land holding" refers to the actual total hectares of land that the farmers possess.

**Table 6:** Distribution of respondents according to size of land holding

(n=113)

S. No.	Categories	Frequency	Percentage
1	Marginal farmers (less than 1.00 ha)	2	1.77
2	Small farmers (from 1.00 to 2.00 ha)	12	10.62
3	Semi-medium farmers (from 2.01 to 4.00 ha)	33	29.20
4	Medium farmers (from 4.01 to 10.00 ha)	50	44.25
5	Large farmer (more than 10.00 ha)	16	14.16
Total		113	100.00

According to Table 6's data, most respondents (44.25 percent) fall into the category of medium farmers (from 4.01 to 10.00 ha), which is followed by semi-medium farmers (from 2.01 to 4.00 ha), large farmers (more than 10.00 ha), small farmers (from 1.00 to 2.00 ha) and marginal farmers (less than 1.00 ha).

**Annual income**

The total amount of rupees earned by an individual from both

farm and non-farm sources during a given year was used to calculate their annual income.

**Table 7:** Distribution of respondents according to Annual income

(n=113)

S. No.	Annual income	Frequency	Percentage
1	Low (less than Rs. 85761)	22	19.47
2	Medium (from Rs. 85761 to 251140)	76	67.26
3	High (more than Rs. 251140)	15	13.27
Total		113	100

X= 168451.33, σ= 82689.39

According to the data in Table 7, the majority of farmers (67.26 percent) belonged to the medium income group, followed by the low income group (19.47 percent), and the remaining farmers (13.27 percent) belonged to the high income group.

**Social participation**

It refers to how frequently respondents communicate with various individuals and groups to obtain information, primarily about crop cultivation techniques.

**Table 8:** Distribution of respondents according to social participation

(n=113)

S. No.	Social participation	Frequency	Percentage
1	None	0	0.00
2	Member of one organization	88	77.88
3	Member of more than one organization	22	19.47
4	Office holder in such an organization	3	2.65
5	Wide public leader	0	0.00
Total		113	100

Table 8 shows that the majority of respondents were members of one organization, followed by those who were members of two organizations, and the remaining respondents held positions in offices of related organizations. In percentage terms, they made up 77.88 percent, 19.47 percent, and 2.65 percent of the total.

**Conclusion**

The terms and concepts were operationalized after a review of pertinent literature was conducted. The responses of the respondents were gathered using an interview schedule that included a measuring device for the dependent and independent variables of project beneficiaries. The socio-personal characteristics of the respondents, such as age, caste, family type, occupation, education, social participation, annual income, and land holding, were covered in the first section of the schedule. The following significant conclusions were reached as a result of the personal interview method used to collect the data, which were then categorized, tabulated, and inferred after the data underwent the necessary statistical analysis. The following headings contain the key conclusions that the investigation produced: Socio-economic characteristics of the project beneficiaries

- Regarding caste majority (70.80%) of project beneficiaries were from Other Backward Class category.
- Majority (94.69%) of the project beneficiaries were having agriculture as their main occupations.
- Above 28.32% of the project beneficiaries were educated up to middle level.
- Most of the project beneficiaries (77.88%) had membership of one organization.

- Majority (67.26%) of the project beneficiaries belonged to medium annual income category ranging from Rs. 85761 to Rs. 251140.
- Most of the project beneficiaries (44.25%) were in Medium farmer's category of land holding.
- Regarding family type about 38.94% of project beneficiaries were belonged to joint family.

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