

Changing Workforce and Farm Force in Sheikhpura District : A Geographical Study

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Abstract :

The District of Sheikhpura, famous for its historico-physical sanctity, is located in the central part of the Bihar State. It lies between 24°16'30" N. latitude and 25°03'30" north latitude and 84°17'35" E. longitude and 85°23'30" east longitude. It is bounded on the north by the parts of the districts of Nalanda and Lakhisarai and on the south by Nawada and Jamui districts. On the east while Lakhisarai district delimits the study area and Nalanda and Nawada districts delimit the study region; on the west. The district consists of six blocks comprising Barbigha, Shekhopur Sarai, Sheikhpura, GhatKusumbha, Ariari and Chewara. The number of inhabited villages are 341 besides 2 towns of Sheikhpura and Barbigha in the districts having 85499 households.

Key Words : *Sheikhpura, Work force, Cultivation, Population, Farm Force.*

Introduction :

The District is an integral part of the Middle Ganga Plain. Its 84.43% of its total area is covered by alluvium and against 11.46% by Pre-Cambrian granite and remaining 4.11% by Pre-Cambrian schist and quartzite. The crest of the southern highlands marks existence of an east-west warp while a depression starting near Kauakol in the south-west proceeds in the east and north-east direction towards Sheikhpura hills. The central parts of Sheikhpura district is undulating and merges into hills with belt of brushwood jungle at their base. Major part of this tract is high, barren and uncultivable. The

northern part of the district consists of tal, diara and alluvial plain, the basic and introductory information about Sheikhpura district.

The basic and introductory information about Sheikhpura district as according to the census 2011 that was procured in unpublished form from District Census Office, Sheikhpura. The geographical area of Sheikhpura district is 689 sq.km. in which 657.82 sq.km comprising 95.47 % belongs to the rural area and the rest 31.18 sq.km. Comprising 4.53% area is urban. Total number of households in the district in 2001 was 78958 in which 66759 households comprising 84.55% was in rural areas and 12199 comprising 15.45% was in the urban areas. The highest number (4869) of households comprising 31.50% of the total in the district was in the block of Sheikhpura out of which 73.93% was in the rural areas and the rest 26.07% in the urban agglomeration of Sheikhpura. The second highest number of households (17240) comprising 21.83% of the district is found in Barbigha block where 66.85% households are in rural areas and rest 33.15% households are in urban agglomeration of Barbigha. Ariari block stands third with 13528 households only in rural areas that stands 17.13% in the district. Similarly, Chewara block stands fourth with 9151 households only in rural areas that stands 11.59% in the district. Shekhopur Sarai block stands fifth with 8795 households only in rural areas that stands 11.14% in the district. The lowest number of households is found in Ghat Kusumbha block where there are only 5375 households and covers 6.81% of the total households of the district. The total number of inhabited villages are 321 while there are only two urban agglomerations. The description of population, 2001 will be represented in the chapter concerned. The growing gap between the birth and death rate over the last 30 years during 1991-2011 owing to the rapid decline in the latter while the former being constant has shown its remarkable effect on the age-composition of population. It has been rather more drastically expressed into the %age decline in the work-force in Sheikhpura district. Here, with a view to revealing the effect of the rapid growth of population on the work-force, the livelihood patterns of 1991 and 2011 have been taken into account. The problem however, is of the incomparable census figure regarding occupational composition as mentioned earlier in this chapter. In order to make it comparable the main and marginal workers of 2011 have been summed up to develop into workers as recorded in the P.C.H. of 1991. It can further be noted from table 3.8 (a) that the

marginal workers contribute to only a fraction of the total workers in 1991. However to avoid inaccuracies it has been added to the main workers.

An interpretation of the table will throw light on the changing economic traits of the population of Sheikhpura district.

The workers in Sheikhpura district were 53.56% of the total population in 1991 including 40.47% main worker and 13.09% marginal worker. The corresponding % age workers in 2001 (the main and marginal workers taken together) has gone sharply down to 36.99% including 28.83% main worker and 8.16% marginal worker and in 2011 it slightly increased to 38.03% including 28.98% main worker and 9.05% marginal worker. A comparative analysis shows spatial variations in the strength of workers as % of total population during 1991-2011. It is the range of over 13% in the district. The highest 13% age of main worker was found in GhatKusumbha block ie, 42.85% followed by Shekhopur Sarai (42-35%), Sheikhpura (40.28%), Chewara (39.96%), Barbigha (39.14%), and lastly by Ariari (38.24%). (In 2001 the % age of the main worker decreased.

In 2001, the highest % age of main worker was found in Chewara (32.50% followed by Ariari (30.92%), GhatKusumbha block ie-29.74% Shekhopur Sarai (28.66%), Sheikhpura (28.07%) and lastly by Barbigha (26.16%). 2011, the % age of the main worker increased slightly to 28.98% in the district. The highest % age of main worker was found in Ariari (32.58%) followed by GhatKusumbha block ie.(31.25%), Shekhopur Sarai (29.37%), Chewara (27.24%), Barbigha (27.21%) and lastly by Sheikhpura (26.21%). Similarly, the highest % age of marginal worker in 1991 was found in GhatKusumbha block ie. 15.87% followed by Ariari (14.52%), Sheikhpura (12.75%), Shekhopur Sarai (12.62%), Chewara (11.52%) and lastly by Barbigha (11.24%). In 2001 the % age of the main worker decreased. The highest % age of marginal worker in 2001 was found in GhatKusumbha block (13.16%) followed by Ariari (11-62%), Shekhopur Sarai (7.77%), Barbigha (7.16%), Sheikhpura (6.96%), and lastly by Chewara (5.74%). In 2011, The highest % age of marginal worker in 2011, was found in Ariari (12.69%), GhatKusumbha block (10.53%) followed by Shekhopur Sarai (9.58%), Barbigha (8.29%), Chewara (7.24%), and lastly by Sheikhpura block (5.98%). The difference may be seen in the following table.

DistSheikhpura

CHANGING WORK-FORCE (%)

S.N.	Block	(1991-2001)		(2001-2011)	
		Main worker	Marginal Worker	Main worker	Marginal Worker
1	Barbigha	12.98	4.08	-1.05	-1.13
2	Shekhopur Sarai	13.69	4.85	-0.71	-1.81
3	Sheikhpura	12.21	5.79	1.86	0.98
4	GhatKusumbha	13.11	2.71	-1.51	2.63
5	Ariari	7.32	2.9	-1.66	-1.07
6	Chewara	7.46	5.78	5.26	-1.5
	Dist. Total	11.13	4.35	0.37	-0.32

CHANGING WORK-FORCE AND FARM – FORCE (2001-2011)

	Sample Block	Barbigha	% age	Shekhopur Sarai	% age
2001	Cultivators	8535	30.31	6814	38.38
	Ag. Labourers	12977	46.08	6964	39.23
	HHI. Workers	1666	5.92	1423	8.02
	Other Workers	4985	17.70	2551	14.37
	Total	28163	100.00	17752	100.00
2011	Cultivators	7535	29.02	6234	34.85
	Ag. Labourers	10258	39.51	6547	36.60
	HHI. Workers	1983	7.64	1954	10.92
	Other Workers	6185	23.82	3151	17.62
	Total	25961	100.00	17886	100.00
	Change (%)	-7.82		0.75	

The difference between 1991 and 2001 has been recorded in decreasing pattern. The percentage of main worker in the district that was 40.47% in 1991, decreased to 28.83% in 2001 showing the decrease of 11.13%. This decrease was recorded higher than the district in the blocks of Shekhopur Sarai (13.69%), Ghatkusumbha (13.11%), Barbigha (12.98%) and

Sheikhpura (12.21%) but lower in the blocks of Chewara (7.46%) and Ariari (7.32%). Similarly, in 2001-2011, differences were seen in the district that increased from 28.83% to 28.98% in 2011 showing a slight increase of 0.37%. The higher percentage increase than the district in 2011, was found in the blocks of Chewara (5.26%) and Sheikhpura (1.86%) while the lower percentage increase than the district was found in the blocks of Shekhopur Sarai (-0.71%), Barbigha (-1.05%), Ghatkusumbha (-1.51%) and Ariari (-1.66%).

The difference in the percentage of marginal workers between 1991 and 2001 has been recorded in a decreasing pattern. The percentage of marginal worker in the district that was 13.09% in 1991 that decreased to 8.16% in 2001 showing a decrease of 4.35%. This decrease was recorded higher than the district in the blocks of Sheikhpura (5.79%), Chewara (5.78%) and Shekhopur Sarai (4.85%) but lower in the blocks of Barbigha (4.08%), Ariari (2.90%) and Ghatkusumbha (2.71%). Similarly in 2001-2011, difference was seen in the district that increased from 8.16% to 9.05% in 2011 showing a slight increase of 0.32%. The higher percentage increase than the district in 2011, was found in the blocks of Ghatkusumbha (2.63%) and Sheikhpura (0.98%) while the lower percentage increase than the district was found in the blocks of Chewara (-1.5%), Shekhopur Sarai (-1.81%), Barbigha (-1.13%), and Ariari (-1.07%).

The Changing Farm-Force :

The cultivators plus agricultural labourers constitute the farm-force or farm workers in the occupational composition of population. The following table concerned illustrates the strength of farm-workers as %age of the total workers or total work-force according to the census of 1991 and 2001. "It is evident that on average 84.42% of the total workers in 1971 in Sheikhpur district were engaged in agricultural activities. The corresponding strength is higher than district average in Chewara (90.20%), Barbigha (86.34%) and Sheikhpura (85.24%) but lower in the blocks of Shekhopur Sarai (83.89%), Ghatkusumbha (78.76%) and Ariari (80.28%). It shows an outstanding strength of the agricultural workers in 1971. The strength of total workers in 2001 in the district declined to 76.33%. The percentage of total worker is higher than district average in Chewara (85.00%), Ariari (80.28%), Sheikhpura (77.89%), Shekhopur Sarai (77.61%) and Barbigha

(76.38%) but lower in the block of GhatKusumbha (68.05%). It shows that the total workers migrated from the region. There became a difference in the percentage of total workers from 5% to 10%. In the whole district, the percentage of decline of total workers was -8.09%. The difference of percentage of total worker is higher than district average in GhatKusumbha (-10.71%), Barbigha (-9.96%) and Ariari (-8.55%) but lower in the block of Sheikhpura (-7.35%), Shekhopur Sarai (-6.28%) and Chewara (-5.20%).

Changing %age Strength of the Cultivators (1971- 2011) :

The cultivators in Sheikhpura district as a percentage of the total workers have declined from 43.66% (1971) to 40.76%, in 2001. It is common to each of the blocks individually as well. The magnitude of decline (1971 to 2001) in blocks however is not the same everywhere. It is by far the most conspicuous in Sheikhpura block from 45.92% to 41.05%, Chewara 45.68% in 1971 to 44.10% in 2001, Barbigha 32.37% to 30.31% but lower in the blocks of Shekhopur Sarai 43.58% to 38.38%, GhatKusumbha 34.52% to 30.43% and Ariari 54.62% to 46.23%. From 2001 to 2011, the percentage of cultivators declined from 39.38% to 36.30%. It is by far the most conspicuous in Chewara 44.10% in 2001 to 40.29% in 2011, Sheikhpura block from 41.05% to 37.54%, Barbigha 30.31% to 29.02%, Shekhopur Sarai 38.38% to 34.85%, GhatKusumbha 30.43% to 27.69% and Ariari 46.23% to 42.79%.

It is worth-mention that some of these blocks characterize urban functions while others are purely rural in their economic activities. That means that in general there is a decrease in the percentage strength of cultivators with rather starting decrease in the components where non-agricultural activities are dominant with urban population.

Changing %age Strength of the Agricultural labourers :

An inspection of the table will further reveal obvious spatial variations in the cumulative percentage change in the strength of agricultural workers in Sheikhpura district (1971-2011). It shows that the agricultural workers as a percentage of the total work-farms for the district as a whole has increased from 40.76% in 1971 to 32.52% in 2011. In the spatial context however, the following variations are worth mention.

1. The corresponding %age strength of the agricultural workers has declined in all the blocks of Barbigha, Sheikhpura, Shekhopur Sarai, GhatKusumbha, Ariari and Chewara.

2 Barbigha, Shekhopur Sarai, Sheikhpura, GhatKusumbha, Ariari and Chewara have 46.08%, 39.23%, 36.84%, 37.63%, 25.50% and 40.90% in 1971.

3 The corresponding strength in the blocks in 2011 was 39.51%, 36.60%, 31.23%, 30.96%, 23.21% and 37.02%. that is likewise diminishing but it is of lower magnitude by comparison.

It is evident from the foregoing account that the agricultural workers as % of the total work-force has declined in the blocks having pre-existing urban and industrial activities since long. In general, there is an apparent increase rather more marked in some of the anchals of the Sn. Section far from the urban centers of the district. The table 3.9c on the other hand shows an opposite trend for the agricultural labourers. In majority of the blocks and other than those specialization in non-agricultural activities the increase however varies in magnitude from anchal in the district. The decline is visible only in Sheikhpura block in which activities other than farming abound in the occupational composition of population. Though it is possible through either of the following.

(a) The growing non-viability of cultivators with regard to the size of operational land-holding declining with the rapid increase of its co-sharers emanating from, the rapid increase in population may be one of the causes of the decrease in cultivators and increase in agricultural labours.

(b) Recently in the wake of Green, white and Blue revolutions more and opportunities of livelihood are becoming available at the farms. As result there may be some movement of workers from the non-agricultural activities to the agricultural one.

There is clear-cut increase in the %age strength of agricultural labourers in all the anchals of the district. The magnitude of the enhanced strength however remarkably varies spatially from as low as 5.29% in Jamui to as high 29.28% in Dharahara anchals. The anchals in this range are of Jamalpur and Lakhisarai in the Nn. Section and Halsi, Sono, Khairai, Chakai,

Lakshmipur and Sikhandra in the Sn. Section. Majority of these anchals contain only rural population. Here it may be inferred that on account of the during the post gradually increasing employment period the %age strength of agricultural labourers has fairly in the district.

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