



## Levels, Pattern and Distribution of Consumption Expenditure of Scheduled Caste Households in Rural Punjab

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### ABSTRACT

*The present study examines the levels, pattern and distribution of consumption expenditure of the Scheduled Caste households on the basis of primary data collected from 543 Scheduled Caste households spread across twenty seven villages and three districts of rural Punjab. The study concluded that the annual consumption expenditure of an average Scheduled Caste household is ₹59,377.27 in rural Punjab. It is the highest (₹96,980.84) for the government employee households and the lowest (₹44,423.70) for the other category households. The proportional share of non-durables, durables, socio-religious ceremonies and services is 51.90, 18.37, 15.23 and 14.50 per cent respectively for an average Scheduled Caste household. The study further revealed that annual per capita consumption expenditure of the government employee households is found to be 1.91, 1.61, 1.23, 1.77 and 2.07 times of that of the agricultural labour, non-agricultural labour, private employee, artisan, and other category households respectively.*

**Key words:** Scheduled castes households, Consumption expenditure, Rural Punjab  
**JEL Classification:** J15, I31

### INTRODUCTION

The term Scheduled Castes is an officially authorised nomenclature which makes sense only in a context of statutory provisions, government programmes and politics (Zachariah, 1972). The scheduled castes constitute one of the most deprived groups in the Indian society. The scheduled castes population in Punjab has been growing at a rate much higher than the rest of the population. This proportion has reached to

31.9 per cent in 2011 (Ministry of Home Affairs, 2013). The need for providing protection against widespread discrimination has been felt by the framers of the Indian Constitution. Consequently, the relevant provisions have been made in the Constitution of India under various articles (Bharti, 2010).

Compensatory policies like reservations in public education and employment and protective legislation like the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities) Act, 1989 have aided this process and a history of protest movements has enlarged the voice of scheduled castes. Despite these constitutional provisions,

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atrocities and crimes on the members of scheduled castes, especially the women, continue to occur in all parts of the country in varying degrees (Planning Commission of India, 2008).

The plight of scheduled caste households is very miserable. Many studies revealed that even after more than six decades of planning, the scheduled caste households are mainly dependent on low wage income and casual employment. The incidence of undernutrition and malnutrition is a reflection of their low levels of income which is due to inadequate employment opportunities (Panikar, 1979). Majority of the scheduled caste households survive on cereals due to lack of resources (Rajuladevi, 2001). The percentage decline of food expenditure among the scheduled caste households is more in rural areas than the urban areas (Vardhan, 2013). This consumption pattern leads towards a fall in the levels of living of the scheduled caste households (Nayak and Prasad, 1984).

The non-availability of food in the rural areas has been considered the main factor for their migration (Chary *et al.*, 1987). Most of the low income and middle income groups had to resort to borrowing to meet their day to day consumption expenditure (Galgalikar *et al.*, 1970). The average propensity to consume is greater than unity among the different categories of the scheduled caste households. It reveals that they try to maintain a minimum level of consumption whether they can afford it or not (Singh, 1986).

The levels of living of the scheduled caste households are better understood from the levels and pattern of their consumption

expenditure. The present study is devoted to analyse the levels, pattern and distribution of consumption expenditure of the scheduled caste households in rural Punjab. More specifically, the aim of the present study was:

1. to study the levels and pattern of consumption expenditure;
2. to compare and contrast the relative shares of different items of consumption in the total consumption expenditure;
3. to examine the inequality in the distribution of consumption expenditure and
4. to work out and analyse the average propensity to consume.

#### METHODOLOGY

The present study, based on a three stage stratified random sampling technique, relates to the year 2012-13. For the analysis of levels, pattern and distribution of consumption expenditure of the scheduled caste households, *viz.* agricultural labour, nonagricultural labour, government employees, private employees, artisans, and others, the whole Punjab state had been divided on the basis of the highest, medium and lowest concentration zones of the scheduled caste population. From each zone, one district had been selected and from each selected district, one village from each development block had been selected for survey. From each selected village 10 per cent of scheduled caste households were selected randomly.

Keeping in view the differences in the concentration of Scheduled Caste population in rural Punjab, it was deemed fit to choose Jalandhar district from the highest, Fatehgarh Sahib district from the medium and Gurdaspur

district from the lowest scheduled caste population concentration zones (Ministry of Home Affairs, 2013). The sampled districts also represented the three geographical regions of Punjab i.e. Doaba, Malwa and Majha respectively. There were eleven development blocks in Jalandhar district, five development blocks in Fatehgarh Sahib district and eleven development blocks in Gurdaspur district. One village was selected from each development block of the sampled districts. Thus, in all, total twenty-seven villages and 543 scheduled caste households were selected for survey from the three sampled districts. Out of these 543 households, 303 from Jalandhar district, 103

from Fatehgarh Sahib district and 137 from Gurdaspur district were selected. Apart from using the mean values and percentages, Gini-coefficients had also been calculated to analyse the data.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### Per Household Consumption Expenditure

The mean values of consumption expenditure of the scheduled caste households in rural Punjab had been presented in Table 1. The table depicted that annual consumption expenditure of an average scheduled caste household in rural Punjab was ₹59,377.27. However, there were considerable variations in the levels of

**TABLE 1: LEVELS OF CONSUMPTION EXPENDITURE OF SCHEDULED CASTE HOUSEHOLDS**

(Mean value in ₹ per annum)

Items of consumption	AL	NAL	SERVICES		ART	OTHR	All Sampled Households
			GT	PVT			
<b>Food items</b>			<i>Non- durable items</i>				
Foodgrains	7749.77	7778.69	8217.95	7667.34	7553.03	6439.41	7566.27
(a) Cereals	6266.29	6257.54	6839.92	6384.31	6210.64	5167.62	6166.12
(b) Pulses	1483.48	1521.15	1378.03	1283.03	1342.39	1271.79	1400.15
Milk and milk products	3942.56	4151.94	5122.21	4288.81	4503.67	4094.07	4304.62
Sugarcane products	2351.87	2333.39	2486.05	2286.19	2127.62	2184.69	2284.85
Condiments and spices	967.09	1017.87	1110.49	1047.31	952.16	840.31	983.75
Vegetables	2368.31	2334.38	2756.97	2317.24	2068.58	1991.79	2280.9
Fruits	888.37	825.28	1121.48	867.44	794.56	760.31	857.27
Tea leaves	1198.94	1194.24	1358.92	1259.32	1222.11	1186.77	1225.04
Meat, fish and eggs	1100.47	1085.07	1285.49	1177.86	1099.91	1035.8	1115.74
Pickles	1670.48	1563.1	1905.26	1647.12	1605.05	1424.85	1615.48
Edible oils	909.71	817.86	1058.61	934.41	838.53	840.91	879.7
Biscuits & sweets	430.45	395.95	409.34	358.31	366.51	382.22	390.87
Intoxicants	1255.13	1302.55	1425.25	1573.32	1414.03	1253.22	1353.26
Sub-total	24833.15	24800.32	28258.02	25424.67	24545.76	22434.35	24857.75
<b>Non-food items</b>							
Clothing and bedding	3182.09	3256.31	3859.52	3740.97	3325.39	2231.64	3225.99
Footwear	1124	1093.17	1423.71	1253.48	1161.56	1356.27	1205.58
Fuel and light	669.19	393.2	1055.9	498.31	430.56	538.1	551.89
Washing and toilet articles	905.74	981.43	1100.82	1061.36	997.83	866.49	977.69
Others	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Sub-total	5881.02	5724.11	7439.95	6554.12	5915.34	4992.5	5961.15
<b>Total non-durables</b>	<b>30714.17</b>	<b>30524.43</b>	<b>35697.97</b>	<b>31978.79</b>	<b>30461.11</b>	<b>27426.85</b>	<b>30818.9</b>

(Contd.)

Table 1 (Contd.)

Items of consumption	AL	NAL	SERVICES		ART	OTHR	All Sampled Households
			GT	PVT			
			<i>Durable items</i>				
House construction and major repairs	3469.42	5278.23	8229.84	4835.76	3332.94	2878.52	4526.8
Radio, T.V., V.C.R. and C.D.	249.42	717.35	1055.9	329.83	398.3	207.33	499.04
Watches and clocks	144.43	133.27	166.8	77.44	94.48	68.99	115.36
Electric fans/ coolers	384.72	227.01	831.57	304.41	146.15	133.09	298.07
Sewing machine	165.2	65.31	688.36	96.1	144.13	65.8	170.36
Press	68.02	60.24	96.89	70	49.82	44.62	62.23
LPG connection	189.07	151.36	290.82	150.85	155.78	110.53	167.74
Furniture	680.47	773.31	1009.67	1286.44	1107.57	910.51	928.48
Utensils	196.16	197.62	447.7	177.12	159.32	260.25	224.91
Car/jeep	-	-	4059.02	-	-	-	455.98
Scooter/motorcycle	523.26	2101.36	5648.36	3249.83	1413.76	948.77	2064.72
Bicycles	158.14	113.61	135.9	155.93	108.07	108.27	125.86
Hand pump	-	23.47	365.9	245.17	142.57	153.7	125.65
Refrigerator	554.65	299.32	1132.79	497.12	148.62	420.49	442.71
Washing machine	-	-	935.41	743.56	-	-	185.87
Cots	220.47	811.39	699.84	190.25	282.46	146.54	432.43
Others	-	-	485.41	171.19	48.62	-	82.89
Sub-total	7003.43	10952.85	26280.18	12581	7732.59	6457.41	10909.1
<b>Services</b>							
Education	513.37	1387.21	6044.75	2527.46	587.25	619.14	1620.77
Healthcare	4172.73	4066.63	5122.7	4569.83	4229.16	3686.96	4232.74
Conveyance	1274.17	1508.53	1845.25	1627.48	1595.96	1098.03	1478.48
Communication	293.89	265.34	281.8	246.71	246.61	272.53	267
Entertainment	840.06	977.52	1398.85	1147.51	1035.6	829.07	1011.07
Sub-total	7094.22	8205.23	14693.35	10118.99	7694.58	6505.73	8610.06
<b>Socio-religious ceremonies</b>							
Marriages and other social ceremonies	4040.81	7825.65	18454.59	14381.86	6279.63	3798.52	8221.55
Religious ceremonies	467.44	1124.63	1854.75	994.92	436.51	235.19	817.66
Sub-total	4508.25	8950.28	20309.34	15376.78	6716.14	4033.71	9039.21
<b>Total</b>	<b>49320.07</b>	<b>58632.79</b>	<b>96980.84</b>	<b>70055.56</b>	<b>52604.42</b>	<b>44423.7</b>	<b>59377.27</b>

Note: AL: Agricultural labour, NAL: Non-agricultural labour, GT: Government employee, PVT: Private employee, ART: Artisan, OTHR: Others.

consumption expenditure of the different categories of the scheduled caste households. For example, an average scheduled caste household belonging to the government employee households spent as much as ₹96,980.84 annually, whereas, it was ₹70,055.56, ₹58,632.79, ₹52,604.42, ₹49,320.07 and ₹44,423.70 respectively in case of the private employee, non-agricultural labour, artisan, agricultural labour, and other category households.

Out of the total consumption expenditure,

₹30,818.90 were spent on non-durable items. All the categories of the scheduled caste households spent maximum amount on non-durable items whereas, ₹10,909.10, ₹9,039.21 and ₹8,610.06 were spent on durable items, socio-religious ceremonies, and services respectively by an average scheduled caste household.

The table highlighted that the consumption expenditure on durables, services, and socio-religious ceremonies was the highest for the government employee households followed

by the private employee, non-agricultural labour, artisan, agricultural labour, and other category households.

On most of the items, consumption expenditure was the highest for the government employee households and the lowest for the other category households. However, there were a few exceptions, for example, in case of bicycles, average expenditure incurred by the agricultural labour households was more than that of all the other categories. The study revealed that the government employee households incurred the maximum amount of expenditure on all the items which revealed that income level had its important role in determining the levels of living of scheduled caste households.

The analysis carried out in terms of absolute values did not give a correct picture of the pattern of consumption expenditure, since the average consumption levels among the different categories of the scheduled caste households were different. In such a situation, the consumption pattern may better be studied by comparing the relative shares of individual items of consumption in the total consumption expenditure of the scheduled caste households across the sampled districts.

#### **Pattern of Consumption Expenditure**

The relative shares of different components of consumption expenditure in the total consumption expenditure of the different categories of the sampled scheduled caste households had been given in Table 2. The table showed that for an average sampled scheduled caste household's non-durable (food and non-food items) consumption expenditure accounts for the major proportion of the total consumption expenditure followed

by durable commodities, socio-religious ceremonies and services.

An average a scheduled caste household spent 51.90 per cent on non-durable items. The agricultural labour households spent 62.28 per cent of the total consumption expenditure on non-durables items followed by the other category (61.74 per cent), artisan (57.90 per cent) and non-agricultural labour (52.06 per cent) households. This proportion decreased in case of the government and private employee households. As the income of the government and private employee households increased, they spent only 36.81 per cent and 45.65 per cent respectively on these items.

Among non-durables, foodgrains (cereals and pulses) were the important item of consumption and an average scheduled caste household spent nearly 12.74 per cent of total consumption expenditure on this item. The agricultural labour households spent about 16 per cent of total consumption expenditure on foodgrains. This proportion was about 15 per cent for the artisan and other category households while it was 10.94 and 8.47 per cent for the private and government employee households respectively.

An average scheduled caste household spent 7.25 per cent on milk and milk products. This proportion was the highest for the other category households closely followed by the artisan, agricultural labour, non-agricultural labour, private employee and government employee households. The Engel's law of consumption stands approved as the portion of income spent on food items decreased with an increase in income. Slightly less than 5.5 per cent of total consumption expenditure was

incurred on clothing and beddings by an average scheduled caste household. This proportion was as high as 6.45 per cent for the agricultural labour households and 3.98 per cent for the government employee households.

Next comes sugarcane products and vegetables contributing 3.85 and 3.84 per cent respectively to total consumption expenditure for an average scheduled caste household. The proportion of sugarcane products was the highest (about 5.00 per cent) for the other category households closely followed by the agricultural labour and artisan households. Pickles, intoxicants, tea leaves and footwear came next contributing

2.72, 2.28, 2.06 and 2.03 per cent respectively to total consumption expenditure for an average scheduled caste household. Other items such as, fruits, refreshment, condiments and spices, meat, fish and eggs had meager share in the total consumption expenditure for an average scheduled caste household.

The table further revealed that an average scheduled caste household spent 18.37 per cent of the total consumption expenditure on durable items. This proportion was as high as 27.10 per cent for the government employee households followed by the non-agricultural labour (18.68 per cent) and private employee (17.96 per cent) households. On the contrary, the agricultural

**TABLE 2: CONSUMPTION PATTERN OF SCHEDULED CASTE HOUSEHOLDS**  
(Percentage of Total Consumption Expenditure)

Items of consumption	AL	NAL	SERVICES		ART	OTHR	All Sampled Households
			GT	PVT			
<b>Food items</b>			<i>Non- durable items</i>				
Foodgrains	15.71	13.27	8.47	10.94	14.36	14.50	12.74
(a) Cereals	12.70	10.67	7.05	9.11	11.81	11.63	10.38
(b) Pulses	3.01	2.60	1.42	1.83	2.55	2.86	2.36
Milk and milk products	7.99	7.08	5.28	6.12	8.56	9.22	7.25
Sugarcane products	4.77	3.98	2.56	3.26	4.04	4.92	3.85
Condiments and spices	1.96	1.74	1.15	1.50	1.81	1.89	1.66
Vegetables	4.83	3.98	2.84	3.31	3.93	4.48	3.84
Fruits	1.80	1.41	1.16	1.24	1.51	1.71	1.44
Tea leaves	2.43	2.04	1.40	1.80	2.32	2.67	2.06
Meat, fish and eggs	2.23	1.85	1.33	1.68	2.09	2.33	1.88
Pickles	3.39	2.66	1.96	2.35	3.05	3.21	2.72
Edible oils	1.84	1.38	1.09	1.33	1.59	1.89	1.48
Biscuits & sweets	0.87	0.68	0.42	0.51	0.70	0.86	0.66
Intoxicants	2.53	2.23	1.47	2.25	2.69	2.82	2.28
Sub-total	50.35	42.30	29.14	36.29	46.65	50.50	41.86
<b>Non-food items</b>							
Clothing and bedding	6.45	5.55	3.98	5.34	6.32	5.03	5.43
Footwear	2.28	1.86	1.47	1.79	2.21	3.05	2.03
Fuel and light	1.36	0.67	1.09	0.71	0.82	1.21	0.93
Washing and toilet articles	1.84	1.68	1.14	1.52	1.89	1.95	1.65
Others	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Sub-total	11.93	9.76	7.67	9.36	11.24	11.24	10.04
Total non-durables	62.28	52.06	36.81	45.65	57.90	61.74	51.90

(Contd.)

Table 2 (Contd.)

Items of consumption	AL	NAL	SERVICES		ART	OTHR	All Sampled Households
			GT	PVT			
			<i>Durable items</i>				
House construction and major repairs	7.03	9.00	8.49	6.90	6.34	6.48	7.62
Radio, T.V., V.C.R. and C.D.	0.51	1.22	1.09	0.47	0.76	0.47	0.84
Watches and clocks	0.29	0.23	0.17	0.11	0.18	0.16	0.19
Electric fans/ coolers	0.78	0.39	0.86	0.44	0.28	0.30	0.50
Sewing machine	0.34	0.11	0.71	0.14	0.27	0.15	0.29
Press	0.14	0.10	0.10	0.10	0.09	0.10	0.10
LPG connection	0.38	0.26	0.30	0.22	0.30	0.25	0.28
Furniture	1.38	1.32	1.04	1.84	2.11	2.05	1.56
Utensils	0.40	0.34	0.46	0.25	0.30	0.59	0.38
Car/jeep	-	-	4.19	-	-	-	0.77
Scooter/motorcycle	1.06	3.58	5.82	4.64	2.69	2.14	3.48
Bicycles	0.32	0.19	0.14	0.22	0.21	0.24	0.21
Hand pump	-	0.04	0.38	0.35	0.27	0.35	0.21
Refrigerator	1.12	0.51	1.17	0.71	0.28	0.95	0.75
Washing machine	-	-	0.96	1.06	-	-	0.31
Cots	0.45	1.38	0.72	0.27	0.54	0.33	0.73
Others	-	-	0.50	0.24	0.08	-	0.14
Sub-total	14.20	18.68	27.10	17.96	14.70	14.54	18.37
<b>Services</b>							
Education	1.04	2.37	6.23	3.61	1.12	1.39	2.73
Healthcare	8.46	6.94	5.28	6.52	8.04	8.30	7.13
Conveyance	2.58	2.57	1.90	2.32	3.03	2.47	2.49
Communication	0.60	0.45	0.29	0.35	0.47	0.61	0.45
Entertainment	1.70	1.67	1.45	1.64	1.97	1.87	1.70
Sub-total	14.38	14.00	15.15	14.44	14.63	14.64	14.50
<b>Socio-religious ceremonies</b>							
Marriages and other social ceremonies	8.19	13.35	19.03	20.53	11.94	8.55	13.85
Religious ceremonies	0.95	1.92	1.91	1.42	0.83	0.53	1.38
Sub-total	9.14	15.27	20.94	21.95	12.77	9.08	15.23
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>

Note: AL: Agricultural labour, NAL: Non-agricultural labour, GT: Government employee, PVT: Private employee, ART: Artisan, OTHR: Others.

labour, artisan, and other category households spent almost equal about 15 per cent on durable items.

Among durable items, major share went to house construction, addition of rooms and major repairs accounting 7.62 per cent for an average scheduled caste household. This proportion was the highest (9.00 per cent) for the non-agricultural labour households closely followed by the government employee households (8.49 per cent). The second important constituent of durable items was

two wheelers (scooter and motorcycle) which contributed 3.48 per cent of the total consumption expenditure for an average scheduled caste household.

This proportion was the highest (5.82 per cent) for the government employee households followed by the private employee households (4.64 per cent). An average scheduled caste household spent 0.77 per cent on four wheelers (car and jeep). The government employee households spent 4.19 per cent of the total consumption expenditure

on four wheelers, whereas the agricultural labour, non-agricultural labour, private employee, artisan and other category households had reported no expenditure on this item. Other durable items had meager share in the total consumption expenditure of the scheduled caste households.

The expenditure on socio-religious ceremonies accounted for 15.23 per cent for an average scheduled caste household in rural Punjab. This proportion was the highest (21.95 per cent) for the private employee households followed by the government employee (20.94 per cent), non-agricultural labour (15.27 per cent), artisan (12.77 per cent), agricultural labour (9.14 per cent) and other category (9.08 per cent) households. Among the socio-religious ceremonies, the expenditure on marriages and other social ceremonies contributed 13.85 per cent to total consumption expenditure for an average scheduled caste household.

The expenditure on services accounted for about 15 per cent of total consumption expenditure for an average scheduled caste household. This proportion was the highest (15.15 per cent) for the government employee households and the lowest (14.00 per cent) for the non-agricultural labour households. Among the different services, the percentage share of healthcare was the highest, i.e., 7.13 per cent followed by education (2.73 per cent), conveyance (2.49 per cent), entertainment (1.70 per cent) and communication (0.45 per cent) for an average scheduled caste household.

The percentage share of healthcare was relatively more in case of agricultural labour households i.e. 8.46 per cent as compared to

the non-agricultural labour, government employee, private employee, artisan and other category households.

The percentage share of education was the highest (6.23 per cent) for the government employee households and the lowest (1.04 per cent) for the agricultural labour households. The expenditure on conveyance and entertainment was the highest for the artisan households whereas, the expenditure on communication had meager share in the total consumption expenditure of the scheduled caste households.

The foregoing analysis provided that in general, there was much similarity in the consumption pattern of the agricultural labour, non-agricultural labour, artisan, and other category households, whereas, the government and private employee households had a different pattern. The consumption expenditure pattern of the agricultural labour, non-agricultural labour, artisan and other category households was of subsistence nature.

A large share of total consumption expenditure by these categories was allocated to non-durables, distinctly followed by durables, socio-religious ceremonies, and services. The proportionate expenditure on non-durable items had a negative relationship and the proportionate expenditure on durables, services, and socio-religious ceremonies had a positive relationship with the increase in income of the government employee households in all the sampled districts.

#### **Per Capita Consumption Expenditure**

Table 3 manifested that per capita



consumption expenditure of an average scheduled caste household was ₹12,236. The per capita consumption expenditure was the highest for the government employee households which spent ₹19,207.27 followed by the private employee (₹15,597.26), non-agricultural labour (₹11,904.72), artisan (₹10,839.06), agricultural labour (₹10,051) and other category (₹9,297.98) households.

The table further revealed that the consumption expenditure pattern in per capita terms was somewhat similar across the different categories of sampled scheduled caste households. The per capita consumption expenditure on most of the items was the highest for the government employee

households and the lowest for the other category households. However, a different pattern had been observed in case of per capita consumption expenditure on some durable items. The per capita consumption expenditure of the scheduled caste households on electric fans and coolers was ₹61.42. It was the highest for the government employee households followed by the agricultural labour, private employee, non-agricultural labour, artisan and other category households.

Since, the average family size varied from one category to other, there were difference in the range of per capita and per household consumption expenditure. The

**TABLE 3: PER CAPITA CONSUMPTION EXPENDITURE OF SCHEDULED CASTE HOUSEHOLDS**

Items of consumption	AL	NAL	SERVICES		ART	OTHR	All Sampled Households
			GT	PVT			
<b>Food items</b>			<i>Non-durable items</i>				
Foodgrains	1579.34	1579.37	1627.58	1707.07	1556.29	1347.78	1559.20
(a) Cereals	1277.02	1270.52	1354.66	1421.41	1279.69	1081.59	1270.67
(b) Pulses	302.32	308.85	272.92	285.66	276.60	266.19	288.53
Milk and milk products	803.46	843.00	1014.46	954.87	927.98	856.90	887.06
Sugarcane products	479.29	473.77	492.37	509	438.39	457.26	470.84
Condiments and spices	197.09	206.67	219.93	233.17	196.19	175.88	202.73
Vegetables	482.64	473.97	546.02	515.91	426.23	416.89	470.03
Fruits	181.04	167.56	222.11	193.13	163.72	159.13	176.66
Tea leaves	244.33	242.48	269.14	280.38	251.81	248.39	252.45
Meat, fish and eggs	224.27	220.31	254.59	262.24	226.64	216.80	229.92
Pickles	340.43	317.37	377.34	366.72	330.72	298.22	332.90
Edible oils	185.39	166.06	209.66	208.04	172.78	176.01	181.28
Biscuits & sweets	87.72	80.39	81.07	79.77	75.52	80.00	80.55
Intoxicants	255.78	264.47	282.27	350.29	291.36	262.30	278.87
Sub-total	5060.78	5035.42	5596.55	5660.59	5057.63	4695.56	5122.49
<b>Non-food items</b>							
Clothing and bedding	648.48	661.16	764.39	832.89	685.19	467.09	664.79
Footwear	229.06	221.96	281.97	279.08	239.34	283.87	248.44
Fuel and light	136.37	79.83	209.12	110.94	88.71	112.62	113.73
Washing and toilet articles	184.58	199.27	218.02	236.31	205.61	181.36	201.47
Others	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Sub-total	1198.49	1162.22	1473.50	1459.22	1218.85	1044.94	1228.43
<b>Total non-durables</b>	<b>6259.27</b>	<b>6197.64</b>	<b>7070.05</b>	<b>7119.81</b>	<b>6276.48</b>	<b>5740.50</b>	<b>6350.92</b>

(Contd.)

Table 3 (Contd.)

Items of consumption	AL	NAL	SERVICES		ART	OTHR	All Sampled Households
			GT	PVT			
			<i>Durable items</i>				
House construction and major repairs	707.04	1071.69	1629.94	1076.64	686.75	602.48	932.85
Radio, T.V., V.C.R. and C.D.	50.83	145.65	209.12	73.43	82.07	43.40	102.84
Watches and clocks	29.43	27.06	33.04	17.24	19.47	14.44	23.77
Electric fans/ coolers	78.40	46.09	164.70	67.77	30.11	27.86	61.42
Sewing machine	33.67	13.26	136.33	21.40	29.70	13.77	35.11
Press	13.86	12.23	19.18	15.58	10.26	9.34	12.82
LPG connection	38.53	30.73	57.60	33.58	32.09	23.13	34.57
Furniture	138.67	157.01	199.97	286.42	228.21	190.57	191.33
Utensils	39.98	40.12	88.67	39.43	32.83	54.47	46.35
Car/jeep	-	-	803.90	-	-	-	93.97
Scooter/motorcycle	106.64	426.66	1118.67	723.55	291.30	198.58	425.48
Bicycles	32.23	23.07	26.92	34.72	22.27	22.66	25.94
Hand pump	-	4.77	72.47	54.58	29.38	32.17	25.89
Refrigerator	113.03	60.77	224.35	110.68	30.62	88.01	91.23
Washing machine	-	-	185.26	165.55	-	-	38.30
Cots	44.93	164.74	138.60	42.36	58.20	30.67	89.11
Others	-	-	96.14	38.11	10.02	-	17.08
Sub-total	1427.24	2223.85	5204.86	2801.04	1593.28	1351.55	2248.06
<b>Services</b>							
Education	104.62	281.66	1197.18	562.72	121.00	129.59	334
Healthcare	850.37	825.68	1014.56	1017.43	871.41	771.69	872.25
Conveyance	259.67	306.29	365.46	362.34	328.85	229.82	304.67
Communication	59.89	53.87	55.81	54.93	50.81	57.04	55.02
Entertainment	171.20	198.48	277.04	255.48	213.38	173.53	208.35
Sub-total	1445.75	1665.98	2910.05	2252.90	1585.45	1361.67	1774.29
<b>Socio-religious ceremonies</b>							
Marriages and other social ceremonies	823.48	1588.91	3654.97	3202	1293.91	795.04	1694.23
Religious ceremonies	95.26	228.34	367.34	221.51	89.94	49.22	168.50
Sub-total	918.74	1817.25	4022.31	3423.51	1383.85	844.26	1862.73
<b>Total</b>	<b>10051</b>	<b>11904.72</b>	<b>19207.27</b>	<b>15597.26</b>	<b>10839.06</b>	<b>9297.98</b>	<b>12236</b>

Note: AL: Agricultural labour, NAL: Non-agricultural labour, GT: Government employee, PVT: Private employee, ART: Artisan, OTHR: Others.

annual per capita consumption expenditure of the government employee households was found to be 1.91, 1.61, 1.23, 1.77 and 2.07 times more of that of the agricultural labour, non-agricultural labour, private employee, artisan and other category households respectively, whereas, per household consumption expenditure of the government employee households was 1.96, 1.65, 1.38, 1.84 and 2.18 times of the per household consumption expenditure of the agricultural labour, non-agricultural labour, private

employee, artisan and other category households respectively.

#### Average Propensity to Consume

The average propensity to consume (APC) defined as the proportion of income spent on consumption was worked out for the scheduled caste households in rural Punjab.

The data regarding the average propensity to consume of the sampled scheduled caste households had been given in Table 4. The average propensity to consume comes to 1.17

**TABLE 4: AVERAGE PROPENSITY TO CONSUME WITH RESPECT TO SAMPLED SCHEDULED CASTE HOUSEHOLDS**

Categories	Average Consumption (₹) C	Average Income (₹) Y	Average Propensity to Consume (APC) C/Y
AL	49320.07	41405.78	1.19
NAL	58632.79	47294.07	1.24
GT	96980.84	92768.55	1.04
PVT	70055.56	60910.55	1.15
ART	52604.42	44442.86	1.18
OTHR	44423.7	36038.12	1.23
All Sampled Households	59377.27	50698.16	1.17

Note: AL: Agricultural labour, NAL: Non-agricultural labour, GT: Government employee, PVT: Private employee, ART: Artisan, OTHR: Others.

for an average scheduled caste household. It was the highest (1.24) for the non-agricultural labour households followed by the other category households (1.23) and the lowest (1.04) for the government employee households.

An average scheduled caste household incurred an annual deficit of ₹8,679.11. The highest deficit was incurred by the non-agricultural labour households, i.e., ₹11,338.72 followed by the private employee households (₹9,145.01), other category (₹8,385.58), artisan (₹8,161.56), agricultural labour (₹7,914.29) and government employee (₹4,212.29) households. The average propensity to consume was greater than unity for all the categories of scheduled caste households. It had an important implication that all the categories of scheduled caste households were trying to keep minimum level of consumption whether they could afford it or not. They had to take loans from various institutional as well as non-institutional sources to maintain a minimum level of consumption in the rural areas of Punjab.

### Distribution of Per Household Consumption Expenditure

The extent of inequality in the distribution of consumption expenditure among the sampled scheduled caste households had been examined on the basis of two types of consumption expenditure distribution. The first related to per household consumption expenditure, whereas, the second to the per capita consumption expenditure among the sampled scheduled caste households across the sampled districts. Gini coefficients had also been calculated to justify the pattern of distribution. The value of Gini coefficient could range from 0 to 1. Gini coefficient conveyed better distribution if it was nearer to zero and if the same was nearer to unity, it indicated worse distribution.

The distribution of per household consumption expenditure of the sampled scheduled caste households in all the sampled districts had been presented in Table 5. On an average, the bottom 10 per cent households claimed only 1.92 per cent of the total consumption expenditure of all the sampled scheduled caste households. On the

**TABLE 5: DISTRIBUTION OF PER HOUSEHOLD CONSUMPTION EXPENDITURE OF SCHEDULED CASTE HOUSEHOLDS**

Description	Cumulative Percentage of Per Household Consumption Expenditure of Scheduled Caste Households						All Sampled Households	
	Cumulative Percentage of Households	AL	NAL	SERVICES		ART		OTHR
				GT	PVT			
10		2.54	2.24	1.54	1.63	2.31	2.05	
20		6.67	5.47	5.31	5.52	5.33	5.46	1.92
30		13.16	10.64	11.36	12.85	10.29	11.44	5.17
40		20.17	18.02	18.00	20.52	18.85	19.25	10.49
50		29.26	26.71	27.10	29.01	28.19	28.88	17.62
60		39.14	35.84	36.43	36.52	37.35	38.32	25.97
70		43.72	44.23	48.19	46.94	48.47	49.19	36.99
80		60.83	62.41	62.67	60.51	60.93	62.13	45.70
90		75.76	78.28	79.54	78.85	76.29	78.30	58.66
100		100	100	100	100	100	100	75.42
Gini coefficient		0.3075	0.3323	0.3197	0.3153	0.324	0.31	100
								0.3441

Note: AL: Agricultural labour, NAL: Non-agricultural labour, GT: Government employee, PVT: Private employee, ART: Artisan, OTHR: Others.

other hand, the top 10 per cent households shared 24.58 per cent of the total consumption expenditure of all the sampled scheduled caste households. The bottom 50 per cent households shared nearly 26 per cent of the total consumption expenditure of all the scheduled caste households. Whereas, the top 20 per cent households shared 41.34 per cent of the total consumption expenditure which was about 1.59 times higher than that of the bottom 50 per cent of scheduled caste households. However, the position was slightly different for the various categories of scheduled caste households. The bottom 10 per cent of the agricultural labour households claimed 2.54 per cent of the total consumption expenditure, whereas, the corresponding share for the non-agricultural labour, government employee, private employee, artisan, and other category households was 2.24, 1.54, 1.63, 2.31 and 2.05 per cent respectively.

The share of top 10 per cent of the agricultural labour households was 24.24 per cent in the total consumption expenditure of all the agricultural labour households, the corresponding share was 21.72, 20.46, 21.15, 23.71 and 21.70 per cent for the non-agricultural labour, government employee, private employee, artisan, and other category households respectively. The value of Gini coefficient was 0.3323 for the non-agricultural labour households followed by the artisan (0.3240), government employee (0.3197), private employee (0.3153), other category (0.3100), and agricultural labour (0.3075) households. This showed that the concentration of household consumption expenditure was more in the case of non-agricultural labour households. The value of Gini coefficient (0.3441) was too high for all the sampled scheduled caste households taken together indicating a highly skewed distribution of consumption expenditure.

### Distribution of Per Capita Consumption Expenditure

The distribution of per capita consumption expenditure among the different categories of the sampled scheduled caste households was given in Table 6. The table showed that the bottom 10 per cent of scheduled caste households shared only 1.98 per cent of the total per capita consumption expenditure. On the other hand, the top 10 per cent of the scheduled caste households claimed nearly 24.84 per cent of the per capita consumption expenditure which was about 12.60 times higher than the per capita consumption expenditure showed by the bottom 10 per cent of scheduled caste households. A clear contrast was obvious from the fact that the bottom 50 per cent households share only 25.45 per cent of the total per capita consumption expenditure of all the households taken together. Whereas, the top 20 per cent households accounted for 41.25 per cent of

the total per capita consumption expenditure which is about 1.63 times higher than that of the bottom 50 per cent of scheduled caste households of all the sampled districts.

However, the position was somewhat different for the different categories of scheduled caste households. The bottom 10 per cent of the agricultural labour households claimed 2.66 per cent of total per capita consumption expenditure, whereas, the corresponding figures for the non-agricultural labour, government employee, private employee, artisan and other category households were 2.23 per cent, 1.83 per cent, 1.45 per cent, 2.09 per cent and 2.19 per cent respectively. The top 10 per cent of the agricultural and non-agricultural labour households account about 25 per cent of the total consumption expenditure. The corresponding figures for the government employee, private employee, artisan and other category households were 24.03 per

**TABLE 6: DISTRIBUTION OF PER CAPITA CONSUMPTION EXPENDITURE OF SCHEDULED CASTE HOUSEHOLDS**

Description	Cumulative Percentage of Per Household Consumption Expenditure of Scheduled Caste Households						All Sampled Households
	AL	NAL	SERVICES GT	PVT	ART	OTHR	
10	2.66	2.23	1.83	1.45	2.09	2.19	1.98
20	7.62	5.65	6.20	6.12	5.12	6.50	5.58
30	13.64	10.68	11.83	12.87	10.27	12.20	10.83
40	20.51	17.22	18.99	20.53	17.50	19.16	17.52
50	28.45	25.04	27.59	29.04	25.87	27.50	25.45
60	37.39	34.01	37.55	38.17	35.15	36.84	34.64
70	47.78	45.20	48.01	48.72	46.39	47.70	45.70
80	60.07	58.05	60.22	60.25	59.89	60.61	58.75
90	75.05	75.02	75.97	77.25	75.91	76.13	75.16
100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
Gini coefficient	0.3137	0.3538	0.3236	0.3112	0.3436	0.3223	0.3488

Note: AL: Agricultural labour, NAL: Non-agricultural labour, GT: Government employee, PVT: Private employee, ART: Artisan, OTHR: Others.

cent, 22.75 per cent, 24.09 per cent and 23.87 per cent respectively. A clear contrast is obvious from the fact that the bottom 50 per cent of the agricultural labour, non-agricultural labour, government employee, private employee, artisan and other category households claim 28.45 per cent, 25.04 per cent, 27.59 per cent, 29.04 per cent, 25.87 per cent and 27.50 per cent respectively. The value of Gini coefficient was the highest i.e., 0.3538 for the non-agricultural labour households followed by the artisan (0.3436), government employee (0.3236), other category (0.3223), agricultural labour (0.3137) and the private employee (0.3112) households.

The above analysis clearly shows that the concentration of consumption expenditure among the non-agricultural labour and artisan households was slightly greater than that of other categories of the sampled scheduled caste households. The value of Gini coefficient also supports this fact. The value of Gini coefficient was 0.3488 for all the categories taken together indicating a highly skewed distribution of per capita consumption expenditure. On an over all basis, the Gini coefficient was greater for per capita consumption expenditure vis-à-vis of per household consumption expenditure. When compared the per household with per capita consumption expenditure distribution, it was found that the distribution was relatively slightly fair in per household consumption expenditure in all the sampled districts under study.

#### CONCLUSION AND POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

The foregoing analysis concluded that the

annual consumption expenditure of an average sampled scheduled caste household was ₹59,377.27 in rural Punjab. It was the highest (₹96,980.84) for the government employee households and the lowest (₹44,423.70) for the other category households. The analysis further revealed that an average scheduled caste household spent 51.90 per cent on non-durable items. Among non-durables, foodgrains were the important item of consumption and an average scheduled caste household spent nearly 12.74 per cent of the total consumption expenditure on this item. The expenditure on durables, socio-religious ceremonies and services accounted for 18.37, 15.23 and 14.50 per cent of the total consumption expenditure for an average scheduled caste household. The per capita consumption expenditure was ₹12,236 for an average scheduled caste household. The annual per capita consumption expenditure of the government employee households was found to be 1.91, 1.61, 1.23, 1.77 and 2.07 times of the agricultural labour, non-agricultural labour, private employee, artisan and other category households respectively, whereas per household consumption expenditure of the government employee households was 1.96, 1.65, 1.38, 1.84 and 2.18 times of the per household consumption expenditure of the agricultural labour, non-agricultural labour, private employee, artisan, and other category households respectively.

The average propensity to consume came to 1.17 for an average scheduled caste household. It was the highest (1.24) for the non-agricultural labour households followed by the other category households (1.23) and

the lowest (1.04) for the government employee households. An average scheduled caste household incurred an annual deficit of ₹8,679.11. On an overall basis, the Gini coefficient was greater for per capita consumption expenditure vis-à-vis of per household consumption expenditure. This revealed that the concentration of per capita consumption expenditure was higher than the per household consumption expenditure.

The study had brought out important implications for policy-makers that will help to raise the levels and pattern of the consumption expenditure of the scheduled caste households in rural areas of Punjab. Although, Punjab has emerged as a primary state in the country by launching Antodaya Anna Yojana and Atta-Dal scheme, yet most of the poor scheduled caste households fail to derive satisfactory benefits from these schemes. Effective implementation of Public Distribution System is obligatory to protect the poor scheduled caste households from rising prices in view of the restricted purchasing power of most of the essential commodities.

In order to provide the beneficiaries good quality of food grains at the fixed rate, there must be proper monthly checking norms for all the field staff. There is a need to educate the scheduled caste households against unproductive consumption expenditure. Moreover, a mass campaign should also be launched against the use of intoxicants and some of the social evils like dowry so that expenditure on socio-religious ceremonies could be reduced.

As the expenditure of the scheduled caste population on healthcare has been a matter

of concern, the state Government must provide preventive and curative health centres in the rural areas of Punjab. There is a need to upgrade and expand the rural dispensaries by providing well-structured building, infrastructure, medicines, machinery and basic minimum services.

Another important implication of the present study is based on one conclusion that the per household and per capita consumption expenditure of the scheduled caste government employee households is on the higher side as compared to all the other categories. The scheduled caste government employee households are in formal employment and as a result their per household and per capita income levels are on the higher side as compared to all the other categories. This fact makes a strong case for providing formal employment opportunities to the scheduled caste households in the rural areas of Punjab.

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