

# DISTRIBUTION OF LANDHOLDINGS AMONG SCHEDULE CASTE AND SCHEDULE TRIBES IN RAJASTHAN

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## **Abstract**

*Land is a vital factor and a crucial natural resource which forms the basis for economic activity. In agriculture dominated country like India, where a large proportion of population is dependent on agriculture, distribution and ownership of land becomes even more important to ensure social equality among various classes in a society. The present paper attempts to analyze the distribution of land holding in general and schedule caste and schedule tribe in particular, in Rajasthan. The present paper deals with land-use in state at two points of time 1991-92 and 2011-12 and thus studies the factors effecting land use changes at same points of time. The objective of the present paper is to study the land use in different categories and the trend of variations so that the characteristics of land utilization may be analyzed for future planning. The study shows that even after a long period of planned initiatives and different policy measures adopted by government or non-government organizations in the state, there have not been major changes in land holding status of schedule caste and schedule tribes in the state. The analysis of data on average size of holdings shows that among all size of land holding in Rajasthan marginal, small and semi-medium size of holds continued the same trend during all periods under study.*

## **Introduction**

Agriculture is a potential sector for development in India and has also been identified as Primary Moving Force (PMF) in tenth five year plan. Without the development of this sector, India as well as its states will neither be able to accelerate growth nor fiscal consolidation. But even at present, farm sector in Rajasthan is plagued with numerous problems like declining farm incomes, size of land holdings, ecological degradation and overcapitalization, etc. Therefore, to stabilize incomes and employment in the farming sector, there is need for

proper land use and land distribution. To unlock agribusiness dynamism and to achieve green transformation, it is much needed that small and marginal farmers should be provided with proper opportunities. In Rajasthan, small holders exist in a huge number and if given an opportunity they can influence State's development issues to a great extent. As far as small holder farming is considered, it provides both the challenge and the opportunity, and to a great extent the success of small holding in State depends on measures and policies in place.

The access to land is of fundamental importance in rural India. The incidence of poverty is highly correlated with the lack of access to land, although the direction of causality in this relationship is not clear. In short, policy instruments and mechanisms that improve access to land for the rural poor and socially excluded are of high priority in bringing about efficient, equitable, sustainable, and poverty- reducing patterns of economic growth in rural India. The paper suggests the main policy options considered here for enhancing access to land by the rural poor and other socially excluded groups. Since land is a state subject in India, State needs to implement the policy in a manner which ensures social equality among various classes in a society.

For the overall development of a country like India, growth of agriculture sector is a prerequisite. As the development of this sector not only helps the large section of population dependent on it, but also affects the other sectors through forward and backward linkages. Prosperous agriculture not only leads to its contribution in GDP growth but also helps in eradicating poverty through gainful employment generation. Accelerated agricultural growth based on increasing land and labour productivity is fundamental to poverty reduction. Past experiences have shown that speed of poverty reduction has closely followed increase in agricultural productivity. Rajasthan is predominately an agriculture state where approx. 65% of the population is engaged in agriculture and allied activities for their livelihood. Rajasthan's record of progress in agriculture in spite of subsequent droughts over the past few years has been quite impressive. Agriculture and allied sector plays an important role in State's economy. Though its contribution in NSDP has fallen from about 35 per cent in 1990-91 to around 23 per cent in 2011-12, agriculture yet forms the backbone of the state economy. The contribution of increased land area under agricultural production has declined over time and increases in production in the past two decades have been almost entirely due to increased productivity. Contribution of agricultural growth to overall progress has been widespread. Increased productivity has helped to feed the poor, enhanced farm income and provided opportunities for both direct and indirect employment.

**Data:** The study is based on secondary data primarily drawn from the 'Statistical Abstract of Rajasthan' and 'District Outlines' published annually by the Directorate of Economics and Statistics (DES), Government of Rajasthan, Jaipur. The other sources are Census reports, reports on Economic Census, and annual publications by DES on Agricultural Statistics.

## A Brief Profile of Rajasthan

Rajasthan with total geographical area of 3.42 lakh sq km is the largest state of India constituting 10.4 per cent of total geographical area of India and with 6.85 crores population which constitute 5.67 per cent of total population of India nearly 65 percent of its population (56.5 million) is dependent on agriculture (GOI, 2011). Of the total population of Rajasthan, 75.11% was rural population. If we look at the decadal growth rate of the population, it was lower during the decade 2000s (21.44 per cent) as compared to during 1990s (28.41 per cent). The population density in the State has increased by about 22 percent, i.e. from 165 per sq.km in 2001 to 201 in 2011. The state is divided into 7 divisions, 33 districts, which are further subdivided into 297 tehsils, 44672 villages, 249 panchayat sammittees and 9,177 gram panchayats (Rajasthan at a Glance 2012).

Rajasthan, the largest state of India, is endowed with diverse soil and weather conditions comprising of several agro-climatic situations that helps the state to adopt a diversified cropping pattern. As the vast area of Rajasthan is covered by arid and dry land which imposes many challenges that are to be addressed systematically so as to facilitate a sustainable development of the sector. Moreover, the average size of land holding by all social groups in Rajasthan is higher as compared to all India average but fertility of land in Rajasthan is comparatively lower than the fertility of land of same size or smaller size in other states.

Rajasthan is divided into 10 agro climatic zones on the basis of variation in soil type, rainfall, temperature and water resources. The government has set a target to achieve a minimum of 4% agricultural growth per annum in the state agriculture policy 2013. Rajasthan has a total geographical area of 342.65 lakh ha, of which 26.75 lakh ha is under forests, 42.62 lakh ha not available for cultivation and 63.19 lakh ha is other uncultivable land (excluding fallow land). The total cultivable area is around 220.00 lakh ha. The shrinkage of gross cropped area is evident from the fact that the highest gross cropped area was around 223.25 lakh ha during the year 1997-98.

**Table 1: Position of Rajasthan according to census 2011**

S.No.	Indicators	Rajasthan	India
1.	Geographical Area (lakh Sq. Km.)	3.42	32.87
2.	Population (in crores)	6.85	121.06
3.	Rural Population	5.15 (75.11%)	83.47(68.95)
4.	Decadal growth rate(2001-11)	21.3	17.7
5.	Density(per sq.km.)	200	382
6.	Per centage of Agricultural Laborers to total workers	16.5	30.0
7.	Per centage of Cultivators to total workers	45.6	24.6
8.	Total Reporting Area (in lakh hect.)	342.7	3059.0
9.	Total Forest Area (in lakh hect.)	27.43(8%)	700.1(22.89%)
10.	Gross Irrigated area to Gross Cropped Area(%)	36.33	44.91
11.	Net Sown Area to total repoting area (%)	52.63	46.28
12.	Net Irrigated Area to Net Area Sown (%)	39.49	44.92
13.	Average Size of Operational Holdings (hect.)	3.07	1.16
14.	Cropping Intensity	142.98	140.54

Source: Directorate of Economics and Statistics, Ministry of Agriculture  
Pocket Book on Agriculture Statistics 2013  
Agriculture Census Rajasthan 2011

### Land Use Pattern in Rajasthan

Land is a natural resource which is limited in supply. For the development of a particular region and country as a whole, this resource has to be used in best planned manner to maximize present return from it and to increase the possibilities of getting better yield in future as well. Table 2 presents the land utilization statistics for the state of Rajasthan from 1990-91 to 2013-14. The analysis of data clearly shows that significant changes have taken place in land utilization over a period of time in Rajasthan. The total area of Rajasthan is 342.5 lakh hectares. The area under forest was 23.5 lakh hectares which constitutes 6.9% of total reported area in 1990-91 and which increased to 7.6% in 2000-01. The area under forest has been almost stagnant ranging between 8.0 to 8.05% and is far less than 33% recommended by National Forest Policy. The area under non-agriculture uses has increased from 14.9% in 1990-91 to 18.89% in 2013-14 which may be due to raise in population vis a vis urbanization. Increasing population and economic growth are changing patterns of land use making potentially unsustainable demands on the country's natural resources. The area under culturable waste land has declined from 16.3% in 1990-91 to 11.68% in 2013-14. The area under fallow land other than current fellow has been fluctuating. It increased from 5.6% in 1990-91 to 17.1% in 2000-01 but come down to 5.39%. This is due to erratic and uncertain behavior of monsoon in the state that farmers here were unable to cultivate their land for several years.

Since early fifties, the net area sown was expanded rapidly at first but at a diminishing rate since 1970 to reach approximately 182 lakh ha at present. Net sown area (NSA) which was 163.8 lakh hectares in 1990-91, constituting 47.8 % of reporting area, fell down to 158.6 lakh hectares (46.3%) in 2000-01. From 2010-11 to 2013-14, the NSA in state has been ranging between 180- 182 lakh hectares and has attained negligible growth rates. The possibilities of bringing more area under cultivation are marginal and further addition to cropped area is possible through intensive cultivation. This stagnancy on use of land simply shows the change in cropping patterns. In this changing scenario, the farmers are either looking for better options in non-agriculture sectors or forced to move from traditional crops to profitable crops. The change in cropping intensity has also not been very impressive.

**Table 2 : Land Use Pattern in Rajasthan (Area in Lakh Hectare)**

Year	1990-91	2000-01	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14
Total Reported Area	342.5(100)	342.6(100)	342.7(100)	342.7(100)	342.67(100)	342.7(100)	342.7(100)
Forest	23.5(6.9)	26.1(7.6)	27.4(8.0)	27.43(8)	27.47(8.02)	27.50(8.02)	27.58(8.05)
Area under Non-Agricultural uses	14.9(4.4)	17.4(5.1)	19.8(5.8)	18.89(5.51)	18.84(5.50)	18.64(5.44)	18.89(5.51)
Barren & Unculturable land	27.9(8.1)	25.7(7.5)	22.9(6.7)	23.8(6.94)	23.9(6.96)	24.11(7.04)	23.85(6.96)
Permanent Pastures and other Grazing land	19.1(5.6)	17.1(5.0)	17.0(5.0)	16.94(4.95)	16.93(4.94)	16.94(4.94)	16.94(4.94)
Land under Misc.- Tree Crops & Grooves	0.2(0.1)	0.1(0.0)	0.2(0.1)	0.2(0.06)	0.2(0.06)	0.2(0.07)	0.2(0.07)
Culturable Waste Land	55.7(16.3)	49.1(14.3)	44.7(13.1)	42.33(12.35)	41.69(12.17)	41.52(12.12)	40.01(11.68)
Fallow Land Other than Current Fellows	19.3(5.6)	24.4(17.1)	20.5(6.0)	17.36(5.04)	18.6(5.41)	20.24(5.91)	18.47(5.39)
Current Fellows	18.1(5.3)	24.2(7.0)	20.6(6.0)	12.35(3.61)	14.77(4.31)	18.7(5.45)	14.03(4.09)
Net Area Sown	163.8(47.8)	158.6(46.3)	169.7(49.5)	183.49(53.54)	180.34(52.63)	174.79(51.01)	182.68(53.31)
Aera Sown More than once	30.0(8.8)	33.7(9.8)	47.7(13.9)	76.53(22.33)	64.71(18.89)	64.75(18.90)	78.52(22.91)
Total Cropped Area	193.8(56.6)	192.3(56.1)	217.4(63.5)	260.02(75.87)	245.05(71.51)	239.54(69.90)	261.20(76.22)
Net Irrigated area*	NA	NA	58.5(34.5)	66.61(19.44)	71.22(20.38)	74.99(21.88)	76.50(22.32)
Gross irrigated area	NA	NA	73.1(33.6)	83.22(24.28)	89.03(25.98)	94.55(27.59)	98.65(28.79)
Cropping Intensity	118.3	121.2	128.1	141.71	135.88	137.04	142.98

Source: Statistical Abstract of Rajasthan, 1990-91 to 2013-14

Note: Figures in the parenthesis indicate the percentages of total geographical area.

### Changing Land-Use and Future of Agriculture in Rajasthan

The main concerning point about the land use is widening gap in average farm size and the pattern of holdings. One of the most important consequences of growing pressure on land is the declining trend in the average farm size and the pattern of holdings. According to the latest Agricultural Census in 2010-11 which is the ninth census in series, there were 70 million holdings operating 162 million ha in India. These trends in farm size changes will have a profound effect on the future agricultural development strategies.

**Table 3: The Distribution of Operational Landholdings in Rajasthan**

Years	Marginal		Small		Semi-Medium		Medium		Large	
	Number	Area	Number	Area	Number	Area	Number	Area	Number	Area
1995-96	30.03	3.67	20.23	7.37	20.83	14.99	19.84	31.14	9.07	42.83
2000-01	31.78	4.21	20.79	8.2	20.62	16.07	18.9	32.05	7.91	39.46
2005-06	33.51	4.85	21.36	9.05	20.37	17.05	17.83	32.46	6.93	36.59
2010-11	36.46	5.86	21.94	10.23	19.38	17.86	16.36	32.73	5.86	33.33

Source: Directorate of Economics and Statistics (DES), Rajasthan

Note: 1. Marginal – 0 to 1 hectare; Small – 1 to 2 hectares; Semi-medium – 2 to 4 hectare; Medium – 4 to 10 hectare; and Large – 10 and above hectare; 2.

Agricultural Census, 2011.

As table 3 clearly shows that in case of marginal size holders, their number has increased from 30.3% in 1995-96 to 36.46% in 2010-11 of total operational holdings with a slight improvement in area operated by them. In case of small size holders also their number has increased with an improvement in area operated by them. For semi-medium and medium size holders, their number has been almost stagnant with a small improvement in area operated by them. For large size farmers both their number as well as area operated by them has declined. But the data clearly depicts the disparity in the distribution of land. In 2010-11 large farmers constitute 5.86% of total operational holdings and control 33.33% of the total operated area, whereas marginal to medium size holder together constituted 94.14% of total operational holdings and operated only 66.68% of the total operated area. It clearly shows the land distribution in Rajasthan is still skewed after so many years of land reforms. Small to medium land holders which constitute large percentage control very small portion of land and large size land holders which are small in number control the large size of land. The large farmers normally opt for high value crops or crops with high export potential. Small and marginal farmers with small size of land holdings are forced to either depend on traditional crops or to leave farming. High disparity in distribution of land is one of the major reasons for change in cropping patterns.

The total number of Scheduled Tribe holdings in the country (Table 7.3) in 2005-06 was 10.34 million as against 9.40 million in 2000-01, indicating an increase of about 10.0 percent.

**Table 4: Schedule Caste and Schedule Tribe population in Rajasthan**

Years	Schedule caste (in millions)	% of the total state population	Schedule Tribes (in millions)	% of the total state population
1971	4.1	15.8	3.1	12.1
1981	5.8	17.0	4.2	12.2
1991	7.6	17.3	5.5	12.4
2001	9.7	17.2	7.1	12.6
2011	12.2	17.8	9.2	13.5

Source: Census of India 2011

The schedule caste population in state in 1971 stood at 4.1 million which constitute 15.8% of the total population of state which increased to 12.2 million constituting 17.8 % of the state. The schedule tribe population in the state was 3.1 million constituting 12.1% in 1991 and increased to 9.2 million constituting 13.5% of the total population of the state in 2011. As per census 2011 report both SC and ST populations have increased in the state.

**Table 5: Percentage distribution of operational holdings and area operated by scheduled castes in Rajasthan**

Different Size Group							
Years		Marginal	Small	Semi-Medium	Medium	Large	All Groups
1995-96	Number	32.51	23.78	20.41	16.92	6.38	100
	Area	5.3	10.53	17.89	32.35	33.93	100
2000-01	Number	34.4	24.07	19.88	16.08	5.57	100
	Area	5.94	11.43	18.68	32.84	31.11	100
2005-06	Number	36.12	24.25	19.65	15.18	4.8	100
	Area	6.71	12.31	19.74	33.07	28.18	100
2010-11	Number	38.95	24.14	18.71	14.11	4.09	100
	Area	7.74	13.24	20.29	33.14	25.58	100

Source: Various issues of Report on SC/ST Land Holdings  
Agricultural census, 2011

The percentage distribution of operational holdings and area operated by schedule caste by different size group is shown in table above since 1995-96 to 2010-11. From the table it is clear that most of the SC is small and marginal farmers. In 1995-96 marginal and small holdings of SCs constituted 56.29% of total holdings and control nearly 15.83 percent of total operated area of SCs. Their percentage increased to 63.09% and the area increased 20.98 % in 2010-11.

**Table 6: Percentage distribution of operational holdings and area operated by scheduled Tribes in Rajasthan**

Different Size Group							
Years		Marginal	Small	Semi-Medium	Medium	Large	All Groups
1995-96	Number	41.44	24.42	20.21	11.68	2.25	100
	Area	9.14	16.14	26.1	31.81	16.81	100
2000-01	Number	44.69	24.57	18.87	10.11	1.75	100
	Area	10.87	17.84	26.84	30.22	14.21	100
2005-06	Number	47.55	24.06	17.85	9.04	1.5	100
	Area	12.33	18.65	27.18	28.89	12.96	100
2010-11	Number	52.99	23.61	15.21	7.05	1.15	100
	Area	15.66	20.88	26.35	25.7	11.41	100

Source: Various issues of Report on SC/ST Land Holdings.  
Agricultural census, 2011

**Table 7: Average size of the holdings operated by scheduled castes (in hectares)**

Years	Marginal	Small	Semi-Medium	Medium	Large	All Groups
1995-96	0.52	1.43	2.82	6.16	17.11	3.22
2000-01	0.52	1.42	2.82	6.13	16.77	3.00
2005-06	0.52	1.42	2.81	6.09	16.39	2.79
2010-11	0.51	1.42	2.80	6.07	16.15	2.58

Source: Various issues of Report on SC/ST Land Holdings.

Agricultural census, 2011

The above table shows the average size of holding among SCs population in Rajasthan from 1995-96 to 2010-11. Among the all categories of average size land holdings in Schedule caste in Rajasthan shows that marginal, small and semi-medium size of holds continued same trend between all periods. On the other hand, medium farmers average size of holdings, it shows the decreasing trend from 6.16 per cent in 1995-96 to 6.07 per cent in 2010-11 and large farmers average size of holding also shows decreasing trend from 17.11 percent in 1995-96 to 16.15 percent in 2010-11. The average size of holding for all size group for Schedule caste shows a downward trend falling from 3.22 ha in 1995-96 to 2.58 percent in 2010-11 as against 3.07 ha for general class in 2011.

**Table 8: Average size of the holdings operated by scheduled Tribes (in hectares)**

Years	Marginal	Small	Semi-Medium	Medium	Large	All Groups
1995-96	0.48	1.43	2.80	5.91	16.23	2.17
2000-01	0.48	1.43	2.79	5.87	15.93	1.96
2005-06	0.47	1.41	2.78	5.83	15.73	1.83
2010-11	0.47	1.41	2.76	5.81	15.87	1.59

Source: Various issues of Report on SC/ST Land Holdings.

Agricultural census, 2011

Rajasthan accounted for 18.2 percent of total operated area of Scheduled Castes holdings in 2005-06 in the country. Rajasthan is the largest state and has a sizeable schedule caste and schedule tribe population. According to census 2011 the schedule caste population was 12.22 million constituting 17.8% of the total population of the state. The schedule tribe population was 9.2 million constituting 13.5% of the total population. According to all India report on agriculture census 2005-06 the number of operational holdings of schedule caste in country shown an increase of 6.2% from 16.07 million in 2005-06 as against 15.14 million in 2000-01.



## Conclusion

The following observation can be drawn from above analysis of land use pattern and distribution of land holding among various class groups in general and schedule caste and schedule tribe in particular in state of Rajasthan from 1995-96 to 2010-11. As per agriculture census 2011, the total number of operational holdings has increased by 7.06% whereas for the state it was 6.89 million operational holdings, thereby showing an increase by 11.35% over 2005-06 giving the state 9<sup>th</sup> rank in the country. The state has highest operated area 21.11 million ha taking the state on first rank in 2010-11.

Even after tremendous increase in operational area, the average size of holding in the state remained almost same for marginal to small land holders. The marginal and small land holders constituted 49.66% of total operational holding in 1990-91 and controlled only 10.46% of the operated area in the same period. Their number increased to 54.9% and area under their control to 14% in 2005-06 leaving average size of holding stagnant at 0.49ha and 1.43 ha respectively.

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