

The Anatomy of Backwardness and Contradictions of (under) Development: A Case Study of Mewat Region, Haryana

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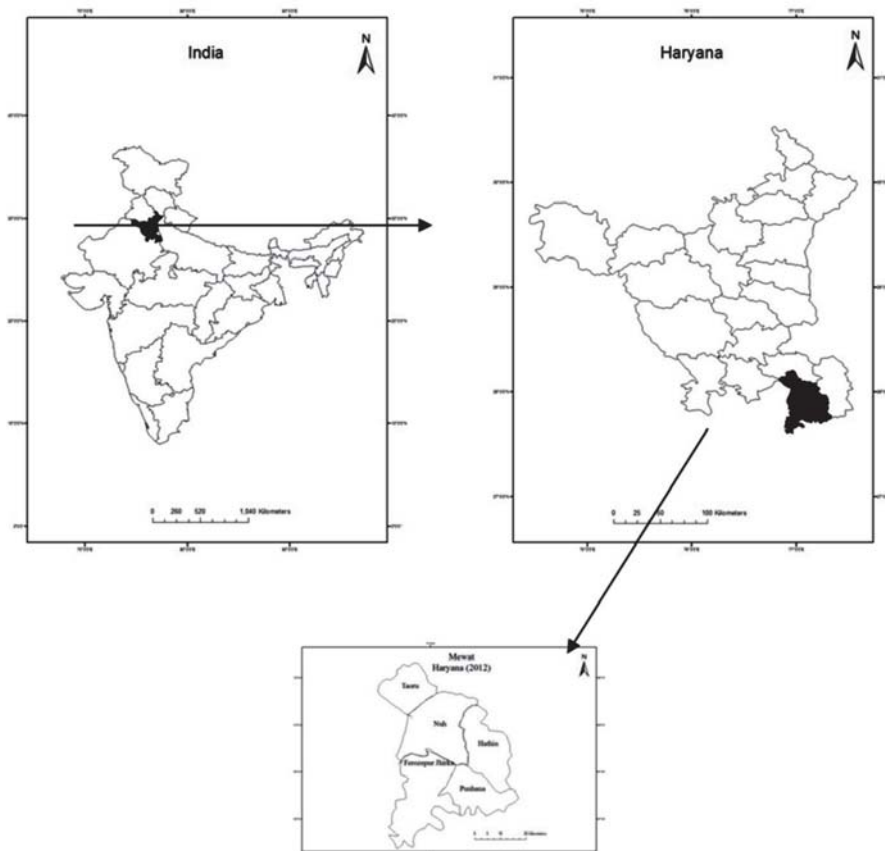
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INTRODUCTION

This paper looks at the anatomy of backwardness and contradictions of (Under)development in Mewat, Haryana. It is an exploratory study. Development and underdevelopment both are related. Underdevelopment does not mean the absence of development. It means dependent, distorted and truncated development. Here development does not have a dynamism of its own and is affected by outside forces. It symbolizes disarticulation of the economy. Mewat is a region in southern Haryana. The Mewat Development Board (MDB) was constituted in 1980 to improve the socio-economic condition of the people of this area. At the field level, Mewat Development Agency (MDA) looks at the work carried out by the MDB. The region comprises Taoru, Nuh, Ferozepur Jhirka, Punhana and Hathin tahsils. Mewat is at the lower ladder in almost all the parameters of development (Kumar, 2013).

OBJECTIVES DATA SOURCE AND METHODOLOGY

There is acute paucity of secondary data to understand (under)development at the unit level. This paucity of data has seriously hampered the process of acquiring an in-depth understanding of the process of (under)development at local level in Mewat. The paper proceeds with three objectives: to identify the nature of development, to look at the structure of development and how the contradictions of development has resulted in consequent (Under)development. To fulfil these objectives, a socio-economic field survey of 150 households was conducted in Taoru tahsil by selecting the three Panchayat villages of Raheri, Kharkhari and Sewka. In each village, 50 households were surveyed. The households were selected by purposive random sampling. The survey was done through the questionnaire and the respondents were asked about their responses. Variables of (under)development include demographic structure, educational attainment, natural resource base, agricultural development, common resources and household industry. This paper is organized into ten sections.



Map 1: Location of Study Area

Nature of Development

The concept of development emerged in the second half of the twentieth century. Since then the meaning and the nature of development has changed from time to time as per the needs and aspirations of people. Along with that, a new phenomenon has emerged. This phenomenon is called the ‘development industry’. This ‘development industry’ emerged in the US and Europe. Therefore the concept is Eurocentric in nature and does not embody assimilation and diversity. By not allowing assimilation and diversity, it breeds exclusion and contempt for the majority of the masses. The meaning of development has also changed since its inception. Development is a broad term. With the passage of time, some regions developed while others lagged behind. This happens due to disarticulation of the economy. The nature of World system plays a very important role in this context. The nature of relations in this World System plays a very important role in development of regions.

Structure of (Under) Development

After identifying the nature of development, it becomes important to look at the structure of (under)development. The structure of (under)development encompasses several variables like demographic structure, educational attainment, occupational structure, housing amenities, migration and natural resource base.

Demographic Structure

Demographic structure constitutes an important part of the development process at any point of time. This constitutes the human resource and this human resource contributes to social advancement in one way or the other. Table 1 shows variables of the demographic structure. The variables include sex ratio, age composition, dependency ratio, household size and marital status of the sample households. Sex ratio in the sample households is 836 females per one thousand males. Age composition of the sample households reveals that there are about 16.84 per cent households in the below 14 age group followed by 64.03 per cent in 15-59 age group and 17.30 per cent in above 60 age group. Dependency ratio is 53.32 per cent. Household size is six per household in the sample households. Marital status of the households shows that there are about 38.27 per cent currently married households, 1.50 per cent widowed households and 0.12 divorced households.

Table 1: Demographic Structure of Sample Households

		Per cent
Sex Composition	Male	54.5
	Female	45.5
	Sex Ratio	836
Age composition	Below 14	16.84
	15-59	64.03
	Above 60	17.30
	Dependency ratio	53.32
Household Size	Household Size	6.00
Marital Status	Currently Married	38.27
	Widowed	1.50
	Divorced	0.12

Source: Socio-economic Field Survey Mewat, 2011.

Educational Attainment

Education is critical for social development in society. Table 2 shows the educational attainment of the sample households. There are about 67.95 per cent not literate sample households. About 3.61 per cent sample households are literate without formal schooling. There are 1.05 per cent

Table 2: Educational Attainment of Sample Households

Attainment	Per cent
Not literate	67.95
Literate without formal schooling	3.61
Below primary	1.05
Primary	17.13
Middle	6.29
Secondary	2.21
Higher Secondary	1.28
Graduate	0.35

Source: Socio-economic Field Survey Mewat, 2011.

sample households below primary followed by 17.13 per cent in the primary, 6.29 per cent in the middle school, 2.21 per cent in the secondary school, 1.28 per cent in the higher secondary and 0.35 per cent graduates.

Occupational Structure

Level of development and consequent (under)development depends upon changes in the occupational structure of population. Table 3 shows the occupational structure as employment status and types of work. Employment status shows that There are about 23.22 per cent employed households followed by 0.35 per cent unemployed households. An overwhelming 76.43 per cent of sample households are reported to be out of labour force. Type of work of the sample households shows that there are about there are about 1.75 per cent sample households in the study area followed by 20.42 per cent engaged in casual labour and 77.83 per cent others.

Table 3: Occupational Structure

		Per cent
Employment Status	Employed	23.22
	Out of Labour Force	76.43
	Unemployed	0.35
Types of Work	Self-employed	1.75
	Casual Labour	20.42
	Others	77.83

Source: Socio-economic Field Survey Mewat, 2011.

Housing Amenities

Availability of amenities is a pre-requisite for development. Table 4 shows variables of amenities in the sample households. The first variable looks at the source of drinking water in the sample

Table 4: Housing Amenities in the Sample Households

		Per cent
Source of Drinking Water	Tape	0.67
	Hand Pump	99.33
Location of Drinking Water	Near the premises	14.77
	Away from the premises	85.23
Source of Light	Electricity	40.27
	No light	59.73
Latrine Facility	No Latrine	85.23
	Service Latrine	1.34
	Pit Latrine	13.42
Drainage Facility	Open Drainage	97.99
	No Drainage	1.34
Bathroom Facility	Yes	99.33
Kitchen Facility	Yes	0.67
	Cooking in the open	98.66
Fuel for Cooking	Firewood	85.51
	Crop residue	0.72
	Dung cake	13.77
Radio/Transistor	Yes	2.00
Television	Yes	6.00
Mobile	Yes	49.30
Bicycle	Yes	0.70
Scooter/motorcycle	Yes	2.00
Money lending	Commercial Bank	2.00
	Private Moneylender	98.00

Source: Socio-economic Field Survey Mewat, 2011.

households. Hand pump (99.33 per cent) is the main source of drinking water in the sample households while less than one per cent (0.67 per cent) use tape. The second variable looks at the location of drinking water. Most of the sample households (85.23 per cent) report that the location of drinking water is away from the premises while 14.77 report near the premises.

The third variable is source of light. About 40.27 per cent households report electricity as a source of light while 59.73 per cent report no light. The fourth variable is latrine facility. Majority of the sample households (85.23 per cent) report no latrine facility, service and pit latrine are

available in 1.34 and 13.42 per cent sample households. The fifth variable is drainage facility. About 97.99 per cent sample households report open drainage facility while 1.34 per cent households do not have any drainage facility. The sixth variable looks at bathroom facility. Most of the sample households report bathroom facility. The seventh variable looks at kitchen facility. Most of the sample households (98.66 per cent) report cooking in the open while 0.67 per cent report kitchen facility. The eighth variable looks at the availability of fuel for cooking in the sample households. Majority of the sample households (85.51 per cent) use firewood as a fuel for cooking followed by Dung cake (13.77 per cent) and crop residue (0.37 per cent). There is general lack of modern amenities in the sample households, which is shown by radio (2 per cent) and television (6 per cent). Half of the households (49.30 per cent) own mobile phones, bicycle (0.70 per cent), scooter/motorcycle (2 per cent). Majority of the sample households borrow from private moneylender (98 per cent) followed by commercial banks (2 per cent).

Migration

Majority of the sample households reported zero in and out migration in the sample villages. Most of the sample households reported daily commuting for work outside the village to Taoru city and the Bhiwadi industrial area for daily wage. It may be possible that the unskilled labour have less incentive to migrate as compared to the skilled and the rich. Migration is a dynamic agent of social and economic change. However there is a need to look in detailed perspective the nature of migration.

Natural Resource Base

Natural resource plays an important role in the development if properly managed and harnessed. However, Nature, technology and institutions play an important role in deriving this process. Land constitutes an important natural resource for agrarian societies.

Distribution of Landholdings

Natural resources play an important role in economic development and consequent social development. Table 5 shows the distribution of landholdings by size class in the sample households.

Table 5: Distribution of Landholdings by Size Class in the Sample Households (in Acres)

Size class of Operational Landholding	Per cent
Landless	52.35
Less than 5	31.26
5-10	11.20
10-15	4.50
15-20	0.69
More than 20	0.00

Source: Socio-economic Field Survey Mewat, 2011.

It shows that more than 50 per cent (52.35 per cent) of the sample households are landless. Majority of the sample households are marginal. Small and semi-medium farmers (31.26 per cent) followed by medium farmers (11.20 per cent) and large farmers less than one per cent (0.69 per cent).

Agricultural (Under) development

More than 50 per cent of people in India depend on agriculture for livelihood. However with the fragmentation of landholding and the declining rural income levels over the years the agriculture sector is in distress in India. The situation is even acute in areas where the nature resource base is low. This is true in the case of Mewat.

Distribution of Landholdings

The main occupation of the people of Mewat is agriculture allied with animal husbandry. Agriculture plays an important role in the livelihood of the people. Therefore, the distribution of land becomes very important in this context. Table 5 shows the distribution of landholdings in the sample households. Table shows that more than 50 per cent (52.35 per cent) of the sample households do not have land. Thus, landlessness is the chief characteristic feature of the sample households. About 31.26 per cent of the landholdings belong to the marginal, small and semi-medium farmers (less than 5 acres). About 11.20 per cent landholdings belong to the medium farmers (5-10 size) while 5.19 per cent landholdings belong to the large farmers in which 4.50 per cent belong to the 10-15 landholding size class and 0.69 per cent to the 15-20 size class. None of the sample households own more than 20 acres.

Table 6: Distribution of Landholdings by Size class in Sample Households

Size class of Operational Landholding (Acres)	Per cent
Landless	52.35
Less than 5	31.26
5-10	11.20
10-15	4.50
15-20	0.69
More than 20	0.00

Source: Socio-economic Field Survey Mewat, 2011.

Sources of Irrigation

In a semi-arid region, irrigation is important to agricultural economy. Table 6 shows the sources of irrigation. The major source of irrigation is tube well without electricity, reported by 36.73 per cent of the sample households. About 3.40 per cent sample households report irrigation by the government canal while 1.36 per cent report irrigation by tube well with electricity. More than 50 per cent (58.51 per cent) of the sample households report that they are dependent upon rainfall for irrigation.

Table 7: Sources of Irrigation in the Sample Households

	Per cent
Tube Well with Electricity	1.36
Tube Well without Electricity	36.73
Government Canal	3.40
Rain fed	58.51

**Source: Socio-economic Field Survey Mewat, 2011.*

Tenure Status

Tenure status indicates the ownership of land. Most of the sample households reported having owned landholdings. Majority of the sample households (99.33 per cent) reported that they neither leased-in nor leased-out land. Less than one per cent (0.67 per cent) of the sample households reported that they used fixed produce for leasing of land.

Use of Modern Inputs

Use of modern inputs is necessary for agricultural development. The modern inputs include chemical fertilizers, green manures and pesticides. About 20.81 per cent sample households report the use of chemical fertilizers. About 66.44 per cent of the sample households report that they did not use chemical fertilizers at all and 12.75 per cent did not reply. About 48.98 per cent of the sample households report the use of green manures while 36.73 per cent did not use green manures. About 14.29 per cent sample households did not give any response. Only 21.48 per cent sample households report the use of pesticides and 66.44 per cent report no use. There it can be said that the respondent household report less use of modern inputs.

Table 8: Use of Modern Inputs

		Per cent
Use of Chemical Fertilizers	Yes	20.81
	No	66.44
	Did not reply	12.75
Use of Green Manures	Yes	48.98
	No	36.73
	Did not reply	14.29
Use of Pesticides	Yes	21.48
	No	66.44

**Source: Socio-economic Field Survey Mewat, 2011.*

Common Resource

Common resources constitute an important resource for the rural communities. They help in the sustainable agriculture and other socio-cultural ecological systems.

Community Pastures and Sacred Groves

Common resources constitute an important resource for the village communities. They are crucial to the livelihood of people. Common resources here include community pastures and sacred groves. About 89.93 per cent of the sample households report that community pastures exist in and around the village. The animals go for grazing there. The number of community pastures has decreased over a period of time. Due to the decline of pastures, there are only a few left to graze the animals. Some pastures are on the Shamlat Deh owned by the Gram Panchayat of the village. When animals are taken for grazing, sometimes they sneak into the nearby fields and destroy the crops. Due to this, there are often fights among the villagers. The sacred groves have been cleared indiscriminately. Therefore, there are only a few left and they are also in danger of being cleared.

Household Industry

Majority of the sample households reported that there is no household industry in the village. One household was reported to have a small shop for repairing of motorcycles and scooters in the village. Even the traditional *Atta Chakki* machine was operative in the sample households. The respondent households reported the lack of financial support from the government for household industries. The respondents were not aware of the Multi-sectoral development Programme (MSDP). All the variables of (under)development indicate the persistence neglect and exclusion of Mewat from the mainstream development process. It also indicates that there is a continuance of ad-hoc approach towards the development of the region. It also highlights the apathy of the policymakers towards the region. All these aspects have resulted in (under)development in the region.

CONCLUSION

It can be concluded from the above discussion that the process of development in Mewat is extremely complex and fractured. The backwardness of the economy can also be gauged from the fact that it is subsistence based agriculture, highly disarticulated and ad-hoc in nature. There is higher dependency ratio in the sample households. More than 60 per cent of the sample households are not literates. Out of labour force and casualization of labour is rampant in the sample households. Agricultural is the main source of livelihood. Natural resource base of the households show that more than 53.25 percent are landless. Most of the farmers belong to the marginal, small and semi-medium category in the region. About 58.51 percent households reported that they were dependent on rainfall as a source of irrigation. Most of the sample households (99.33 percent) reported that they neither leased-in nor leased-out land. The main reason is that most of them are marginal, small and semi-medium farmers. It shows the signs of traditional subsistence economy. About 89.93 percentage of the sample households stated that community pastures existed. There is no household industry.

Therefore, it can be stated that contradictions of development and consequent (under) development are the result of contradictory nature of capitalism inherent in the system and the policymaking and its underlying value systems. It is also important to emphasize here that this process of (under) development will continue unless and until the process is fully reversed in the favour of an alternative World System.

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