

Tetragonal Polar Magnet VOSe₂O₅: A Study of Néel-type Skyrmion Lattice and Magnetic Behavior

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Abstract: The paper attempts to study inter-state differentials in occupational/industrial classification of the Chamar caste workers in India using the latest 2011 Census data. The Chamar, the numerically the largest and the most widely distributed SC caste in India, is still dominantly agricultural by occupation and rural by residence. Only slightly higher than two-fifths of their worker were engaged in non-farm activities, against this the share of such workers was nearly three-fourths for Balmiki workers.

There were, of course, wide inter-state differentials on this count. In some states like Himachal Pradesh the share of cultivators among the total Chamar workers was as high as two-fifths. In contrast, in Bihar seven of each ten Chamar workers were employed as agricultural/casual labourers. On the whole, in eight states, the majority of the Chamar workers was employed in farm sector, and in remaining 17 states and four union territories the reverse was true of the Chamar workers. However, in the former category of states, more than seven of each ten (73.0 per cent) of total Chamar population was residing. Evidently, the dominant majority the Chamar households in the country was employed in farm sector, where wages were generally low and working conditions poor.

Keywords: Numerical dominance, Work participation rates, Landless labourers, Non-farm employment, occupational diversification.

Date of submission: 08.08.2019

Date of review: 21.08.2019

Date of acceptance: 27.08.2019

Introduction

The Chamar caste is numerical the largest and geographically the most widely distributed of the castes listed in the VIII Schedule of the Indian Constitution under the Article 341 for taking special welfare measures for socio-economic upliftment of former untouchable castes and communities. Initially, stigma of untouchability in the traditional hierarchy of castes in India was the basic criterion to include or exclude castes in the scheduled list of castes, but today the list include castes that never faced untouchability. Presently, there are, in all, nearly 600 castes among the scheduled castes in India. However, 16 top ranking castes of them, each having at least three million persons, shared together 127.9 million or 63.5 per cent of 201.4 million SC population of India in 2011.

The Chamar caste, the largest scheduled caste in India with a population of 46.72 million making more than one-fifth or 23.2 per cent in total scheduled caste (SC) population in India in 2011 and distributed in 25 states and four union territories in 2011, is differently called in different areas and as such include many sub-groups. In Gujarat, Karnataka and Maharashtra, they are notified with Bhambi; and Jatva, Mochi/Muchi, Satnami, and Raidas would prefer an identity distinct from the Chamar (Singh, 1993:302). They make first ranking SC caste in 184 districts (excluding 11 districts, having a population of less than 1,000 persons) of ten states

and one union territory. Their share in total SC population of respective districts ranged from a high of 91.8 per cent in Kabeerdham (Chhattisgarh) to a low of 14.7 per cent in Godda (Jharkhand). Further, the Chamars made majority SC caste (more than 50.0 per cent) in 109 districts of India in 2011. Seventy-eight of them were distributed in three states of Uttar Pradesh (48 districts), Madhya Pradesh (21 districts) and Chhattisgarh (10 districts). The rest were distributed in Haryana, Bihar, Punjab, Rajasthan, Himachal Pradesh and NCT of Delhi. The Chamars were though predominantly rural by residence (more than 80.0 per cent living in rural areas), had low female literacy (45.0 per cent against 48.0 per cent for all SCs) and agricultural (only 42.0 per cent workers engaged in non-farm factor against 43.0 per cent for all SCs), but more organized and assertive in political and social terms. The Dalit Panthers Movement started in the early 1970s in Maharashtra has made their youth radical and highly assertive. Over the period, they have mastered in identity politics using leaders such as B.R. Ambedkar and Jyotiba Phule as their icons. Their widespread geographical distribution and numerical dominance over the other SC castes in several states and their sub-regions helped them in this context. The electoral successes of Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP) under Mayawati, who hails from the Chamar caste, exemplify this well. BSP made early inroads in power politics in some states and finally succeeded in gaining political power Uttar Pradesh. In 21 districts of the country, the Chamar make more than three-fourths in total SC population there. Definitely, this goes in their favour so far as the electoral politics is concerned. Being traditionally landless, they were engaged in skin and hide and in agriculture as labourers. Presently, they are employed as daily-wage worker, cultivators, household industry workers, leather work and shoe-makers. In Himachal Pradesh, they are now engaged in masonry, carpentry, basketry and rope-making. Kurils of Madhya Pradesh have adopted modern occupations. Education has improved and they are now shifting to urban areas. The teachers, administrators, engineers, doctors, defence personnel and white-collar workers from amongst them are the harbingers of modern inter-community linkages, cutting across community barriers. Some of them have emerged as political leaders both at the national and state levels. Given different historical background, some of the states and union territories have done relatively better than others for their welfare.

In the light of above statements, it would be interesting to examine inter-state differentials in occupation structure of the Chamars in India by using data/information available from the 2011 Census, the latest in the series. The latest picture is a cumulative effect of the effects made by different individuals and individual households, on the one hand, and

the different state/union territory governments, on the other hand, for their socio-economic upliftment since Independence. In which of the states/union territories, the occupational structure of the Chamars is more diversified than the others and why makes an important question? Answering such a question will help in reassessing as well as re-defining the programmes and policies framed by different state and union territory governments for their socio-economic upliftment.

For the purpose, the data have been picked up from the Census of India, *Special Tables on Scheduled Castes, 2011* by taking the state as a unit of data analysis and mapping. In 2011, there were 28 states and seven union territories in India, and the Chamar caste was distributed in 25 states and four union territories. In the states of Sikkim, Nagaland, and Arunachal Pradesh and the union territories of Puducherry, Lakshadweep, Andaman and Nicobar Islands, the Chamar caste was not notified. In fact, in Nagaland, Arunachal Pradesh, Lakshadweep, and Andaman and Nicobar Islands, scheduled castes were not at all notified in 2011.

Since, the Census of India stopped publishing individual SC caste-wise data on the occupational structure of SC population in India at the district level after 1981 Census, we are handicapped in extending this study to the district level. Further, the Census of India divides workers into two categories: *main* and *marginal* workers. Those working for major part of the reference period of six months or more are termed as ‘main’ workers, those, who had not worked for the major part of reference period (worked less than six months), termed as ‘marginal’ workers and a person who had not at all worked during the entire reference period as a ‘non-worker’. Accordingly, 58.2 million or about 71.0 per cent of 82.3 million SC workers were classified as the ‘main’ workers, and remaining 24.1 million or 29.0 per cent as ‘marginal’ workers. The present study will focus only on the occupational/industrial classification of the ‘main’ workers.

Before moving further to analyse the data on occupational structure of the Chamars at the state level, we shall compare occupation structure of the Chamars with other nine major SC castes in India to see where the Chamar caste stands among the major SC castes in India in terms of their occupational diversification.

The Chamars in comparison to other major SC castes

Adi Dravida, Balmiki, Chamar, Dhobi, Madiga, Mahar, Mala, Dusadh and Pasi were the nine top ranking SC castes in India at the time of 2011 Census. Each having more than 5.0 million persons and their combined population made 105.7 million, their share made 52.5 per cent in

total SC population of India. Geographically speaking, Adi Dravida, Mala, and Madiga castes were mainly concentrated in south Indian states, Mahar caste mainly in Maharashtra and Chhattisgarh, Balmiki, Chamar, and Dhobi in north Indian states, and Dusadh and Pasi in Uttar Pradesh and Bihar states.

In 2011, nearly one-half or 49.8 per cent of total 'main' workers in India were engaged in non-farm activities. The national averages for SC main workers was 43.4 per cent, for non-SCs 54.4 per cent, and for nine top ranking SC castes 41.1 per cent. It means, the top ranking SC castes in India have the least diversified occupational structure in comparison to both the non-SC and rest of the SC castes. The combined share of non-farm employment was 45.7 per cent for remaining more than five hundred SC castes in India (Table 1). One can safely infer that dominant majority of SC workers are still engaged in agricultural operations mostly as agricultural labourers and thus rural by residence.

There were, of course, wide inter-caste differentials in structural composition of workers among nine top ranking castes. The share of non-farm employment ranged from a high of 74.2 per cent for the Balmikis to a low of only 25.4 per cent for the Madigas, differing nearly by three times. Traditionally, Balmikis are engaged in sweeping and scavenging. Against this, Madigas, mainly concentrated in Andhra Pradesh and Karnataka, are traditionally agricultural labourers. In 2011, dominate majority of their workers (65.5 per cent) were engaged as agricultural labourers. This proportion was only 22.1 per cent for Balmikis.

SC Caste Name	Main Workers	Farm sector workers	Per cent	Non-farm sector workers	Per cent
Adi Dravida	3,043,414	1,475,393	48.48	1,568,021	51.52
Balmiki	1,702,927	438,748	25.76	1,264,179	74.24
Chamars	11,911,351	6,882,462	57.78	5,028,889	42.22
Dhobi	1,165,121	578,237	49.63	586,884	50.37
Madiga	3,253,435	2,426,846	74.60	826,589	25.40
Mahar	3,461,749	1,999,117	57.75	1,462,632	42.25
Mala	2,345,637	1,648,280	70.27	697,357	29.73
Dusadh	1,077,138	792,806	73.60	284,332	26.40
Pasi	1,627,892	1,176,604	72.28	451,288	27.72
Sub-Total	29,588,664	17,418,493	58.87	12,170,171	41.13
Remaining SC Castes	28,594,817	15,538,552	54.34	13,056,265	45.66
Total	58,183,481	32,957,045	56.65	25,226,436	43.35

Of the nine major SC castes, the Balmikis, the Adi Dravidas and the Dhobis/Dhobas are three SC communities, in whose case the majority of workers were engaged in non-farm economic activities. Balmikis are traditionally engaged in sweeping and scavenging, which are low paid tertiary activities. During the British rule in India, they were recruited in defence services to perform these traditional services. After independence, with urban-industrial development there has been rapid in urbanization in India, creating a huge demand for their traditional services as sweepers and scavengers. This played an important role in residential shift from rural to urban areas and change of their occupation structure. Reservation of jobs in public sector units for scheduled caste workers in post-Independence period also played an additional role in their shift of resident and occupations. That is why, Balmikis are more urbanized and employed in non-farm activities than other major SC castes. Whereas, socio-cultural movements in south India especially in Tamil Nadu, where are the Ad Dravidas are highly concentrated happened the downtrodden castes including the Adi Dravidas in their socio-economic transformation (see Kshirsagar, 1994:380-390). While the reverse was true of Madigas, Malas, Dusadhs and Pasis. However, one- third or 33.1 per cent of Pasis workers were cultivators and only about two-fifths working as landless agricultural labourers. Within this group, the Dhobis and the Chamars are the two other castes among whom about one-fifth or more workers are engaged as cultivators. It means sizable share of Pasis, Dhobis and Chamars households own land or cultivate land on rent, providing them prestige and power animating from landownership in rural communities.

Briefly, the majority of SCs workers are still engaged in farm sector activities, engaged mainly as low paid agricultural workers. Of course, there are wide inter-caste differentials in this context. Of the nine top ranking castes, the three castes namely Adi Dravidas, Balmikis and Dhobis/Dhobas have the majority of their workers employed in non-farm activities; while the reverse is true for remaining six castes namely, Madigas, Malas, Chamars, Mahars, Dusadhs and Pasis. However, Pasis and Chamars from the latter and Dhobis/Dhobas from the former group have a good share of workers engaged as cultivators. This adds not only to their income but also prestige and power in rural society.

In the following, occupational/industrial composition of workers belonging to the Chamar caste are discussed in details at the state level. It is to be noted here that earlier the Census of India was classifying and publishing industrial classification of individual SC castes up to the district level. However, the practice was discontinued after the 1981 Census. In absence of requisite data, we are forced to restrict our discussions to the state level.

Occupational/Industrial Structure of the Chamars

Chamars, in contrast to Balmikis/Bhangis, are predominantly rural by residence, have relatively low female literacy and high male-female literacy differentials and employed mostly as the agricultural labourers (Table 2).

Table 2: Comparative picture of urbanization, general literacy, female literacy and occupational diversity between all SCs and Chamars, 2011				
Caste	Urbanization	General Literacy	Female Literacy	Non-farm employment
Chamar	19.46	58.08	45.28	42.22
All SCs	23.60	56.50	48.30	43.35
Non-SCs	35.20	66.09	59.40	54.41
Note: All figures are in percentage. Literacy rate has been computed on the basis of total population in place of excluding 0-6 age-group population.				
Table 10: Classification of states/union territories in accordance to work participation rates of Chamars, 2011				
Level/per cent	Name of State/Union Territory			
High (>40.0%)	Manipur (49.5), Kerala(46.9), Mizoram (46.8), Tamil Nadu (45.7), Daman & Diu* (40.5) Total=5			
Moderate (40.0-30.0%)	Karnataka(38.2),Maharashtra(37.9), Andhra Pradesh (35.6), Dadra & N.Haveli* (35.3), Goa (35.0),Chandigarh*(34.1),Gujarat (33.4), Tripura (32.9), Assam (30.4) Total= 9			
Low(< 30.0%)	NCT of Delhi*(29.4),Chhattisgarh (29.1), Madhya Pradesh (28.7), Punjab(28.6) Rajasthan(28.5),West Bengal(27.8), Himachal Pradesh(25.3),Uttarakhand (25.0),Odisha(24.9),Jammu &Kashmir (24.4), Haryana (23.9), Meghalaya (22.3), Uttar Pradesh (20.5), Bihar (18.6), Jharkhand (16.3) Total=15			

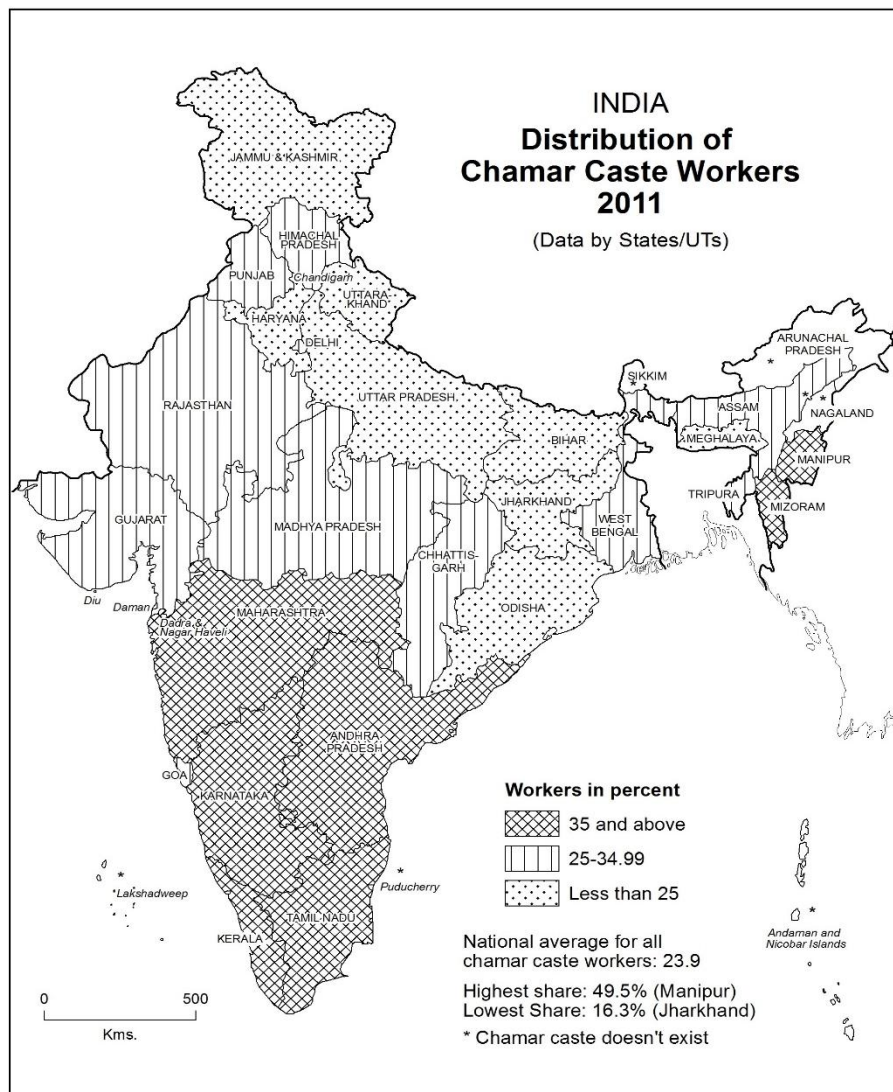
Average: 24.1

Notes:1. *Union Territories, 2. Figures in parenthesis indicate to workers as percent to total population

The work participation rate of the Chamars (about 24.0 per cent) was quite low. This indicates to a high dependency ratio among the Chamars. In other words, there were three dependents on one Chamar worker. Against this, there were less than two persons dependent on one Madiga worker. The latter caste is mainly concentrated in south India and the former in north India.

What explains the low work participation rates among the Chamars? It seems that these is a marked outflow of economically the most active workforce from the backward states like Bihar, Uttar Pradesh, and Jharkhand, where Chamars are highly concentrated, to the developed states and their metropolitan cities to work leaving behind their families at the native place. This results in low work participation rates of Chamars in states, which are economically backward but having high concentration of the Chamars. Low work participation rates of Chamars in states like Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, West Bengal, and Rajasthan speaks of this.

Another explanation, needing further investigation, may be that the Chamars being a relatively better-off caste of SCs in India can afford to keep their school/college going children off the labour force.



* Courtesy: Mr. Mohan Singh, Cartographer, for designing the map.

FIG. 1

Of course, there are wide inter-state differentials in work participation rates of the Chamars. It ranged from a high of 49.5 per cent in Manipur to a low of only 16.3 per cent in Jharkhand, the respective shares the two states by three times (Table 3). In four states and one union territory, where was work participation rate of Chamars higher than 40.0 per cent, the total population of Chamars is very low. Total population of Chamars in these states ranged from a high of 525 persons in Tamil Nadu to 131 persons in union territory of Daman & Diu. In these states, most of the Chamars are either working as migrant labourers or central government employees including defense personnel including stationed armed forces for the national security.

Table 3: India: Inter-state differentials in percentage of the Chamar workers and their distribution in broad industrial/sector categories, 2011					
State/UT	Worker	Cultivators	Agri. Labourers	Household industry workers	Other workers
Jharkhand	16.31	14.25	29.14	3.35	53.26
Bihar	18.62	8.78	69.86	2.33	19.02
Uttar Pradesh	20.46	25.34	38.66	2.96	33.03
Meghalaya	22.34	5.81	3.10	1.94	89.15
Haryana	23.90	7.34	32.40	2.03	58.23
Jammu and Kashmir	24.45	25.09	5.07	1.49	68.23
Odisha	24.88	22.82	27.51	5.94	43.74
Uttarakhand	24.97	10.57	33.17	2.38	53.88
Himachal Pradesh	25.27	39.76	4.28	1.54	54.42
West Bengal	27.83	7.20	44.19	5.36	43.25
Rajasthan	28.55	31.22	18.63	3.28	46.88
Punjab	28.59	3.98	22.53	4.03	69.45
Madhya Pradesh	28.71	22.18	44.71	3.80	29.31
Chhattisgarh	29.14	30.64	42.72	0.70	25.94
Assam	30.39	15.01	12.79	3.68	68.52
Tripura	32.92	2.89	4.97	2.26	89.89
Gujarat	33.36	12.73	42.04	0.90	44.34
Goa	34.96	3.22	0.51	1.88	94.39
Andhra Pradesh	35.58	1.70	7.48	13.59	77.24
Maharashtra	37.91	12.69	26.60	4.83	55.88
Karnataka	38.23	13.25	59.49	1.58	25.68
Tamil Nadu	45.71	3.33	2.92	5.00	88.75
Mizoram	46.81	14.55	3.45	0.00	80.00
Kerala	46.86	1.03	2.06	0.00	96.91
Manipur	49.47	25.53	2.13	1.06	71.28
<i>Union Territories</i>					
NCT of Delhi	29.39	0.22	1.00	2.23	96.55
Chandigarh	34.11	0.20	0.30	0.89	98.61
Dadra & N. Haveli	35.29	5.95	2.46	0.00	91.58
Daman & Diu	40.46	0.00	0.00	0.00	100.00
All Chamars	23.90	19.81	37.97	2.95	39.27
All SCs	28.89	16.43	40.22	2.81	40.54
All Non-SCs	29.99	26.86	18.73	3.78	50.63

In another seven states and two union territories, where work participation rate of Chamars ranged between 30.0 and 40.0 per cent, Andhra Pradesh, Tripura, Goa and Dadra and Nagar Haveli belong to a category of states/union territories where total population of Chamars was relatively small. Whatever little number of persons was there, they were living and working in urban areas, mostly engaged in urban services relating to sanitation. In Karnataka, Maharashtra, Gujarat, Assam, and Chandigarh (UT), where Chamars have relatively higher concentration, present a contrasting picture. In Karnataka, Maharashtra and Gujarat, Chamars were dominantly rural and agricultural. Against this, in Chandigarh (UT) and Assam, they were

highly urbanized and engaged in non-farm activities. In states of southern and western India, Chamars are enumerated with Bhambi/Bhambhi and Chambhar castes. However, in Andhra Pradesh the Chamars and Chambhars are notified separately.

In remaining fourteen states and one union territory (i.e. NCT of Delhi), where the Chamars were highly concentrated, their participation rates are low. Their combined strength in these areas was about nine-tenth of total Chamars in India. In all these states except Meghalaya, population of Chamars was quite large but work participation rate low. States and UTs in this category were distributed in northern, central and eastern India.

On the whole, the dominant majority of Chamar workers (57.8 per cent) were engaged in farm activities, mainly as agricultural labourers. Nonetheless, about one-fifth or 19.8 per cent of their total (main) workers were cultivators in 2011. Only a tiny share of their worker (about 3.0 per cent) was engaged in household industries. In fact, in post-green revolution phase traditional household industries registered a sharp decline in rural India, forcing many SC rural artisan households, earlier engaged in traditional activities like skin tanning, shoe-making, rope-making, carpentry and so on, to join agriculture as labourers. Increase in agricultural wages and the decline in demand for traditional household industry products, in combine, contributed to this. In 2011, 57.8 per cent of the Chamar workers were employed in farm sector and remaining 42.2 per cent as non-farm workers. Of course, there were wide inter-state variations in this context.

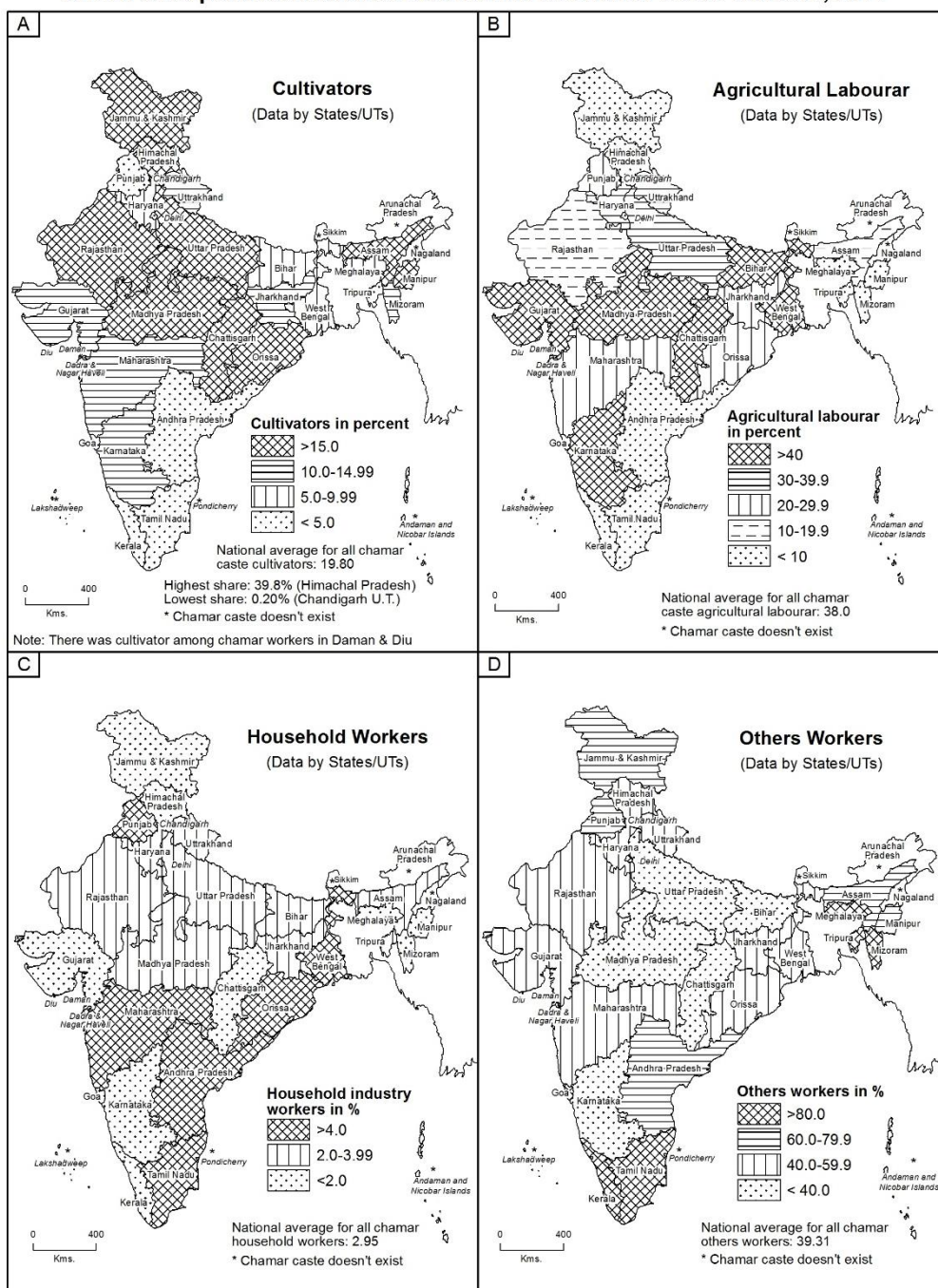
The share of cultivators in total Chamar workers ranged from a high of about two-fifths (39.8 per cent) in Himachal Pradesh to a low of less than 2.0 per cent in Andhra Pradesh, and all union territories recording nil or a negligible share of such workers in total Chamar workers. In six states of Himachal Pradesh, Rajasthan, Chhattisgarh, Manipur, Uttar Pradesh and Jammu and Kashmir, the share of cultivators in total workers was one-fourth or higher. In another two states (Odisha and Madhya Pradesh), this share was more than one-fifth. In this way, about one-third of total 25 states having Chamar population in 2011 had the share of Cultivators among Chamar workers was higher than the average for all the Chamars in India. Except Manipur, all other such states were located in north and central India. In contrast, ten states of Bihar, West Bengal, Haryana, Punjab, Tripura, Meghalaya, Goa, Andhra Pradesh, Tamil Nadu and Kerala had this share of less than one-tenth. In south India, it is only Karnataka, where this share was higher than one-tenth but lower than the national average for the Chamars. Against this, Punjab had this share lowest of all the north India states, even less than one-half of Bihar, having the highest share of farm workers among Chamars in India. Briefly, the share of

cultivators among the Chamar workers was higher in north Indian states and the lower in south Indian states. The share of cultivators among the Chamar workers finds a positive association with historical factors and success of land distribution among SCs under land ceiling act, while showed a negative association with degree of urbanization in states and union territories of India.

Inter-state variation in the share of the Chamar agricultural/casual labourers was much higher than that of Chamar cultivators. It ranged from a high of about 70.0 per cent in Bihar to less than one per cent in Goa. The union territories, in general, had a very low share of such workers. The two states, Bihar and Karnataka, had the dominate share of Chamar workers in agriculture as the labourers. In another four states (Madhya Pradesh, West Bengal, Chhattisgarh, and Gujarat), this share was more than two-fifths in total workers. Also, the share of such workers was quite high in Uttar Pradesh. In all, seven states had this share higher than the average for the Chamar workers in India. Notably, however, the average share of agricultural labourers (38.0 per cent) among the Chamars was lower than the average for all SCs (40.0 per cent) in India. This is associated mainly with the higher share of cultivators among the Chamars in comparison to all SCs in India. The non-SC castes had this share less than one-fifth.

On the other side, all the union territories along with states in northeast and south India, except Karnataka, recorded low to very low share of such workers among the Chamars. In seven states of Meghalaya, Tripura, Mizoram, Manipur, Goa, Tamil Nadu, and Kerala, the share of agriculture labourers among Chamars was less than 5.0 per cent. Himachal Pradesh from northwest Indian states is also included in this category. In all these states, except Himachal Pradesh the total population of the Chamars is generally small. Briefly, states in the Indo-Gangetic plains, in general, had higher proportion of agriculture labourers among the Chamar workers, while the reverse was true for all the union territories and states located in northeast and south India. Further, in states having relatively higher share of cultivators among the Chamar workers, the share of agriculture labourers in total Chamar workers was relatively low to very low.

INDIA: Occupational/Industrial Distribution of Chamar Caste Workers, 2011



* Courtesy: Mr. Mohan Singh, Cartographer, for designing the map.

FIG. 2

Only a small fraction (2.93 per cent) of the Chamar workers was engaged in household industries. However, the average share for Chamar workers was slightly higher than that for all SC castes (2.81 per cent). Notably, the share Non-SC castes was higher (3.78 per cent) than the Chamars and all SCs both. Among states, the share of such workers among the Chamars ranged from a high of about 14.0 per cent in Andhra Pradesh to nil in Mizoram and Kerala. Among union territories, Dadra and Nagar Haveli and Daman & Diu also recorded nil share of such workers. It was only in the four states of Andhra Pradesh, Odisha, West Bengal and Tamil

Nadu, the share of such workers among Chamars was 5.0 per cent or more. Assam, Jharkhand, Maharashtra, Rajasthan, and Punjab are others states, where was the share of Chamar workers in household industries was between 3.0 and 5.0 per cent. In India, under the impact of rapid urbanization and modernization there has been a sharp decline in demand for goods produced in traditional household industries, wherein were employed, at one point of time, a large number of SC households.

The share of ‘other workers’¹ among the Chamars varied widely among the states and union territories. 39.3 per cent being the all India average for all Chamars workers, the share ranged from a high of cent per cent in Daman and Diu to a low of only 19.0 per cent in Bihar. All the four union territories had this share of more than 90.0 per cent. Among states, there were as many as sixteen states, where the share of such workers was higher than one-half, and in another four states (Odisha, West Bengal, Rajasthan, and Gujarat) it was higher the average for all the Chamars in India. In remaining five states of Bihar, Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh and Karnataka, this share was quite low. In these states, only three or less among each ten Chamar workers were employed in non-farm activities. This indicates to very poor economic conditions of the Chamars in these states. In 2011, these states, in combine, had nearly 70.0 per cent total Chamars in India.

Table 4: Classification of States/UTs in accordance to the majority of the Chamar workers employed in farm and non-farm activities, 2011

Having majority worker in the farm sector	Having majority workers in the non-farm sector
Bihar (78.7), Chhattisgarh (73.4), Karnataka (72.7), Madhya Pradesh (66.9), Uttar Pradesh (64.0), Gujarat (54.5), West Bengal (51.4), Odisha (50.3) Total=8	Daman&Diu(100.0), Chandigarh(99.5), NCT, Delhi(98.8), Kerala(96.9), Goa(96.3), Tamil Nadu (93.8), Tripura (92.2), Dadra & Nagar Haveli (91.6), Meghalaya(91.1), Andhra Pradesh (90.8), Mizoram (80.0), Punjab (73.5), Manipur (72.3), Assam (72.2), Jammu & Kashmir (69.8), Maharashtra(60.7), Haryana (60.3), Jharkhand (56.6), Uttarakhand(56.3), Himachal Pradesh (56.0), Rajasthan (50.2) Total=21

Note: Figures in parentheses indicate to percent in total main workers.

On the whole, in eight states the majority of the Chamar workers was employed in farm sector activities, and in remaining 17 states and four union territories the reverse was true of the Chamar workers (see Table 4). In the former category of states, 73 per cent of total Chamars were residing, while remaining 27 per cent were living in the latter category of states/UTs.

¹ The category of ‘other workers’ included those engaged in manufacturing industries, plantation, trade and commerce, transport, storage and communications, and other services.

Evidently, the dominant majority the Chamar households in the country was employed in farm sector activities.

Conclusion

The majority of SCs workers are still engaged in farm sector activities, engaged mainly as low paid agricultural workers. Of course, there are wide inter-caste differentials in this context. Of the nine top ranking castes, the three castes namely Adi Dravidas, Balmikis and Dhobis/Dhobas have the majority of their workers employed in non-farm activities; while the reverse is true for remaining six castes namely, Madigas, Malas, Chamars, Mahars, Dusadhs and Pasis. However, Pasis and Chamars from the latter and Dhobis/Dhobas from the former group have a good share of workers engaged as cultivators. This adds not only to their income but also prestige and power in rural society.

The Chamar, the largest and most widely distributed SC community in India, had low work participation rates. Their work participation rate of 24.0 per cent indicates to a high degree of dependency ratio among them. Low work participation rate was more evident in the case of economically backward states like Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Madhya Pradesh and Rajasthan, where the Chamar population has a very high concentration. The reverse was true of union territories and states having a low concentration of Chamars. States in northeast and south India represent this category. The majority of the Chamar workers was employed in farm sector especially as agricultural labourers. However, in some states like Himachal Pradesh the share of cultivators in total Chamar workers was as high as two-fifths. In contrast, in Bihar seven of each ten Chamar workers were employed as agricultural/casual labourers. On the whole, in eight states, the majority of the Chamar workers was employed in farm sector, and in remaining 17 states and four union territories the reverse was true of the Chamar workers. However, in the former category of states, more than seven of each ten (73.0 per cent) of total Chamar population was residing. Evidently, the dominant majority the Chamar households in the country was employed in farm sector.

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