

# Measuring Inequalities among Main and Marginal Workers: An Analysis of Meo Muslims in Nuh District, Haryana

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## ABSTRACT

*This study employed an empirical approach to investigate the occupational structure of Meo Muslim households in Nuh district, Haryana, focusing on the disparities between main and marginal workers. Utilizing primary data collected through a meticulously designed household schedule, the study aimed to capture a comprehensive view of occupational patterns within this community. The research methodology involved a three-step process for selecting villages: initial classification of villages by blocks, followed by stratified random sampling to create two buffer zones (5 km and 10 km), and then purposive random sampling to select one village from every 40 villages in these zones. In total, the study surveyed 10 villages out of 439, ensuring a diverse representation of Meo Muslim households. There are two major objectives for the present study i.e. to assess the disparities in main and marginal occupations among Meo Muslim workers in Nuh district and to identify variations in worker participation across different villages, highlighting differences in occupational patterns and economic involvement in the study area. Some villages, like Mubarikpur and Raipuri, have a larger percentage of marginal workers, suggesting a dependence on temporary or seasonal employment, while other villages, like Rigarh and Uleta, have higher percentages of main workers. According to the study, there are notable differences in the patterns of occupancy between the villages. In contrast to Mubarikpur, where the marginal labor force is primarily male, Uleta has a significant level of female engagement in major work.*

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## INTRODUCTION

In India, Main Workers are individuals who participate in economic activities for the majority of the year, specifically for six months or more (183 days or more) during the reference year. They are distinct from marginal workers, who are employed for less than six months. Main workers can be employed in various sectors, including agriculture, industry, or services, and their employment may be regular or casual. Marginal Workers in India are individuals who engage in economic activities for a period of less than six months (183 days) in a year (Census of India). The poverty in India exhibited significant disparities across social and economic groups, largely reflecting the entrenched inequalities within the country. Socially marginalized communities faced disproportionately high poverty levels compared to upper-caste groups. Rural poverty was widespread, particularly among landless laborers and small farmers, many of whom belonged to these marginalized groups (Sundaram & Tendulkar, 2003). Haryana's growing industrial and agricultural sectors significantly impact labor force participation. Urbanization and the expansion of sectors such as manufacturing, services, and technology have created more formal job opportunities, drawing individuals into the workforce (Singh, 2022).

Gender occupational segregation in Haryana reflects deep-rooted social, cultural, and economic inequalities that influence the type of work men and women perform. This segregation manifests in both vertical and horizontal forms, where women are either underrepresented in certain sectors or confined to lower-paying, less prestigious jobs compared to men (Sharma, 2021). In Nuh, where agricultural work is often seasonal and land ownership is skewed, MGNREGA plays a vital role in providing alternative sources of income, particularly for marginalized groups such as landless laborers, Scheduled Castes (SCs), and women (Narang, 2014). Nuh district, primarily a rural and Muslim-majority district, faces deep-rooted issues related to gender inequality, poverty, and low literacy rates, which have direct and far-

reaching impacts on women's overall socio-economic condition (Kumar, et al., 2017). The SHG-Bank Linkage Programme, a key initiative under microfinance schemes in a district like Nuh, where women face restricted access to education, healthcare, and employment, the program provides a pathway for enhancing their financial independence, social status, and decision-making power (Nizamuddin & Alam, 2014). The Cash for Work (CFW) program is an initiative aimed at alleviating poverty by providing direct cash payments to individuals in exchange for their labor, typically in public infrastructure or community development projects.

It is designed to offer immediate income support to vulnerable populations while simultaneously improving local infrastructure. The program addresses both the short-term need for income and the long-term need for economic development, making it an effective tool for poverty alleviation in rural and marginalized regions (Jayadiputera, et al., 2023). Rural Haryana's economic landscape has been significantly impacted by changes in agriculture, industrialization, infrastructure development, and government policies, leading to significant employment transformations and socio-economic changes (Kaur et al., 2005).

The structural change and growth of agriculture in Haryana reflect a dynamic evolution of the state's agricultural sector, driven by advancements in technology, policy interventions, and shifting economic conditions. Haryana, known for its significant contributions to India's food grain production, particularly wheat and rice, has undergone considerable transformation in its agricultural practices and structure. These changes have been pivotal in shaping the state's economic landscape (Aggarwal & Moudgil 2015). As Haryana has transitioned from a traditional agrarian economy to a more modern, diversified agricultural sector, several emerging patterns have become evident, particularly concerning labor relationships and the nature of agrarian work (Jodhka, 1994). Women's Participation in Agricultural Activities: A Study of Haryana, India explores the significant yet often undervalued role that women play in agriculture, particularly in the context of Haryana, a key agricultural state in India. Despite their critical contribution to farming, women face various challenges that affect their participation and productivity. This study aims to analyze the extent, nature, and impact of women's involvement in agricultural activities in Haryana, examining both the opportunities and constraints they encounter (Rani, 2021).

### **Study Area**

Nuh district, located in the southern part of Haryana, India, is predominantly characterized by its agrarian economy. Situated near Delhi, it benefits from its proximity to a major urban center while retaining its rural and agricultural essence. The district's economy is primarily reliant on agriculture, with farming, livestock rearing, and agricultural labor forming the core activities for most of its residents. The landscape is dotted with small villages, each contributing to the agricultural output of the region. Despite the strong agricultural focus, Nuh district also exhibits a presence of secondary economic activities. These include small-scale industries, construction work, factory jobs, and household production, which offer supplementary income opportunities to the local population. The socio-economic fabric of Nuh is further enriched by its diverse communities, including the Meo Muslims, who play a significant role in both primary and secondary sectors. The district's development is influenced by its proximity to urban areas, leading to variations in occupational patterns and economic diversification across its villages. As Nuh continues to navigate the balance between traditional agricultural practices and emerging economic opportunities, it reflects the broader dynamics of rural development and urban integration in India.

### **Objectives**

- To assess the disparities in main and marginal occupations among Meo Muslim workers in Nuh district
- To identify variations in worker participation across different villages, highlighting differences in occupational patterns and economic involvement in the study area.

### **DATABASE & METHODOLOGY**

The present study is based on the empirical approach. This study has been utilized the primary data and the primary data have been collected with the help of a well-defined household schedule. It included all significant aspects and the occupational structure of Meo Muslim households. The transformation of the occupational structure of Meo Muslims in each village have been examined from a horizontal perspective. The names of villages have been selected in the three steps. The villages in Nuh districts have been classified according to blocks.

**Table 1: Selection Criteria of Villages for Primary Survey in Nuh district, Haryana**

Blocks	Total Village (2011)	Sampled Villages	Villages to be Selected	Total Households (2011)	Sampled Households (5 %)
Punhana	92	02	Mubarikpur (216)	423	22
Nagina	67	01	Gulalta (201)	781	39
			Uleta (6)	239	12
Nuh	118	03	Jogipur (110)	182	10
			Raipuri (148)	284	14
			Chandeni (158)	639	32
Taoru	81	02	Sikarpur (74)	561	28
			Bawla (46)	516	26
Ferozepur Jhirka	81	02	Pathrali (105)	538	27
			Ferozepur Jhirka (73)	183	10
<b>Total</b>	<b>439</b>	<b>10</b>		<b>4163</b>	<b>220</b>

Source: Primary Census Abstract, Rohtak District, Census of India, 2011

In the second step, we have applied stratified random sampling. So, the blocks have been stratified into two buffer zones, i.e., 5 km and 10 km. Then, we have been selected one village per 40 villages. Further, from the selected villages, purposive random sampling has been used to identify five percent of households in each village, and due care have been taken to ensure that households are Meo Muslims in the study area.

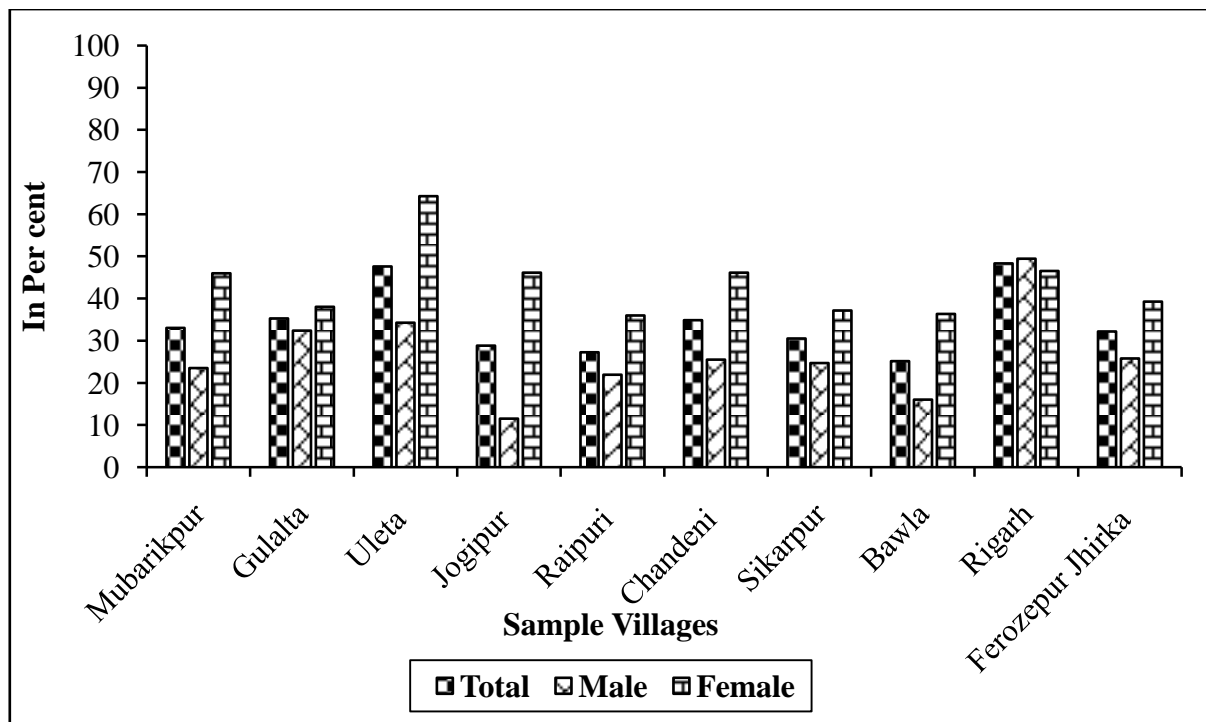
### RESULT & DISCUSSION

The main workers among Meo Muslims of the sample villages in Nuh District represent those who are primarily engaged in full-time work throughout the year. This group of workers forms the backbone of the community's economy, contributing significantly to both household income and overall economic activity in the region (Saidalavi, 2017). Different villages may exhibit different patterns in the distribution of main workers. For example, some villages may have a higher concentration of workers in agriculture, while others might show more engagement in services or industrial work (Ali, 2002). The main workers among Meo Muslims in the sample villages of Nuh district reveals diverse participation patterns across genders and villages in 2023. Mubarikpur has a total of 33.05% main workers, with a notable gender disparity: 23.53% are male and 46.00% are female, indicating a substantial female workforce (Table 2).

**Table 2: Main Workers among Meo Muslims of Sample Villages in Nuh District, 2023**

Sr. No.	Name of the Villages	Total	Male	Female
1.	Mubarikpur	33.05	23.53	46.00
2.	Gulalta	35.29	32.41	38.05
3.	Uleta	47.62	34.29	64.29
4.	Jogipur	28.85	11.54	46.15
5.	Raipuri	27.27	21.95	36.00
6.	Chandeni	34.88	25.53	46.15
7.	Sikarpur	30.54	24.72	37.18
8.	Bawla	25.17	16.05	36.36
9.	Rigarh	48.34	49.46	46.55
10.	Ferozepur Jhirka	32.20	25.81	39.29
	<b>Total</b>	<b>34.54</b>	<b>28.23</b>	<b>42.18</b>

Source: Field Survey, 2023. Compiled by Researcher



Source: Based on the table 1.

**Figure 1: Main Workers among Meo Muslims of Sample Villages in Nuh District, 2023**

In Gulalta, the total main worker rate is 35.29%, with 32.41% males and 38.05% females, showing relatively balanced gender participation. Uleta exhibits the highest main worker rate at 47.62%, where 34.29% are male and 64.29% are female, highlighting a significant role of women in the workforce. Jogipur has a lower total of 28.85% main workers, with 11.54% male and 46.15% female workers, suggesting that women play a predominant role in this village. In Raipuri, 27.27% of the population are main workers, with 21.95% males and 36.00% females, reflecting a notable female presence (Table 4.8). Chandeni reports 34.88% main workers, with 25.53% males and 46.15% females, indicating strong female involvement. Sikarpur has 30.54% main workers, with 24.72% males and 37.18% females, showing higher female participation. Bawla features 25.17% main workers, with 16.05% males and 36.36% females, highlighting a prominent role of females despite a lower overall participation rate. Rigarh stands out with 48.34% main workers, where 49.46% are male and 46.55% are female, showing balanced gender participation (Fig. 1). Finally, Ferozpur Jhirka has 32.20% main workers, with 25.81% males and 39.29% females, indicating a slightly higher female workforce. Overall, the data illustrates varying levels of male and female participation across villages, with some showing a predominance of women in the workforce (Fig.1). Typically, male participation in the main workforce tends to be higher than female participation, though variations exist depending on the specific socio-economic context of each village.

#### **Marginal Workers among Meo Muslims of Sample Villages**

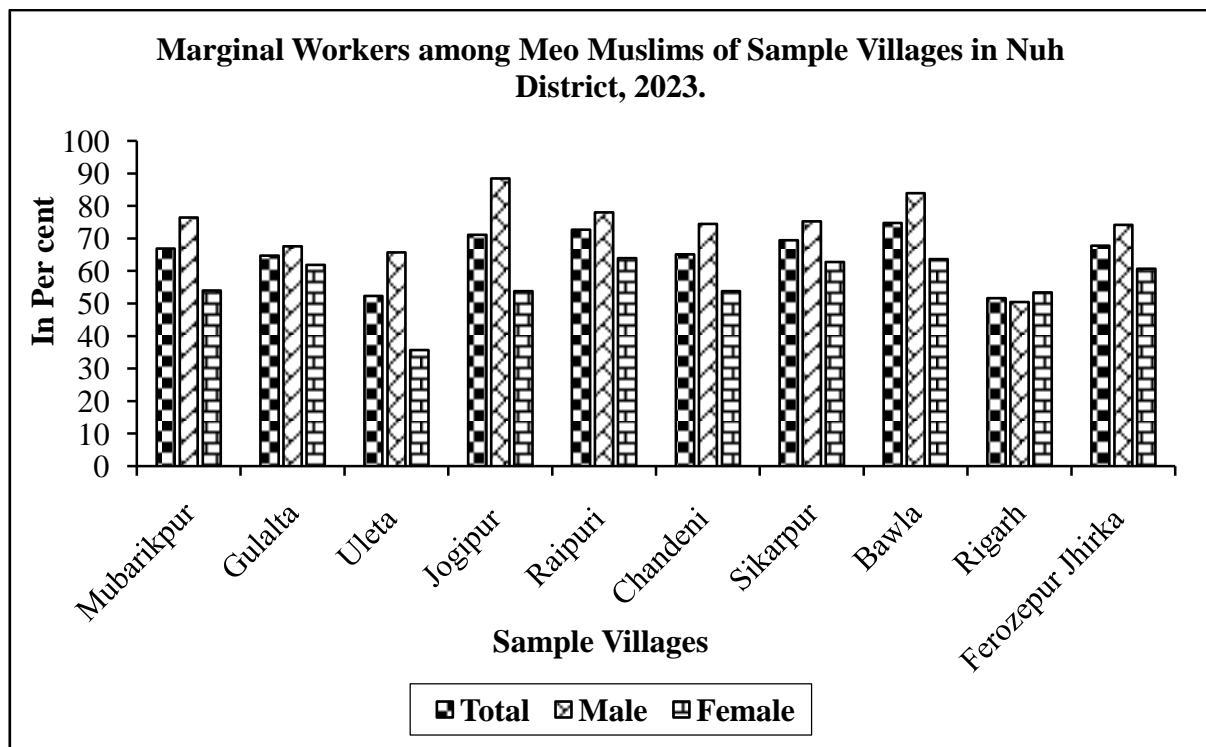
The table 4.9 shows data for the marginal workers among Meo Muslims in Nuh District highlights significant variation across villages in terms of total, male, and female workers. In Mubarikpur, 66.95% of the population are marginal workers, with a higher proportion of males (76.47%) compared to females (54.00%), reflecting a predominance of male marginal labor. Gulalta shows 64.71% of its population as marginal workers, with 67.59% males and 61.95% females, indicating a balanced yet slightly male-dominated workforce. In Uleta, 52.38% are marginal workers, with 65.71% males and 35.71% females, suggesting that male marginal workers are significantly higher than their female counterparts. Jogipur has a high rate of marginal workers at 71.15%, with a strikingly high male proportion (88.46%) compared to females (53.85%), emphasizing a strong male dominance in marginal work. Raipuri follows with 72.73% marginal workers, where 78.05% are male and 64.00% are female, showing a notable male bias (Table 2).

Chandeni reports 65.12% marginal workers, with 74.47% males and 53.85% females, indicating a substantial male presence in marginal activities. In Sikarpur, 69.46% of the population are marginal workers, with 75.28% males and 62.82% females, reflecting a higher male participation. Bawla has 74.83% marginal workers, with a high male proportion (83.95%) and a significant female proportion (63.64%) (Table 2).

**Table 3: Marginal Workers among Meo Muslims of Sample Villages in Nuh District, 2023**

Sr. No.	Name of the Villages	Total	Male	Female
1.	Mubarikpur	66.95	76.47	54.00
2.	Gulalta	64.71	67.59	61.95
3.	Uleta	52.38	65.71	35.71
4.	Jogipur	71.15	88.46	53.85
5.	Raipuri	72.73	78.05	64.00
6.	Chandeni	65.12	74.47	53.85
7.	Sikarpur	69.46	75.28	62.82
8.	Bawla	74.83	83.95	63.64
9.	Rigarh	51.66	50.54	53.45
10.	Ferozpur Jhirka	67.80	74.19	60.71
<b>Total</b>		<b>65.46</b>	<b>71.77</b>	<b>57.82</b>

Source: Field Survey, 2023. Compiled by Researcher



Source: Based on the table 2.

**Figure 2: Marginal Workers among Meo Muslims of Sample Villages in Nuh District, 2023**

Rigarh shows 51.66% marginal workers with a nearly balanced gender ratio (50.54% males and 53.45% females). Lastly, Ferozpur Jhirka has 67.80% marginal workers, with 74.19% males and 60.71% females, indicating a strong male dominance but also significant female participation. Overall, the data highlights a trend of higher male marginal workers compared to females across most villages, with some villages showing more balanced or substantial female participation (Fig. 2).

### CONCLUSION

The study on Meo Muslims in Nuh district, Haryana, reveals significant occupational disparities between main and marginal workers, with noticeable variations across gender and villages. The findings highlight the high concentration of marginal workers in certain villages, emphasizing a reliance on seasonal and part-time labor. The data indicate that female workers play a vital role in the workforce, particularly in certain villages where their participation surpasses that of males. However, male workers tend to dominate in marginal labor across most areas. The district's occupational structure is primarily agrarian, with agriculture and related activities serving as the primary sources of employment.

However, some villages also exhibit engagement in secondary activities such as construction and household industries, albeit at lower rates.

Tertiary sector employment remains limited, reflecting the rural character of the district, though female participation in service-related jobs such as tailoring and nursing is notable. The study underscores the socio-economic challenges faced by Meo Muslims, such as gender disparities, low formal employment, and dependence on marginal labor. The findings suggest a need for policies that address these disparities, especially in enhancing women's opportunities and improving labor conditions for both genders. The Meo Muslim workforce is predominantly engaged in agriculture, with a notable difference between main and marginal workers. Marginal workers, particularly males, make up a larger percentage in most villages. Female participation is significant, especially in certain villages like Uleta and Jogipur, where female workers constitute a higher proportion of the workforce. However, marginal labor is largely male-dominated. Villages such as Rigarh and Uleta show higher rates of main workers, while others, like Mubarikpur and Raipuri, exhibit a higher proportion of marginal workers, indicating a reliance on temporary or seasonal employment. While agriculture remains dominant, some villages show a shift towards secondary activities (e.g., construction, household industries), though participation in tertiary sectors is minimal. The study reveals significant disparities in occupational patterns between villages. For instance, Uleta shows high female participation in main work, whereas Mubarikpur has a more male-dominated marginal labor force.

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