

Research Article

Socio-Demographic Condition of One of the Most Marginalised Caste in Northern India

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Abstract

The present paper attempts to study the socio-economic and demographic characteristics of the most marginalised caste known as Musahars, a scheduled caste enumerated in northern India. The analysis is based on census data of 1961-2011. The analysis indicates that Musahars are socially and economically backward and marginalized caste group. During last six five decades their condition has not improved much despite of various government efforts initiative started to uplift disadvantage and marginalized group.

According to 2011 census, nearly 201.4 million persons in India were enumerated as scheduled caste, of which 3 million (about 1.5 per cent) were enumerated as belonging to the Musahar caste. Musahars are mainly found in four states - Bihar (89.2%), Jharkhand (1.7%), Uttar Pradesh (8.4%) and West Bengal (0.7%). In November 2000, state of Jharkhand was formed by bifurcating state of Bihar and state of Utrarkhand was formed by bifurcating state of Uttar Pradesh. The major concentration of the caste is in districts of eastern Uttar Pradesh, Central and North Bihar and Northern part of West Bengal. Musahars live mainly in rural areas (96.3%), and are agricultural labourers (95%) and are least educated (Illiteracy 79%).

Musahars according to their Origin

Nesfield (1888: cited in W. Crook: 1975) was probably the first to provides detailed ethnographic account of the Musahars. The name Musahar is derived from 'Musa Ahar' meaning 'rat-eater' or 'rat-catcher' but many other tribes also used to eat rat to survive. However, Crook prefer to call them 'flesh-seeker' or 'hunter' based on a legend which led to the tribe being driven to the jungle and maintain itself by hunting wild animals. Another legend explains their origin as follows: When Parameswar (lord Siva) created the first man of each caste, he gave each a horse to ride on, and a tool to work with. Each took his tool and mounted his horse, but the Musahar began to dig a pair of holes in the belly of his horse in which he might fix his feet as he rode. Parameswar saw his folly and ordered that descendants of Musahars should live on rats which they should dig out of the earth. When Parameswar had finished eating, the Musahar began to lick his leaf platter (patari). Seeing this, Parameswar said "These are low people. They shall always lick the platter", and so they have been degraded ever since (Crook, 1975: 1-13). This habit still prevails in most parts of eastern Uttar Pradesh in late 20th century.

Musahars derive their name from a curious association with field rat. They are supposed to possess a hereditary instinct for locating the underground burrows and grain catches of these animals. After each harvest they derive the rats from their holes and take a portion of their grain. But they do not kill the rats and take care to leave sufficient grain for them to survive until the next harvest. The relationship is thus symbiotic (Fuchs, 1981:30).

In Ghazipur district in U.P., Musahars do not have permanent home (Saxena, 1949: 108). They live outside the village in small huts and move around rural areas. They do not have any proper means of livelihood and they indulge in some criminal activities in Ballia, Ghazipur, Jaunpur, Sultanpur of Uttar Pradesh and Shahabad in Bihar states (Ayyanger, 1951: 31). However, they are not trained criminals. Musahars were notified as a criminal tribe in the Uttar Pradesh while a gang of Musahar as well as Musahars of Itihari (Bihar) were notified as a criminal tribe in Bihar State. They commit robberies and dacoit's by making stray assaults on passers-by in the dark nights (Ayyanger, 1951).

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The settled Musahar live in villages and work as field labourers, while nomadic Musahars prefer to hunting in the jungles and collecting forest produce and fuel which they sell in the villages. In eastern Uttar Pradesh, they carry palanquins, and make 'Donas' and 'Pattals' from the leaves collected from forests mainly used for eating during religious ceremonies such as marriages and other community functions.

No systematic attempt has been made to study the demographic and socio-economic conditions of the Musahars except few making some note (Shah, 1967, Mukul, 1999; Singh, 1999). The present paper seeks to examine the existing characteristics of the caste using primarily available data from Indian censuses of 1961-2011. Recently concluded National Family and Health survey of 2005-06 provides some information on the caste which is also used to examine changing social and demographic characteristics of the Musahar. Based on NFHS survey of 2005-06, 109 households were extracted from state data of Bihar and U.P. who reported their caste as Musahar. In Bihar some uses Manjhi as surname but surname Manjhi also used mostly by boatman. Therefore paper uses data of NFHS III for those household who reported clearly as Musahar. The main objective of present paper is to analyze demographic and socio-economic characteristics of the Musahar caste during last 100 years. First, demographic characteristic of the caste is examined from census data and latter part relates to some characteristics available from NFHS surveys.

Population Growth

According to 2011 census, 3,057,396 persons reported as members of Musahar caste accounting about 0.23 per cent of total population of India and 1.8 per cent of total scheduled caste population in the country. Figure 1 provides the population of Musahar from census of 1891-2011. Due to non-availability of scheduled caste data for 1941 and 1951 census, decadal variations are not computed for 1941-51 and 1951-61. It can be noted that the decadal growth rate of the caste was higher than country decadal growth rate as they recorded growth of 28.22 per cent during 2001-11 compared to all India growth rate of 17.7 per cent. The growth rate during 1991-2001 was little lower as 27.06. In the recent decades the decadal growth is increasing at faster rate as compared the earlier decades as well recorded higher growth rate among Musahar population as compared to all India population growth (Table 1).

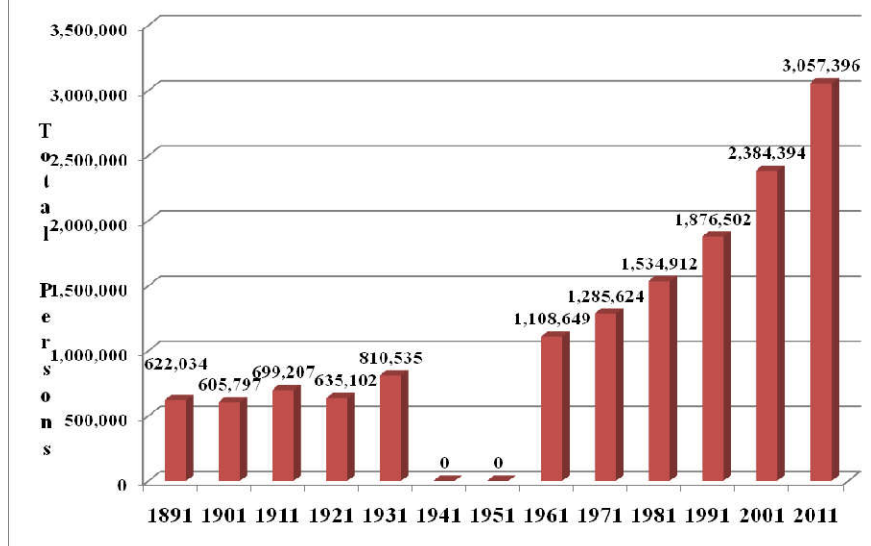
Table 1: Decadal Variation and Sex Ratio of Musahars in India, 1891-2011

Census Year	1901	1911	1921	1961	1971	1981	1991	2001	2011
Sex Ratio	1021	1016	1014	994	953	965	918	932	936
Decadal Variation	-2.61	15.42	-9.17	NA	15.96	19.39	22.25	27.06	28.22
India decadal Growth		5.75	-0.31	21.51	24.80	24.66	23.87	21.54	17.70

N.B. Population figure of 1901 are for Bihar and 1921 Bihar and Orissa only. Data on Musahar caste were not available for 1941 and 1951 census.

Source: Census of India 1891-2011, Special Tables for Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribes. Census data of 2001 and 2011 are available in soft copy.

Another important change in their population characteristics can be observed from their changing sex ratio - females per thousand males. While in early period of 20th century females were more than males, the trend has changed in favour of males in later part of 20th century. In 2011, 936 females per thousand males were found which has improved from 918 females per thousand male in 1991 and 932 in 2001. The sex ratio of Musahar caste was much better around 960 during 1971 and 1981 census which had sharply declined in 1991. It seems likely that higher prevalence of mortality among Musahar might affect sex ratio. Some members of the caste were enumerated in Orissa (57 in 2011, 35 in 2001 and 576 in 1991 and 29 in 1981) and Tripura (327 in 2011, 265 in 2001, 237 in 1981 and only 61 in 1991) and they are likely to be migrants from Bihar.

Figure 1: Population of Musahars, 1891-2011

Rural-Urban Distribution

In contrast to urban population of India - 28 per cent, Musahar inhabitants in urban areas were merely 3.67 per cent in 2011 which increased from 3 per cent in 2001 (Table 2). The reasons for low level of urban resident among Musahars are historical as well as social and economic. The fact that they have been living in jungles for a long time and social contact with other caste has been limited probably accounts for their lower inhabitation in urban areas. The urban growth rate of Musahar was nearly 2 times higher as compared to rural growth. During 2001 and 2011 the urban areas recorded increase of population by 57 per cent as compared to 27 per cent in rural areas. It was quite surprising the growth of urban population was nearly nil during 1991-2001. The Musahar population in urban areas of Bihar and Jharkhand did not increase much during 1991-2001 due to which urban growth minimal during the decade. However, earlier two decades 1971-81 and 1981-91 - the observed growth rate of Musahars residing in urban areas was 42 per cent compared to 29 per cent during 1961-71, indicating higher migration of Musahars from rural areas to urban areas. The sex ratio in rural areas is 933 as compared to 899 in urban areas likely due to more male migration.

Table 2: State wise Distribution of Musahar Population by Gender and rural-urban residence in 1961-2011 Census (in '000)

Census year	Gender	Bihar			Uttar Pradesh			West Bengal			Total		
		Total	Rural	Urban	Total	Rural	Urban	Total	Rural	Urban	Total	Rural	Urban
1961	Total	1007	982	25	88	86	2	13	12	1	1109	1081	27
	Male	504	491	13	45	44	1	7	6	1	556	541	15
	Female	503	491	12	43	42	1	6	6		553	540	12
1971	Total	1168	1137	32	105	103	2	12	11	1	1286	1251	35
	Male	597	579	17	55	54	1	7	6	1	658	639	19
	Female	572	557	15	50	49	1	6	5		627	612	16
1981	Total	1391	1347	44	126	123	3	18	16	2	1535	1485	50
	Male	707	684	23	64	62	2	9	8	1	781	755	26
	Female	684	663	21	62	60	2	8	7	1	754	730	23

1991	Total	1688	1624	63	165	161	4	23	19	4	1876	1806	71
	Male	880	847	33	86	84	2	12	10	2	978	941	37
	Female	807	777	30	79	78	2	11	9	2	898	865	33
2001	Total	2155	2091	63	207	202	5	22	20	2	2384	2313	71
	Male	1115	1081	33	107	104	3	11	10	1	1234	1196	37
	Female	1040	1010	30	100	98	2	11	10	1	1151	1117	34
2011	Total	2778	2677	101	257	249	8	21	17	4	3057	2945	112
	Male	1435	1383	52	133	129	4	11	9	2	1579	1521	58
	Female	1343	1295	49	124	120	4	10	9	2	1478	1424	54

Source: Same as Table 1. Figure of Bihar includes Jharkhand Musahar population of 42,647 in 2001 and 53,096 in 2011 for comparison purpose with previous censuses. Similarly Uttar Pradesh population 2011 includes 718 Musahar enumerated in Uttaranchal state. Total column includes Musahar population enumerated in other states mainly in Odhisa (57) and Tripura (327).

District wise Distribution of Musahar Population

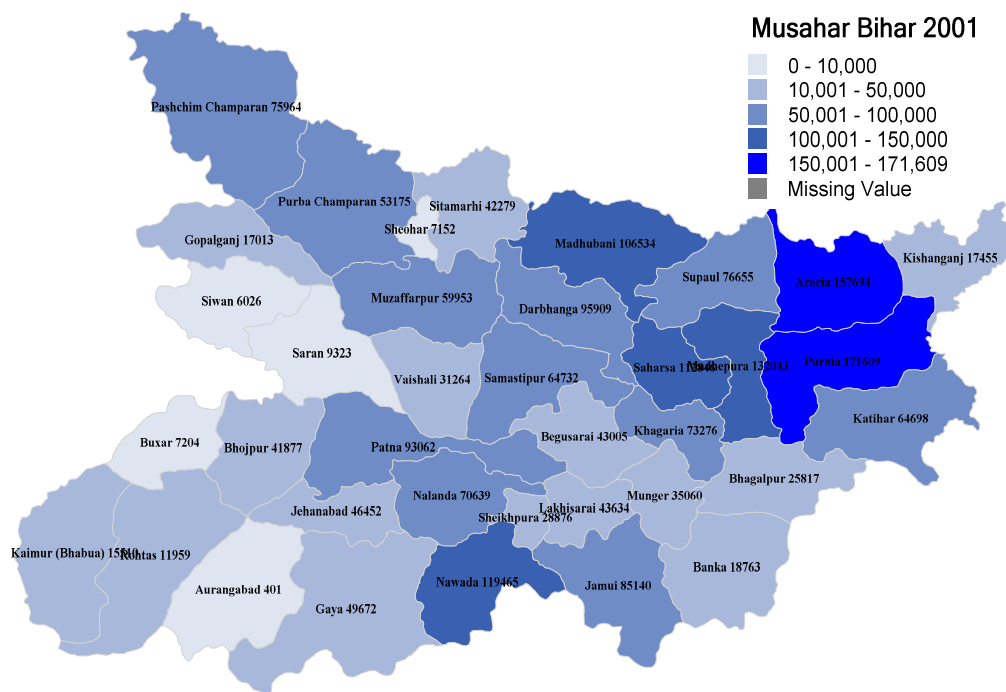
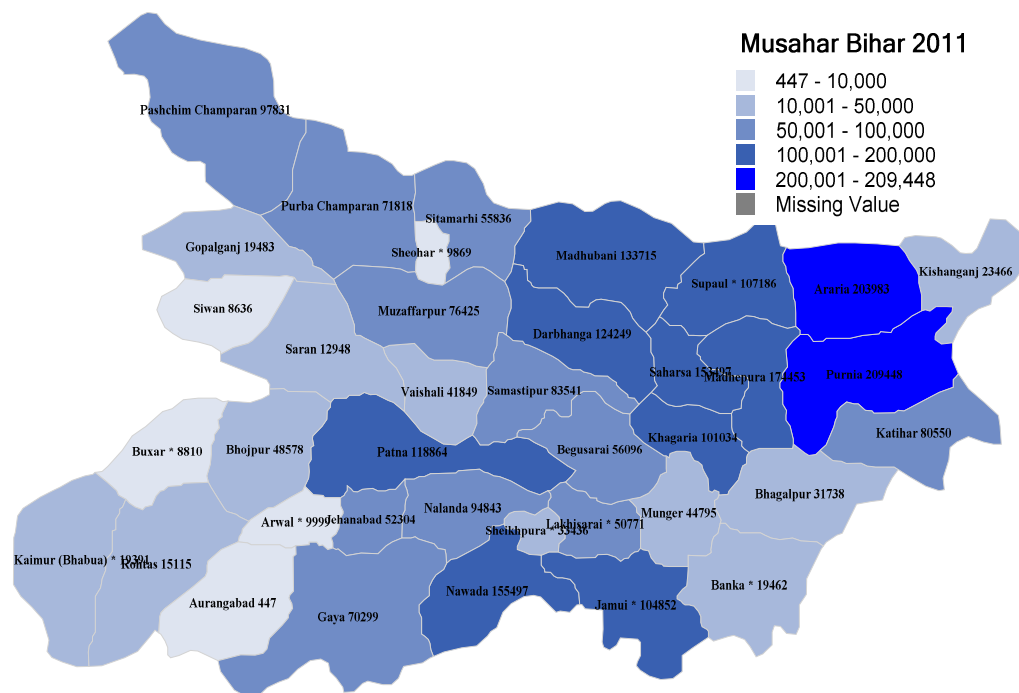
Districtwise population distribution of Musahar indicates that they are mainly found in the districts of eastern Uttar Pradesh, all over Bihar and northern part of West Bengal. In 2011, district of Bihar such as Purnia and Araria recorded more than two lakh person of Musahar population in Purnia (209,448 in 2011 and 171,609 in 2001) and in Araria (203,983 in 2011 and 157,694 in 2001). The districts of Bihar recorded the population on Musahar between 1 and 2 lakhs are Madhepura (174,453 in 2011 and 132,043 in 2001), Nawada (155,497 in 2011 and 119,465 in 2001), Saharsa (153,497 in 2011 and 112,846 in 2001), Madhubani (133,715 in 2011 and 106,534 in 2001), Darbhanga (124,249 in 2011 and 95,909 in 2001), Patna (118,864 in 2011 and 93,062 in 2001), Saupal (107,186 in 2011 and 76,655 in 2001), Jamui (104,852 in 2011 and 85,140 in 2001) and Khagaria (101,034 in 2011 and 64,698 in 2001). In following districts of Bihar population was recorded less than one lakh such as Pashchim Champaran (97,831), Nalanda (94,843), Samastipur (83,541), Katihar (80,550), Muzaffarpur (76,425), Gaya (70,299), Puarb Champaran (71,818), Begusarai (56,096), Sitamarhi (55,836) Jehanabad (52,304) and Lakhi Sarai (50,771) were reported as Musahar caste. In other districts of Bihar state less than 50,000 persons were enumerated of Musahar caste (Map 1 in 2011 and Map 2 in 2001 census). The districtwise Musahar population in Bihar state is provided in appendix I in 2011 and 2001 census. The Jharkhand state which came into existence after bifurcation state of Bihar in November 2000 recorded highest Musahar population in Deoghar (16,356 in 2011) and Godda district (10,155). The other district of Jharkhand recorded less than 10,000 Musahar population (appendix I).

The state of Uttar Pradesh which accounts about 10 per cent of Musahar population their main concentration was found in eastern U.P. In 2011, the district of Jaunpur recorded highest population (37,229) followed by Kushinagar (34,843), Ghazipur (22,123), Chandauli (21,222), Varanasi (21,272), Mirzapur (17,046), Azamgarh (19,035), Allahabad (16,820) and Sant Ravidas Nagar (15,264). The other district recorded less than 10,000 Musahar population. The districtwise population in Uttar Pradesh is presented in Map 3 for 2011 and Map 4 in 2001 census (appendix II).

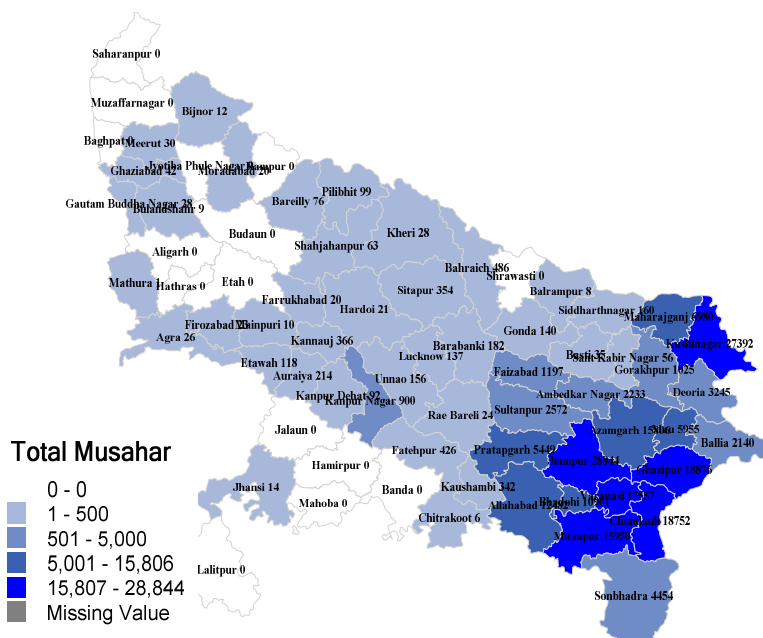
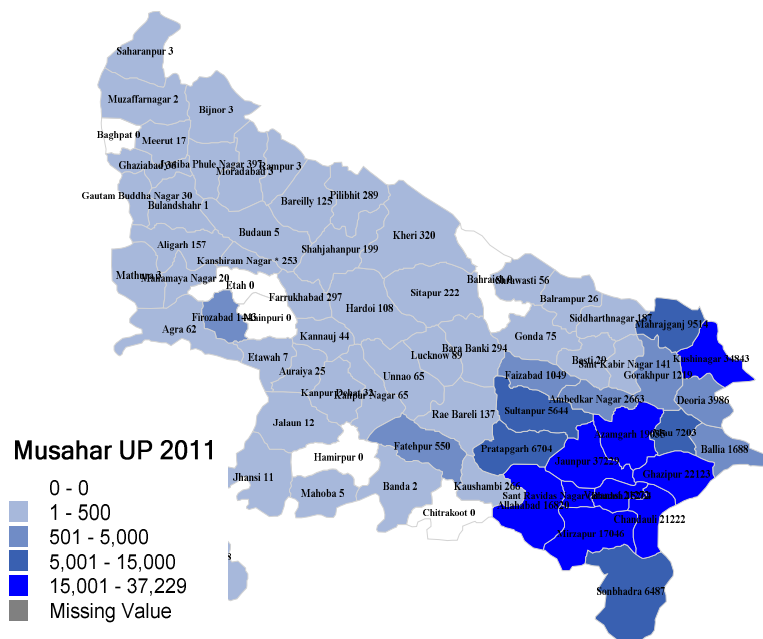
According to 2011 census in West Bengal, mainly found in two districts Maldah (7532 in 2011 and 7,617 in 2001) and Uttar Dinajpur (7,773 in 2011 and 6,938 in 2001) enumerated higher population of Musahar caste. The other districts recorded less than 1000 persons of the caste. In many districts mostly males were enumerated, most of whom were likely the migrants from other districts. Similarly, the population in some districts has changed drastically indicating higher mobility among the caste.

The migration data among Musahar is not available from census data. The population figure indicates that Musahar are mobile from one district to other. Some of district in the state of Bihar, UP, West Bengal and Jharkhand shows their movement. Some member of Musahar caste was enumerated in Tripura, Assam and Odhisa which can be attributed to movement from major states for livelihood as well other social changes such as hostility towards group shown by other caste group.

Map 1 and 2: Musahar Population in Bihar 2011 and 2001 census



Map 3 and 4: Musahar population in Uttar Pradesh 2011 and 2001 census



Age-Sex distribution of Musahar Population 1961-2011

Table 3 presents the age-sex distribution of Musahar in broad age-groups during the last six censuses - 1961-2011. In 2011, children (age below 18 years) constituted about 50.5 per cent of the population and about 5.5 per cent as old age population (aged 60 years and above). The percentage of children below 18 year has increased by one percent from 2001 census. The child population below 15 years has shown an increase of about 1.5 per cent from during 2001 and 2011 census which may be either due to higher fertility or better survival. . The sex ratio of child population show consistent decline over the decades and lower than overall sex ratio.

Nearly 48 per cent of populations fall in working age group between 15 to 59 years. The percentage of aged population (60 years and above) was nearly 5.6 percentage as compared to 8 per cent among Scheduled Caste and 9 per cent in the general population. The sex ratio among aged was lower among female as compared to young and working population.

Table 3: Percentage Distribution of Musahar Population by Age and Gender: 1961-2011 Census

Age Groups	Male	Female	Total	Sex Ratio
1961 Census*				
0-14	43.14	42.18	43.22	997
15-44	40.79	42.04	40.78	993
45+	16.05	15.78	16.08	998
Total	555982	552535	1108517	994
1971 Census*				
0-14	43.38	42.00	42.40	936
15-44	41.13	43.28	42.18	1003
45+	19.96	14.72	15.42	872
Total	658119	627479	1285598	953
1981 Census*				
0-14	41.21	40.01	40.63	937
15-59	51.72	53.23	52.46	994
60+	7.06	6.74	6.09	922
Total	780871	753776	1534647	965
1991 Census**				
0-14	41.17	40.32	40.77	899
15-59	52.32	54.53	53.38	957
60+	6.12	4.85	5.51	728
Total	978120	897743	1875863	918
2001 Census**				
0-14	45.32	44.14	44.75	908
15-59	49.17	50.83	49.97	964
60+	5.23	4.82	5.03	860
Total	1233415	1150294	2383709	933
2011 Census**				
0-14	46.80	46.07	46.45	921
15-59	47.21	48.43	47.80	960
60+	5.65	5.18	5.42	859
Total	1579277	1478119	3057396	936

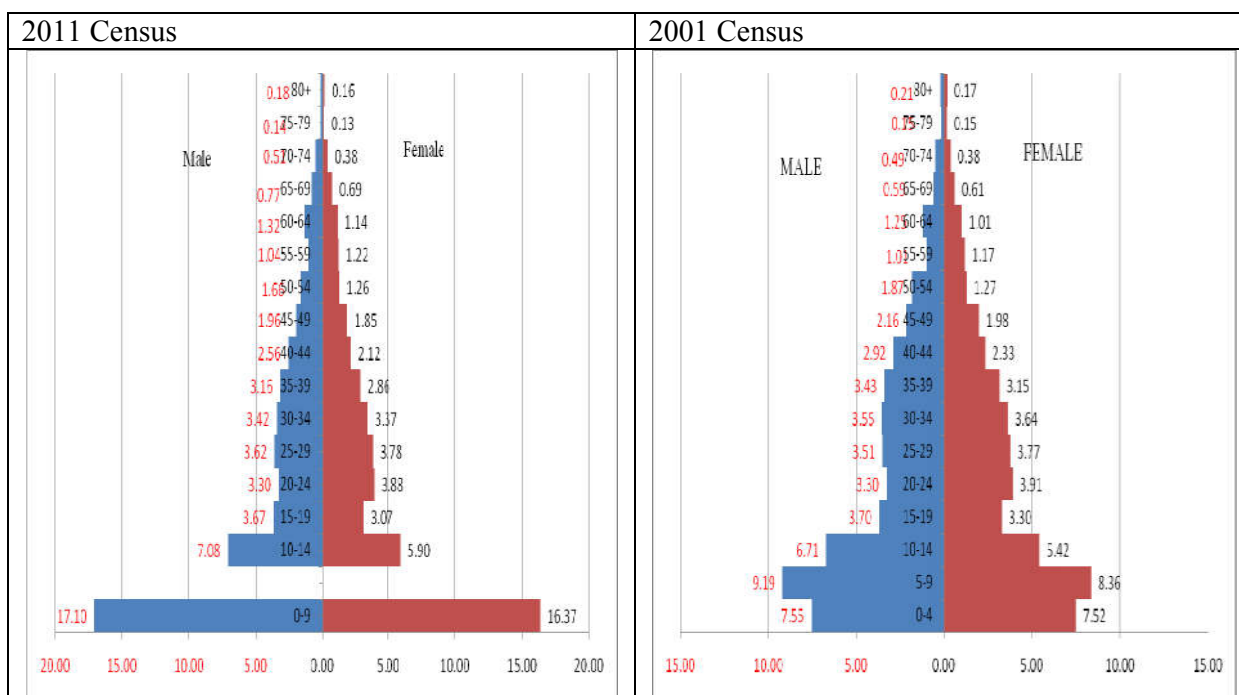
NB: * Data Bihar and Uttar Pradesh are used for 1961-1981.

** Data from Bihar, Jharkhand, Uttar Pradesh and West Bengal.

The population pyramid of Musahar population shows higher percentage of children population which is an indication of higher fertility in the group and comparatively lower percentage of population old ages. The lower percentage of population among Musahar is reflects higher prevalence of mortality in

the group. While lot of improvement has taken place in term of health availability and accessibility but Musahar suffer due to their economic condition and discrimination by health professional.

Figure 2: Percentage Distribution of Musahar population by Sex and Age, India 2011 and 2001



Dependency Ratio

The dependency ratio among Musahar was found much higher as compared to Scheduled Caste population as well total population in the country. In 2011, the child dependency defined as population below 15 year to total working population (15 to 59 years) was 972. The old age (population aged 60 years and above) to total working population was 113. In 2011, the child dependency ratio was 510 and old age dependency 142 in India and for Scheduled Caste population the child dependency was 555 and old age dependency as 132. The higher child dependency indicates that the working population among Musahar has to support a large number of young population which affect their economic condition which is already at subsistence level due to type of work they get mostly agriculture labour.

Marital Status

In 2011, nearly 55 per cent of male and 50 per cent of females reported as unmarried, mostly young children. About 46 per cent female and 42 per cent male are married and 4.1 per cent female and 2.0 per cent male are widowed, while less than 0.1 per cent reported as divorced/separated. As expected, females indicate early marriage age than males, in age group 25-29 nearly 98 per cent female and 93 per cent male reported as married. The instances of widowed/divorced and separated were more among females, which shows a declining trend from previous censuses. It is likely that among widowed and divorced male remarriage is more common compared to females. Nesfield observed that bigamy is not allowed among Musahar and any man doing so is isolated from the caste. Similarly, divorce and separation is discouraged in the caste. Sometimes younger brother of deceased husband can claim the widow. The census data indicate that during last five decades the marriages are slightly delayed indicating rising age at marriage.

Table 4: Marital status distribution of Musahars by Gender, 1961-2001

Census Year	Unmarried		Married		Widowed		Divorce/separated	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
1961	42.42	36.39	53.10	54.05	4.48	9.57		
1971	44.38	38.60	52.08	54.04	3.55	7.37		
1981	46.78	39.69	49.82	52.94	3.40	7.37		
1991	48.00	40.95	49.24	54.63	2.65	4.35	0.10	0.07
2001	53.02	46.37	44.49	48.94	2.39	4.60	0.10	0.09
2011	55.63	49.64	42.33	46.13	2.04	4.12	0.09	0.10

Source: Census of India, same as table 1

Literacy and Educational Standard by Residence and Sex

The number of literates in a society reflects its social position and state of development. The level and quality of literacy among Musahar is quite low (Table 5). Nearly 78 per cent of Musahar populations in 2011 are completely illiterate – as defined by the census. Females were less educated than males. Some improvement in Literacy level are noted during the last two decades compared to previous decades where the percentage has remained more or less stable around 98 per cent. As one may expect higher literacy among urban resident compared to rural resident, only male indicate higher percentage of literate in urban areas. Females of Musahar remain mostly illiterate. It seems that many factors contribute to low level of literacy such as due to poor economic conditions, most of them cannot afford to send their children to school, those who do enter school often drop out of school system at early age on account of untouchability or have to take care of young children in the family and or to contribute to family income.

Among the literates most of them were literate without educational standard and negligible percentage of Musahar population were matriculates or above. Only 1,346 persons were graduates among this caste in 2001, mostly male (1258). The statewide literate persons among this caste who had acquired some schooling were nearly 6.9 per cent in Bihar, 10.2 per cent in U.P. and 12.0 per cent in West Bengal, of which most of them had up to primary or junior level of schooling. Literacy data among Musahar suggest that the casts are extremely backward and improvement during the last five decades has been negligible.

Table 5: Educational Standard of Musahar Population by Sex and Rural - Urban Residence; 1961-2011

Educational Standard	Census Year	Rural		Urban		Total
		Male	Female	Male	Female	
Illiterate	1961	96.41	99.41	93.77	98.74	97.86
	1971	97.12	99.80	91.11	99.37	98.33
	1981	96.13	99.70	90.64	98.62	97.77
	1991	94.07	99.12	83.81	93.98	94.07
	2001	89.18	96.86	84.90	93.75	92.78
	2011	73.56	82.99	74.52	83.11	78.14
Literate without Educational Standard	1961	3.24	0.58	5.23	0.98	1.94
	1971	1.66	0.13	3.95	0.44	0.95
	1981	2.31	0.25	4.03	0.80	1.33
	1991	2.00	0.45	3.71	2.29	2.00
	2001	1.37	0.80	1.62	0.90	1.10
Primary or Junior Basic	1961	0.33	0.02	0.90	0.23	0.18
	1971	1.10	0.07	3.50	0.19	0.64
	1981	1.29	0.05	3.91	0.48	0.73

	1991	1.83	0.24	4.00	1.56	1.83
	2001	8.67	2.27	11.50	4.95	5.66
Matriculation Higher Secondary	1961	0.03	-	0.10	0.05	0.02
	1971	0.11	-	1.14	-	0.07
	1981	0.26	-	1.27	0.09	0.15
	1991	2.00	0.17	7.63	2.02	2.00
	2001	0.68	0.06	1.58	0.35	0.40
Graduate and Above	1961	-	-	0.01	-	-
	1971	-	-	0.30	-	0.01
	1981	0.01	-	0.15	0.01	0.01
	1991	0.10	0.02	0.85	0.16	0.10
	2001	0.09	0.01	0.41	0.06	0.06

Source: Same as table 1. For 2011 census data on education standard are yet to be published

Sources of Livelihood

Earlier, the Musahars used to be mainly engaged in shifting cultivation, hunting and food gathering but due to government prohibition on shifting cultivation and hunting, they have been forced to work mainly as agricultural labourers to earn their livelihood. According to 2011 census, 42.6 per cent Musahar population was reported workers. The male work participation was 49 per cent while 35.7 per cent among women. In comparison to 2001 census, the work participation has declined by about 6 per cent. The decline in WPR was noticed for both male and female.

Due to subsistence level of economy, the work participation rate among the Musahar is higher than that of the general population as 49.07 per cent males and 35.69 per cent females were returned as workers as against 50.7 per cent males and 22.3 per cent females in Scheduled Caste of Bihar, Uttar Pradesh and West Bengal in 2011 census. During last 10 year between 2001 and 2011 census, the work participation rate has declined by about 5 per cent for both male and female (Table 6). The work participation rate decline by about 11 per cent among main worker (those who get work for more than 6 month) while it increased among marginal workers (those who reported getting work for less than 6 month). It may be attributed to government employment scheme such MNERGA which provides work for about 100 days. In rural areas higher work participation rate was reported among the Musahars than urban areas. The female of rural areas also reported higher participation rate.

Table 6: Work Participation rate among Musahar population according to place of residence 2001 & 2011 census

	Total			Main			Marginal		
	Person	Male	Female	Person	Male	Female	Person	Male	Female
2011 census									
Total	42.60	49.07	35.69	22.86	29.82	15.43	19.74	19.25	20.26
Rural	42.77	49.06	36.05	22.88	29.70	15.58	19.89	19.36	20.47
Urban	38.12	49.35	26.15	22.46	32.91	11.31	15.66	16.44	14.84
2001 census									
Total	48.49	54.36	42.19	34.23	44.14	23.61	14.25	10.22	18.58
Rural	48.68	54.43	42.53	34.36	44.25	23.76	14.32	10.17	18.77
Urban	42.10	52.16	30.93	30.05	40.34	18.63	12.05	11.82	12.30
Percentage change 2001 - 2011									
Total	-5.89	-5.29	-6.50	-11.37	-14.31	-8.19	5.48	9.03	1.68
Rural	-5.91	-5.37	-6.48	-11.48	-14.55	-8.18	5.57	9.18	1.70
Urban	-3.98	-2.81	-4.78	-7.60	-7.43	-7.32	3.62	4.62	2.54

Industrial classification of Musahar population shows that a very large percentage of them, nearly 88 per cent, were engaged in primary sector as cultivators and agricultural labourers. Most of them were agricultural labourers, nearly 83 per cent. The remarkable difference between Musahar and

Scheduled caste population was observed in terms of those who reported to be engaged in cultivation and agriculture labour. Nearly 83 per cent of Musahar were engaged as agriculture labourer as against 42 per cent of scheduled caste population while only 4 per cent reported as cultivator among Musahar in contrast to 42 per cent of S.C. population. This clearly shows that Musahar are more disadvantaged group among SC. Over the years the percentage of agricultural labourer has increased while percentage depending on cultivation and household industry has consistently declined.

The dependency on household industry which was one of customary occupation of Musahar as cane and leaf-plate workers, show sizable decline over time. The extreme rise in agricultural labourers to earn livelihood is likely due to many social and economic factors. Due to small and less productive land holding and division in the family have probably shifted them from cultivation to agricultural labourers. Similarly new entrants in labour force were mostly unskilled and this could get employment as labourers in agricultural activities. Employment in traditional household industry has also declined due to availability of modern and cheap products which also likely shifted many workers to labourer category. In urban areas also most of workers were engaged as labourers and in transport services-probably as load carrier. Female workers were comparatively more employed as agricultural labourer in both rural and urban areas.

Some result from National Family and Health Survey

Assets Owned

National Family and Health Survey (round III) conducted during 2005-06, collected some information regarding type of assets in the household. A total of 109 households reported to belong to Musahar caste, mainly in the state of Bihar. In terms of ownership of assets Musahar fall at the bottom of development. About 23.9 per cent own Bicycle, 10.1% Radio, No one reported owning assets like Motorcycle, Car, Telephone, Mobile, refrigerator and television, except just one household living in urban area. Nearly 68.8 per cent fall in lowest quintile of wealth known as poorest and 28.4 per cent as poorer. About 13 per cent reported to own agriculture land and 8 per cent bank account. However, no one reported to own any agricultural facility such as water pump, tractor, thresher and bullock cart which itself speaks of their economic condition. About 30 per cent reported to own livestock mostly pig. No one reported to own cow, buffaloes, sheep, goat, bullocks etc.

No household were covered by any health insurance scheme and nearly 56 per cent reported to have BPL card. Based on various indicators of facility and assets, according to NFHS data nearly 92 per cent fall in lowest category of level of standard of living index.

Housing condition

About 52.3 per cent live in katchha house followed by 45.9 per cent in semi pucca houses. Fifty per cent had only one room and another 25 per cent 2 rooms. Nearly 83.3 per cent do not have separate kitchen. Ninety nine percent of households of Musahar reported to that they do not have any toilet facility and mostly use open space/Bush/field while more than 92 per cent depend on tube well or bore well for drinking water. Based on household data of NFHS 3, Musahars are one of the most disadvantaged group among Scheduled Caste. Their economic condition is lowest.

Discussion and Conclusions

The Musahar's are mainly found in three states of India - Bihar, Jharkhand, Uttar Pradesh and West Bengal. Small numbers of caste members were also enumerated in Assam, Orissa, Tripura. The growth rates of the caste were lower than the general population probably reflecting higher mortality among them. They are socially and economically backward. The majorities of the Musahars caste resides in rural areas and are mostly illiterate. During last six censuses, data indicate that as far as the educational level is concerned they had made negligible improvement. Most of caste population depended on agriculture as agricultural labourers. During post independence 1961-2001 the

proportion of agricultural labourers has increased significantly during 1961-2001 while proportion of cultivators has declined during the same period. An in-depth study of the caste may throw light on their socio-economic life. The various government initiatives need to be more focused to improve Musahar socio-economic conditions. The analysis of NFHS 3 data indicate that many service providers do not interact with caste.

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Appendix I: Districtwise Population of Musahar in Bihar state, 2001 and 2011 census

Sr No	District of Bihar	2011	2001	Sr No	District of Jharkhand	2011	2001
1	Pashchim Champaran	97831	75964	01	Garhwa *	645	638
2	Purba Champaran	71818	53175	02	Palamu	1249	1184
3	Sheohar *	9869	7152	03	Chatra *	249	658
4	Sitamarhi	55836	42279	04	Hazaribag	1623	2123
5	Madhubani	133715	106534	05	Kodarma *	3577	2735
6	Supaul *	107186	76655	06	Giridih	5137	2674
7	Araria	203983	157694	07	Deoghar	16356	12017
8	Kishanganj	23466	17455	08	Godda	10155	8283
9	Purnia	209448	171609	09	Sahibganj	4866	4071
10	Katihar	80550	64698	10	Pakaur *	1051	585
11	Madhepura	174453	132043	11	Dumka	99	1225
12	Saharsa	153497	112846	12	Dhanbad	6019	5396
13	Darbhanga	124249	95909	13	Bokaro *	494	580
14	Muzaffarpur	76425	59953	14	Ranchi	161	227
15	Gopalganj	19483	17013	15	Lohardaga	3	0
16	Siwan	8636	6026	16	Gumla	26	35
17	Saran	12948	9323	17	Pashchimi Singhbhum	46	124
18	Vaishali	41849	31264	18	Purbi Singhbhum	140	92
19	Samastipur	83541	64732	19	Latehar - New in 2011	39	
20	Begusarai	56096	43005	20	Ramgarh - New in 2011	369	
21	Khagaria	101034	73276	21	Jamtara - New in 2011	598	
22	Bhagalpur	31738	25817	22	Khunti - New in 2011	102	
23	Banka *	19462	18763	23	Simdega - New in 2011	7	
24	Munger	44795	35060	24	Saraikella - New in 2011	85	
25	Lakhisarai *	50771	43634				
26	Sheikhpura *	33436	28876				
27	Nalanda	94843	70639				
28	Patna	118864	93062				
29	Bhojpur	48578	41877				
30	Buxar *	8810	7204				
31	Kaimur (Bhabua) *	19391	15510				
32	Rohtas	15115	11959				
33	Aurangabad	447	401				
34	Gaya	70299	49672				
35	Nawada	155497	119465				
36	Jamui *	104852	85140				
37	Jehanabad	52304	46452				
38	Arwal *	9999					

Source: Census of India, 2001 and 2011, soft copy, SC07, Marital Status by Age and Sex for each caste separately

Appendix II: Districtwise Population of Musahar in Uttar Pradesh state, 2001 and 2011 census

Sr No	District	2011	2001	Sr No	District	2011	2001
1	Saharanpur	3	0	36	Lalitpur	8	0
2	Muzaffarnagar	2	0	37	Hamirpur	0	0
3	Bijnor	3	12	38	Mahoba	5	0
4	Moradabad	3	20	39	Banda	2	0
5	Rampur	3	0	40	Chitrakoot	0	6
6	Jyotiba Phule Nagar	397	0	41	Fatehpur	550	426
7	Meerut	17	30	42	Pratapgarh	6704	5449
8	Baghpat	0	0	43	Kaushambi	266	342
9	Ghaziabad	36	42	44	Allahabad	16820	12482
10	Gautam Buddha Nagar	30	28	45	Bara Banki	294	182
11	Bulandshahr	1	9	46	Faizabad	1049	1197
12	Aligarh	157	0	47	Ambedkar Nagar	2663	2233
13	Mahamaya Nagar (Hathras)	20		48	Sultanpur	5644	2572
14	Mathura	3	1	49	Bahraich	0	486
15	Agra	62	26	50	Shrawasti	56	0
16	Firozabad	1443	23	51	Balrampur	26	8
17	Mainpuri	0	10	52	Gonda	75	140
18	Budaun	5	0	53	Siddharthnagar	187	160
19	Bareilly	125	76	54	Basti	29	35
20	Pilibhit	289	99	55	Sant Kabir Nagar	141	56
21	Shahjahanpur	199	63	56	Mahrajganj	9514	6980
22	Kheri	320	28	57	Gorakhpur	1219	1025
23	Sitapur	222	354	58	Kushinagar	34843	27392
24	Hardoi	108	21	59	Deoria	3986	3245
25	Unnao	65	156	60	Azamgarh	19035	15806
26	Lucknow	89	137	61	Mau	7203	5955
27	Rae Bareli	137	24	62	Ballia	1688	2140
28	Farrukhabad	297	20	63	Jaunpur	37229	28844
29	Kannauj	44	366	64	Ghazipur	22123	18876
30	Etawah	7	118	65	Chandauli	21222	18752
31	Auraiya	25	214	66	Varanasi	21272	17557
32	Kanpur Dehat	32	92	67	Sant Ravidas Nagar (Bhadohi)	15264	10961
33	Kanpur Nagar	65	900	68	Mirzapur	17046	15950
34	Jalaun	12	0	69	Sonbhadra	6487	4454
35	Jhansi	11	14	70	Etah	0	0
				71	Kanshiram Nagar *	253	0

NB: In the district of Bagpat, Hamirpur and Etah, No Musahar caste was enumerated in 2001 and 2011.

Source: Census of India, 2001 and 2011, soft copy, SC07, Marital Status by Age and Sex for each caste Separately