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Rural Poverty, Public Policy and Social Change: Some Findings from Surveys of Six Villages

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RURAL POVERTY, PUBLIC POLICY AND SOCIAL CHANGE: SOME FINDINGS FROM SURVEYS OF SIX VILLAGES

Report of results of visit to WIDER Project at Santiniketan, West Bengal, between 14 December 1990 and 4 February 1991.

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Contents

1. Introduction

The WIDER project at Santiniketan, "Rural Poverty, Social Change and Public Policy", has generated a large amount of primary data from a number of villages in West Bengal in a series of surveys between 1987 and 1989. The motivation of the project was to provide first-hand information to help understand the relationship between changes in rural West Bengal and public policy, particularly those policies associated with the Left Front government.

Public Policy

Three aspects of the Left Front's rural programme stand out in West Bengal. Firstly, there are the land reforms. These consist of extensive land redistribution as well as the recording of tenure lease contract (Operation Barga). All-India legislation exists on both these issues, but success in implementation has been varied across the states. West Bengal can justifiably boast one of the most comprehensive reforms.

Secondly, the Left Front government is accredited with carrying out an over-haul of village administration under its reform of the panchayat system. West Bengal was the first place where panchayats were directly politicised, with open participation of political parties. They were also handed over many new powers, and effectively function as the basic unit of

rural administration[1].

Thirdly, the state government has gained a reputation for relatively efficient implementation of central government rural development schemes and poverty alleviation programmes. In the case of the IRDP, for instance, it has been found that leakage (or incidence of beneficiaries outside the target group) has been minimal[2]. This compares well with the performance of such schemes in other states.

At a more general level, the factors leading the Left Front to power, and indeed much of the political history of West Bengal, are associated with high levels of political articulation and organisation in the rural areas. In the last decade or so, agricultural labourers have been organised in unions, and strike action is not uncommon during wage bargaining. Literacy, provision of social services, and opposition to caste and other discriminatory practices are also widely raised political issues[3].

Outline

The WIDER Project provides an opportunity to examine conditions prevailing in rural West Bengal after over a decade of Left Front rule. While the significance of certain policy

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[1]See for example Westergaard (1986)

[2]Swaminathan (1990)

[3]Westergaard (1986)

actions in their effects on rural poverty and social change can be determined from the project data, the lack of comprehensive benchmarks renders any rigorous appraisal exercise impossible. It is hoped, however, that the data generated by the Project might themselves serve as baseline for any future studies.

The next section gives an account of the type of data generated. In section 3 we give profiles of the villages where surveys were carried out. Section 4 discusses the characteristics of poor households using various poverty measures, and attempts to establish the main determinants of current incomes. In section 5 we present an analysis of a food consumption and an under-fives nutrition survey. Section 6 looks at two broad themes of social change, viz. effects of land reforms and inter-generational occupational mobility in the four south Bengal villages. Concluding comments are offered in section 7.

2. Data

2.1. Village surveys

The backbone of the project data are the village surveys carried out in six villages of West Bengal, four in south Bengal and two others in the north of the state. The four south Bengal villages include two villages in Birbhum district (Kuchly and

Sahajapur), both of which have been surveyed in the past. Sahajapur has been studied periodically by the Agro-Economic Research Centre (AERC) at Santiniketan and others from 1956 onwards. Both villages were also surveyed for a study of sex biases in nutrition in 1983 and 1986[4]. Other south Bengal villages include one village in the district of Medinipur (Bhagabanbasan), and one mainly tribal village (Simtuni) in Purulia district. These were surveyed in 1987-88, while the north Bengal villages were canvassed in the following year. In north Bengal one village each was selected in the Jalpaiguri (Magurmari) and Cooch Behar (Kalmandasguri) districts. Village profiles are sketched in section 3.

In the two Birbhum villages camps were set up by the project, and their proximity to the project base in Santiniketan (also in Birbhum) meant that a number of field workers were involved. The project staff included two residents, one male and one female, from each of these two villages. The other villages were visited by several teams of field workers. Two field workers spent a total of six months in the year at each of these villages, in two rounds of three months each. In all six villages therefore, investigators had good knowledge of the village and its residents.

The village surveys are in two parts. A set of questions were put to the panchayat members regarding the overall situation in the villages. These include questions regarding the

[4]See Sen and Sengupta (1983).

infrastructure and provision of public facilities.

The major part of investigation, however, were the household surveys in which detailed information was obtained relating to various household and individual characteristics and activities. Besides questions about occupation, educational level, caste, size of land holding and operation, income and expenditure, the survey included questions on wage employment and wages in cash and kind, extent of irrigation and production of different crops, agricultural (out-of-pocket) costs of production, sales and purchase of assets, and borrowings.

The reliability of these data vary across the different types of variables. The main household and individual characteristics such as caste, land holding, educational status, occupation etc. are not problematic. Since the income, expenditure and production data are on the basis of a one-year recall, they are likely to be approximations rather than actual figures. There was no reason to suspect deliberately biased reporting and the field staff had good relations with the villagers, and knew nearly all of them personally. The problems of recall are therefore not likely to be cause of too much concern except in cases where large and genuine errors in memory are likely; e.g. expenditure on non-food items.

2.2. Sample surveys and other studies

Apart from these extensive surveys, three other sample surveys were conducted in these six villages. The first one identified ten poor households in each village, and these were canvassed for fifteen consecutive days in two seasons for their food consumption. These were in fact the first sets of surveys to be carried out in the villages, and preceded any information on relative earnings of households. Selection was made on the basis of observation of outward signs of impoverishment (housing conditions, number of earning members etc) and discussion with members of the panchayat.

The surveyors went to the villages twice during the annual cycle, the timing of the visits broadly corresponding with the lean and the peak periods of grain availability in the annual cycle. The former is in September/October, when stocks are depleted, while the latter is around January/February when the harvest has been taken and stocks replenished. This was done for all villages except Kuchly (Birbhum district) where only the peak period was covered. The households were canvassed for detailed data on food intake every day, as well as the source of the food supply, whether stock, purchase, wages in kind, or any other.

The surveys also collected detailed information on wages and earnings and economic activities of the household members during those fifteen days. Since a large number of the households in this survey were agricultural labourers, and since the period of recall was short, the data on wages so collected can be an important supplement to other data on wages and employment (in

the main survey) that is based upon a one year recall. In addition, since the consumption surveys were carried out in two seasons broadly corresponding to lean and peak seasons in terms of agricultural activity, some measure of seasonal variation can be captured, a feature that is not picked up by the general household surveys.

Another set of nutritional surveys that was carried out at the same time (season) was that of all children in the village at or below the age of 5 years. A prototype of this study had been carried out in Kuchly and Sahajapur in 1983 and then again in 1986 (Sen and Sengupta, 1983). The children were weighed and their nutritional status calculated using the age-for-weight guidelines currently employed by the Anganwadi (mother and child) centres all over West Bengal. These ratios are in turn based upon a WHO prescribed formula. Four categories of under-nourishment are identified, with the lowest one calling for clinical action.

The third special survey was based upon a 25 per cent sample drawn randomly, but in correspondence with the population caste and land ownership categories. These households, totalling 196, were surveyed for their general level of living with respect to clothing, footwear, housing conditions, sleeping and cooking arrangements, possession of utensils and other durable consumer items, and access to potable water and electricity. The households among this sample that owned cropped land of 5 acres or less were classified as poor, and some additional questions were addressed to them. These questions included those pertaining

to the availability of credit from various sources.[5]

Besides these village studies, at least two other studies collected data from different sets of villages. One of them was a detailed opinion poll of two Birbhum villages on the perception of villagers about their panchayats and village politics[6]. The other is a study on Operation Barga (the campaign for the recording of land lease contracts), and has data from several districts[7].

The present report will deal exclusively with the data generated in the surveys of the six core villages. One limitation of our data that must be acknowledged from the very outset, is that for most of the variables considered there is little or no benchmark for comparison. This is all the more problematic if part of our objective is to comment upon the changes in rural West Bengal as a result of the policies of the State government.

The data that have been generated, however, can be of great value in getting a fairly detailed snapshot of the villages. We shall be using income, land ownership, household and individual characteristics (caste, asset ownership, occupation, educational level, nutritional status etc) from the population surveys, and food consumption data from the sample survey.

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[5]For detailed results see Sengupta and Majumder (1990).

[6]Mukherjee (1990).

[7]Gangopadhyay (1990).

3. Village profiles

This section provides some basic demographic, economic and social information about the villages studied in the project. The villages are not randomly drawn, but they do represent the broad characteristics of the parts of West Bengal where they are located. Among the south Bengal villages, Kuchly and Bhagabanbasan benefit from perennial ground water irrigation, Sahajapur relies on tanks and Simtuni has almost no means of irrigation. The north Bengal villages are also not irrigated.

In terms of size the villages range from less than four hundred inhabitants (Simtuni) to a population of over a thousand (Sahajapur). Table 1 gives an age-by-sex summary of the villages. In all villages the number of females is less than the number of males. It is also worth noting that in the above 60 group the number of women is at least equal to the number of males in all six villages. Another similarity between the villages is the average household size.

3.1 Caste and social change

Table 2 shows the caste-wise distribution of population, and here the varied structure of villages is obvious. Caste is important as a variable not simply from the social justice point

of view. It may reveal something about changes that might have taken place in the economic situation. In particular, land ownership has been associated in the past primarily with Caste Hindus. Similarly, education was most accessible to members of this group. High incidence of landlessness, illiteracy, ill health and poverty among the "lower" castes would all indicate stagnation.

Literacy by age group is analyzed in Table 3. While the overall literacy rates vary greatly between villages, there appears to be a trend towards higher levels of literacy among younger age groups. The 6-15 age category can be somewhat misleading in this regard as many children doubtless gain literacy between these ages.

Table 4 shows that the caste pattern in literacy and education still holds true, where apart from Kalmandasguri in Cooch Behar, Caste Hindus have the highest literacy rate in all villages. This also accounts to some extent for the extremely low rate in Simtuni where over 80% of the inhabitants are from Scheduled Tribes.

3.2 Occupational profile

Table 5 is based upon the reported primary occupations of all workers. It shows a heavy dependence on agriculture in all

villages except Magurmari. Magurmari lies almost adjacent to a town and many people here rely on traditional non-agricultural activities such as biri-making for their livelihoods.

Another feature of the occupational profile is the near absence of tenant cultivation from our sample. There appears to have been a decline in the incidence of tenant farming, at least as the primary activity. This is confirmed by the analysis of occupational mobility (reported in section 6.2). Tenancy reforms, such as Operation Barga, by strengthening the legal position of tenants, are thought to have contributed to the virtual elimination of new share-tenancy contracts.

Another explanation is in terms of the declining size of land-holdings due to the increase in the per capita pressure on land. In the absence of any rapid expansion in urban employment opportunities, land holdings have been divided into ever smaller parcel, with the consequence that households tend to cultivate whatever they own.

The existing tenants are those who held leases before the reforms and were able to have them recorded. In the cases of both Sahajapur and Kuchly, (the two villages where share tenancy was important before), most of those who reported their fathers' primary occupation as tenant cultivation reported agricultural labour as their own primary occupation. There is, however, a good amount of seasonal leasing of land in Kuchly and Bhagabanbasan (both villages with perennial ground water

irrigation). Seasonal leasing contracts are outside the purview of tenancy reform legislation.

In the non-agricultural activities, "Craft" refers to traditional craftsmanship such as carpentry, iron-smithery etc. "Salaried Employment" refers to formal sector employment, and in the case of these villages, belongs exclusively to the public sector. It may include anyone from a peon in a government office to a teacher or any level of civil servant. The relatively high percentage of people (11.9%) relying on such employment in Sahajapur might be explained due to its proximity to the town of Bolpur, the district headquarters.

Despite the ambiguity of the term "Salaried Employment", and the wide range of incomes, activities and skill levels it encompasses, it is retained because permanence of employment is an important determinant of security in West Bengal. As will be discussed in section 6.2, it is also one the categories that is an important route for upward mobility.

3.3 Wage labour and wages

Wage (agricultural and in the case of Magurmari non-agricultural) labour is reported as primary occupation by a large number of workers in all villages. Wage labourers tend to be people with the poorest asset holdings, and agricultural wages

and unskilled non-agricultural wages can act as useful indicators of inter-regional differences. Table 6 reports summary results of wage data collected in the household surveys. These are based upon a one-year recall period, and do not reflect any seasonal variations. Even so, they tell us something about inter-village and other differences.

It is clear from the table that wages are a significant source of diversity between villages. Migration is also seen to occur in response to wage differentials between regions. This is particularly the case for Simtuni, nearly 80% of whose wage labourers are migrants. They travel to Bardhamman district, where wages are twice those found in Simtuni, in search for seasonal employment.

This may also explain the relatively lower average wage for people whose primary occupation is owner cultivation. These must include a large number of people who are not able to migrate for some reason or the other, and have a greater reliance on the cultivation of their own land. In the other three south Bengal villages those reporting their primary occupations are owner cultivation receive slightly higher wages than those who report their primary occupation to be agricultural labour. The differentials are not great (or indeed statistically significant) and this indicates the presence of a fairly unsegmented labour market.

Migration from Kuchly and Sahajapur is also mainly in the

direction of Bardhamman (which has good irrigation infrastructure and generally 2-3 crops a year).

The figures showing higher than average wages for women four of the villages are somewhat misleading: firstly because women work on average far fewer days then men (i.e. almost wholly during the peak season of agricultural activity) when the wages for all labourers are higher; and secondly because many boys and younger men work as attached labourers at low wage rates, but this is not strictly comparable to casual agricultural labour.

In any case, it is striking that there is no negative bias in women's wages. This contrasts with other parts of India, and indeed with West Bengal a few years ago. The presence of organisations of agricultural labourers, and the representation of women in these organisation is probably responsible for this elimination of a gender bias.

3.4 Income and inequality

The diversity in wages between villages is reflected in their respective average incomes, migration notwithstanding (Table 7). The figures for the north Bengal villages would be even lower in real terms when compared with south Bengal, given that they were surveyed some 18 months after, and price inflation has not been accounted for.

Table 7 also reports the results of inequality measures that show differences in the distribution of income. Income inequality is very much present in nearly all the villages. The one exception is Simtuni, where the overall level is very low, and which appears to be a case of "everybody being poor". The low level of inequality in Simtuni is also consistent with the commonly observed egalitarianism among tribal communities in West Bengal and elsewhere in India.

Data on average income, per capita income and average wages, act as a rough guide to the relative position of respective villages in our sample. As such, the confirm some casual inferences. Firstly, north Bengal villages appear to be much worse off than those in south Bengal. This is true even of the village that is in close proximity to a town (Magurmari). Secondly, within south Bengal the two villages with perennial irrigation (Kuchly and Bhagabanbasan) appear to be the best off. Sahajapur, despite its short distance from Bolpur town has lower average incomes than these two. Simtuni represents an interesting case. The resource base of the village is similar to the north Bengal villages, yet access to seasonal employment in neighbouring, more fertile districts, forms an important contribution to income here.

Differences in incomes between villages arising out of their divergent resource bases and access to sources of extra-village employment are significant factors in the overall picture of rural poverty in West Bengal. The survey villages capture this

well. It is clear, however, that redistributive policies such as land reform, formalisation of existing contractual arrangements (tenancy reform), and enhancement of the bargaining position of the poor ("pro-labour" panchayats), do not by themselves address the problem of inter-regional differences in agricultural resources. Such policies are most likely to have some impact on the patterns of poverty within villages over time.

The next section attempts to analyse the sources of poverty and inequality in the survey villages. The focus will be on the four south Bengal villages in particular.

4. Poverty measurement and income

Table 8 reports the incidence of poverty in the four south Bengal villages. The official poverty line has been used along with further disaggregation into four categories of poverty[8]. Per capita household income has been used for the calculations in Table 8. The relative position of the four villages in terms of incidence of poverty is in line with their relative mean income levels. This pattern breaks down, however, for the

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[8]The most commonly used is the head count against a criterion level of income. The income level used in India has been Rs. 6400 for a household consisting of 5 members. This is further disaggregated in the following manner:

less than 2265	destitute
2266 - 3500	extremely poor
3510 - 4800	very poor
4801 - 6400	poor

category "destitute", where the order is reversed between Simtuni and Sahajapur on the one hand, and Kuchly and Bhagabanbasan on the other. This is perhaps most significant in the case of Simtuni which has a far lower mean per capita income than Sahajapur, but has a smaller proportion of households that are "destitute". This is reflective of the differences in income distribution, and is in line with our results for inequality measures in the different villages.

4.1. Relative Poverty

Absolute income or poverty measures while being useful means of understanding differences between villages, need to be supplemented by measures that can reveal something about patterns of relative deprivation within villages. In Table 9 we report likely characteristics of the four poorest deciles using per capita income. Categories with entries greater than 0.40 represent those with the higher than average likelihood of being associated with relative poverty[9].

The landless have a high incidence of poverty in all villages except Simtuni. In Simtuni there are very few landless households and land is not nearly as productive as in other villages. Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe households also

[9]This methodology is similar to the one used by Lanjouw and Stern (1990) in their work on Palanpur.

have a higher than average probability of being poor. There is a high degree of collinearity between caste and land-owning status.

Table 10 illustrates this clearly, with caste Hindus counting for nearly all cases of per capita land ownership of more than 5 acres[10]. Similarly, their share amongst the landless is lowest in all villages except Simtuni. Simtuni diverges from the other villages, due to its peculiar caste composition and the lower economic value of land ownership owing to poor land productivity.

Multivariate analysis allows the possibility of separating out the residual effects of caste once asset ownership has been taken into account. This type of analysis has been conducted and results are reported below. Whether caste or land ownership is ultimately the relevant explanation, the continuing partial correlation of caste with landlessness and poverty is indicative of stagnation and economic immobility. Similar observations are due for occupational differences in Table 9.

4.2 Income determinants and correlates

[10]This table may be read alongside Table 2 that gives the caste-wise distribution of population in order to get some idea of the over or under-representation of various caste groups among the landless and the "land-rich".

In this section we report results of multivariate regressions of annual household income on a number of explanatory variables. These include a number of variables suggested by the results of cross-tabulations reported above. Household size, area in acres of land owned (not including land received as a result of land reforms) and additional areas of land operated under lease or as a result of land reforms, dummies for the ownership of modern implements (such as threshers, pumps, sprayers etc.) and host of caste and occupational dummies were tested. Educational level of the household was measured by using a dummy for whether or not the head of the household was literate. Table 11 summarises the results of the best-fit models, i.e. the final model as non-significant variables were progressively dropped from the regression, for all six villages.

Size of land holding is a significant variable in all villages, as is household size (which is kept to capture the "per capita effect"). The positive, significant coefficient for land ownership is as might be expected in an agrarian context. These results are, however, at variance with findings in other parts of India where no significant relationship was found between ownership of land and current income[11].

Assigned land was included separately as an explanatory variable from land ownership in order to examine its particular role as a determinant of income. The role of assigned land in

[11]For example see studies of Palanpur, Lanjouw and Stern (1990).

income augmentation is not straightforward. If farm size is positively correlated with productivity, small transfers of land to the landless or the land-poor might be expected to lead to high returns (this has been one the efficiency arguments for land redistribution). On the other hand, there are equally tenable reservation to this; if land transfers are very small and are not accompanied by complementary transfers of other essential farming assets, poor recipients may be unable to put these to productive use. In this case the marginal contribution to income is unlikely to be significant.

In our model the assigned land variable performs only in one village, Simtuni. Although this appears to lend support to the latter hypothesis, this sort of estimation under-estimates the economic value of marginal land holding. If land reforms have led to an overall rise in the agricultural wage level (due to the enhanced bargaining position of the formerly landless labourers) this would not be captured in our data. This might have been achieved if the redistributed land has made the position of the landless more secure simply in terms of their rights over homestead land[12].

The other two explanatory variables relating to agricultural production are seasonal leasing, and ownership of modern farm implements. Seasonal leasing occurs in areas where there are possibilities of irrigation during the summer season. It is

[12]More discussion of land redistribution follows in section 6.1

thought that the more able (in terms of the availability of labour, and other agricultural inputs) or the more enterprising households find it worth their while to lease in land during this season. In the two of our survey villages (Kuchly and Bhagabanbasan) where seasonal leasing does actually occur, it was found to be a significant determinant of income.

Similarly, the ownership of modern farm implements has a positive and significant coefficient in these two villages. The interpretation of these results is not straightforward, however, because the two variables are both determinants and consequences of higher income levels. This is also true for a number of the dummy variables representing the different occupations. For this reason it is useful to think of our results more as indicating correlates rather than determinants of income.

Among the occupational dummies the one for "service" (or salaried employment) is important in five of the six villages. This result confirms the finding of the mobility study (see Section 6.2) where most cases of upward mobility from agricultural occurred in this category.

It is interesting to note that once the effects of land ownership are netted out, caste drops out from the list of explanatory variables. The exceptions are the north Bengal villages. This is in contrast with findings in other parts of India, where caste remains an important explanatory variable for

income even after the inclusion of asset ownership[13].

Literacy is paradoxically negatively correlated with income in Kuchly, but does have some explanatory power in Simtuni. By and large, however, it does not appear to be and important determinant of income. This may also be due to estimation problems caused by the presence of multicollinearity with the dummy for occupation "service". Access to salaried employment (usually in the public sector) is generally contingent upon some minimal education qualifications. It would be reasonable to argue that it is not literacy in itself that accrues positive returns in terms of income, but the access to formal sector employment that it entails.

4.3 Apparent poverty versus income measures

Income-based poverty measures have come under scrutiny in many recent works on rural poverty. Since the present paper is based upon data collected without explicit reference to other ways of measuring poverty, it is not possible to make a thoroughgoing comparison between income and non-income measures. In this section we attempt an illustrative, if somewhat partial, analysis of the two types of measures.

As explained in section 2, field workers of the WIDER project spent a total of six months in each of the villages.

[13]Lanjouw and Stern (1990) on Palanpur.

They developed good knowledge of the households, and knew nearly all of them personally. These field workers were then asked to rank the poorest 15 to 20 households of the villages that they had surveyed according to the severity of poverty. Table 12 compares their ranking for Sahajapur, Bhagabanbasan and Simtuni with two income rankings. This is similar to the method used in a study of Palanpur in eastern U.P. by Drèze, and reported in Lanjouw and Stern (1990).

The rankings are in ascending order of "apparent prosperity". The entries under the village columns refer to the ascending rank of the household in terms of total household income and per capita income household income respectively. (So the household with the lowest total income will have the rank 1, while the one with the highest will be the same as the total number of households in the given village).

The results are a mixed bag, but all confirm the general impression that very different results are obtained using apparent poverty ranking and the income measures. For Sahajapur, for instance, only 3 of the 20 apparently poorest households have rankings of 20 or less using the income measures. In Bhagabanbasan there is somewhat more convergence between the income and apparent poverty measures, with 6 out of 18 occurrences for total household income and 9 out of 18 for per capita household income. In Simtuni total household income has far better correspondence to apparent poverty than per capita income. Per capita income is in fact a very dubious predictor

of apparent poverty; 6 out of the 15 apparently poorest households occur in the top two deciles in terms of per capita income, and the ninth poorest household in terms of apparent poverty, is the richest in the village in terms of per capita income.

In the absence of more detailed non-income measures of poverty and well-being, we are limited in this paper to relying mainly on income-based measures. The exercise ought to caution us about the sensitivity of poverty assessment exercises to the type of measure used.

5. Food consumption and nutrition

5.1 Results of a food consumption survey

The consumption survey was an intensive exercise to learn about the nutritional level of the poor in the villages. Selection criteria of the sample have been mentioned above (for a detailed account see Sengupta and Misra, 1990).

Results of the survey are summarised in Table 13. (Kuchly was not surveyed in the lean season). These differ slightly from the ones presented in the Levels of Living II report on account of computational nuances except in two cases where the

differences are substantial. Firstly, in the case of the lean period data for Simtuni, we have used the rice equivalent for cereals. This has the effect of lowering the total consumption figure, as part of Simtuni's cereal consumption was made up of less nourishing wet maize. Its weight was deflated by a factor of 2.782 to get the rice equivalent.

Secondly there is a more worrying discrepancy in both peak and lean results for Kalmandasguri. The estimates here are much higher than the ones obtained in the earlier report. We have been through our calculations and find no reason to doubt the accuracy of our results.

Table 13 shows the differences in the levels of consumption between villages. The Levels of Living II report has a detailed account of the possible explanations behind this pattern, and we shall not repeat those here. It is of interest, however to try and separate out the effects of these possible causes by carrying out simple multiple regression analysis. The following are the best fits obtained in this exercise, when non-performing variables have been taken out of the model. PUEARN is the per unit earning per day during the period of the survey, and PCINC is the per capita household annual income (derived from the general survey). The former captures the notion of current income, while the latter can be interpreted as a measure of income over a one-year period. VILL12, VILL21, VILL34 and VILL55 are dummy variables respectively for the villages Kuchly, Bhagabanbasan, Simtuni and Kalmandasguri.

Lean Period

CONS = 258.25 + 67.05*PUEARN + 155.74*VILL21 + 70.69*VILL55
(0.0000) (0.0000) (0.0001) (0.0562)

Adj. R sq. = 0.529, DF = (3,41), F-stat = 17.45, Sig F = 0.0000

Peak Period

CONS = 345.05 + 14.99*PUEARN + 0.12*PCINC + 126.91*VILL12 +
(0.000) (0.0228) (0.0089) (0.0008)

73.16*VILL34 + 91.06*VILL55
(0.0524) (0.0521)

Adj. R sq. = 0.433, DF = (5,53), F-stat = 8.436, Sig F = 0.0000

Annual income was found to be significant explanatory variable for per unit consumption in the peak period, but not in the lean period, where daily earnings during the survey period itself were more important. This agrees with the hypothesis that poor households may be constrained by short term cash availability during the lean season.

Once the effects of daily and annual incomes are accounted for, an interesting picture emerges in terms of the villages dummies. The performance of the dummy for Bhagabanbasan during the lean season could be attributed to the relatively more secure

position of the poor in a village with employment opportunity round the year. Bhagabanbasan has perennial irrigation and thus 2-3 crops a year. The reasons for the positive and significant Kuchly dummy are partly due to the timing of the survey (see Sengupta and Misra, 1990).

Simtuni in the peak period and Kalmandasguri in both peak and lean present an interesting set of problems. These villages have the lowest levels of income, and are poorly endowed with resources. A possible interpretation for the positive and significant coefficient in these cases is that the poor are faring better than expected at the given level of income. This does not mean, of course, that the condition of the poor in these villages is in any way satisfactory, but that entitlements have a non-linear relationship with income at these extremely low levels.

5.2 Nutrition

Child nutrition is both an important area of public intervention, as well as an indicator of the welfare of the community at large. Our data on the level of under-5 malnourishment is based upon the weight-for-age relationship in wide usage in the Anganwadi mother and child centres in West Bengal. These centres are accessible to all mothers with children below the age of five, as well as to pregnant women.

They conduct a programme of supplementary feeding. None of our survey villages was served by an Anganwadi centre at the time of the survey, though one was subsequently opened near Sahajapur.

Four categories of malnourishment viz. slight under-nourishment, under-nourishment, severe under-nourishment and disastrous (or clinical) under-nourishment have been identified.

Households were given the nutritional status according to the lowest level found in a child under 5. If for example in a household with two children below 5 one child was found to be under-nourished while the other severely under-nourished, we assign it the nutritional status corresponding to severe under-nourishment. Data was taken from the peak period only, as this allowed the largest set of consistent observations.

The first thing to note (Table 14) is that despite diverse conditions across villages, child under-nourishment is a common problem. The proportion of households with children under 5 without any incidence of malnutrition is very low in all villages, and is nowhere greater than one in six. The severity of the problem varies across villages and regions, with north Bengal clearly being the worst off.

We have attempted to relate the level of under-nourishment to the income level of the household. Table 14 compares the mean income of the households with the various nutritional statuses in the six villages. While there is some tendency for the lower

nutritional status households to have lower average incomes, e.g. Bhagabanbasan and Kalmandasguri, this does not appear to be very strong in other villages. The reverse, in fact, appears to be the case in Kuchly. Non-income factors probably play quite an important part in child malnutrition.

This has important implications for poverty assessment and alleviation. If child nutrition is a good indicator of well-being, more attention needs to be paid to non-income factors in the determination of well-being[14]. These might include the parents', particularly the mothers' awareness of nutrition issues, among other things. The high prevalence of child under-nutrition, and the unreliability of income measures as targeting instruments make stronger the case for the extension of non-discriminatory provisioning of the Anganwadi type.

6. Public policy and social change

In this section we examine two different elements of social change in rural West Bengal using the data from the four south Bengal villages surveyed. The first part gives a brief analysis of the extent of the land reforms and the characteristics of its beneficiaries. In the second part we present a detailed case study of inter-generational occupational mobility in these four villages, using data on reported primary occupations of the heads

[14]This also supports our results of a comparison between apparent poverty and income measures in section 4.3.

of households and the occupations of their fathers.

While the two themes are distinct from each other, they do throw some light upon the patterns of social change (and indeed stagnation) in rural West Bengal.

6.1 Land Redistribution: south Bengal villages

The success of the West Bengal land reforms was mentioned at the beginning of this paper in order to draw attention to the record of the state government in dealing with the problems of rural poverty. While much of the political impetus behind land reforms was possibly driven mainly by redistributive considerations, poverty alleviation is generally accepted as an important effect of land redistribution. Here we present some summary statistics of the impact of land redistribution in the four south Bengal villages in our sample.

Table 15 shows the total area redistributed in each village, its share of the total agricultural area operated by the village resident, and the average area per beneficiary household. It is clear from this table that in most villages the areas involved are extremely small, almost marginal. In Kuchly, with the highest proportion (as well as absolute area) of assigned land the average area per beneficiary is less than half an acre.

The pecuniary significance of this can be derived using the coefficient of land owned in the regression of income correlates reported in Table 11. The annual increment to income to the average beneficiary household of land reform would be 612, 354, 435 and 342 rupees respectively in Kuchly, Sahajapur, Bhagabanbasan and Simtuni. While these are not trivial amounts for the very poor, the highest (Kuchly) is less than 10% of the official poverty line of Rs. 6400 for a household of five people. In addition to this, in our estimation of section 4 (reported in Table 11) assigned land included as a separate variable had no significant correlation with income in most of the villages.

Possible sources of negative biases in the estimation of the importance of assigned land in statistical exercises have already been discussed in section 4.2. Nevertheless, some comments are due on the apparent paradox of universally acclaimed land reforms on the one hand, and their small private value to beneficiaries on the other.

If land redistribution was thought to be panacea to the problem of rural poverty, then it has clearly failed in West Bengal. But the failure should be seen as rejection of the view that redistributive strategies in themselves would eradicate rural poverty. It certainly cannot be ascribed to corruption or incomplete implementation.

From an administrative point of view the reforms have been a complete success. In the villages in our surveys, there were

no households with more than the legal ceiling of land ownership. Furthermore, a breakdown of the beneficiaries shows that there was little if any leakage of benefits to non-target groups.

Table 16 compares the probability of being a recipient of assigned land across different socio-economic groupings. The landless and the land poor have been the beneficiaries of reforms in all the villages. The category of households who "Own land" in Table 16 are all marginal landowners. Even so, the probability of receiving assigned land is always higher for the landless. The same is true for scheduled caste and scheduled tribe households in all villages save Simtuni, where nearly all households are from scheduled tribes in any case.

Conclusive evidence was not found of significant direct economic benefits of land reforms (such as greatly enhanced agricultural production from assigned land), and indirect effects (such as strengthening of bargaining position of landless labourers, security of rights over homestead land) are difficult to measure in the absence of comparable benchmark data. It is nevertheless significant that beneficiaries were largely in the target group, and that communities (such as scheduled castes and scheduled tribes) that have suffered exploitation and oppression over centuries were able to benefit from these measures.

Even with an extremely unlikely supposition that the symbolic value of these reforms is greater than their real economic benefits, their impact and the impact of other

institutional reforms on social change in rural West Bengal cannot be ignored.

In the next sub-section we concentrate on "economic" dynamism and present detailed case studies from our four south Bengal villages of its sources, using inter-generational occupational mobility as a proxy.

6.2 Occupational mobility[15]

Household and individual surveys included questions regarding the occupational status of respondents as well as the occupation of the father of the head of household. In all, we had information on mobility between two generations for nearly every household.

Eleven occupational classifications were made on this basis. Four of these categories are in agriculture; owner cultivation, tenant cultivation, agricultural labour and agriculture allied activities (poultry, dairy, fishery). There are four non-agricultural activities - trade, craft (mainly traditional), service (salaried employment) and profession (skilled activity, mainly a service). The remaining three categories are in non-agricultural labour, attached labour (low wage activity mainly

[15]This section is based upon a mimeo co-authored with Debanshu Majumder.

involving children tending cattle in return for meals), and other marginal activities including begging. Table 17 gives the occupational profile of all workers, heads of households and the fathers of heads of household (as proxy for previous generation of household heads) for the four south Bengal.

The broad picture shows a relative decline in the agricultural occupations in all the four villages. The proportion of owner cultivators, in particular, is lower in the present generation in every village. There is an accompanying rise in the importance of non-agricultural activities taken together. In the case of Sahajapur, nearly 30 per cent of household heads report their occupations to be in this sector. Data on secondary occupations shows some participation in non-agricultural labour from the Birbhum villages. Sahajapur stands out in particular, with 15 per cent of those reporting secondary occupations being engaged in non-agricultural labour. This is explained largely by Sahajapur's proximity to an urban centre.

For the villages taken as a whole Table 17 indicates a fair degree of occupational shift. Whether this is reflected in increased chances for mobility for low income, land poor and scheduled caste and scheduled tribe groups can only be ascertained from examining the characteristics of households that have reported movement away from fathers' occupations.

Cross-tabulation of occupation of head of household by caste, and father of head of household by caste were carried out

for the south Bengal villages (full results not reported here). Apart from Simtuni, which has an overwhelmingly tribal population, the predomination of general caste Hindus among owner cultivators and scheduled castes and scheduled tribes among agricultural labourers has persisted over a generation. Furthermore, the categories of trade and service which have provided the major source of mobility for these three villages, are largely associated with the general caste.

Cross-tabulations on the occupational status of heads of households with those of their fathers are reported in Tables 18. Overall, we found considerable stickiness around agricultural labour. There was also some movement from owner cultivation to agricultural labour. Besides agricultural labour, moves from owner cultivation are of particular interest. The two Birbhum villages of Kuchly and Sahajapur show relatively less stickiness around owner cultivation - around 57 per cent for both villages followed the father's occupation as compared with Bhagabanbasan and Simtuni (ratios being 71 and 63 per cent respectively). The main shift was found to have been towards agricultural labour, trade and service.

These shifts are examined in greater detail below in case studies from the four villages. We examine the income ranking (using per capita household income) and other characteristics (such as caste) of the households reporting an occupational shift from the head of household's fathers' primary occupations. The aim is to understand the main sources of dynamism in the rural

economy.

Case studies:

Kuchly

Owner cultivation to agricultural labour: 9 households. Of these 9, 5 belong to SC/ST[16] (the proportion of owner cultivators who are from SC/ST being only 20 per cent) and 7 are landless. In terms of per capita income ranking these 7 fall within the poorest 4 deciles.

Owner cultivation to trade: 6 households.

Two of these households are landless, and the others are in the lowest 4 deciles in terms of per capita land ownership. 4 households are within the poorest 4 deciles in terms of per capita income. One household is headed by a widow who makes and sells puffed rice, as well as visiting people's homes and making puffed rice there. Her household ranks the lowest save one in terms of per capita income. Others include three milk sellers, one hawker (landless) and one grocery shop owner.

Owner cultivation to service: 6 households.

[16]In this section SC and ST are abbreviations respectively for scheduled caste and scheduled tribe.

Four households are in the top decile of per capita income and all of these are school-teachers. Of the others, one household head works in a rice mill while the other is employed by a rice trader. This household is in the poorest four deciles in terms of per capita income, and the son of the household head has reported his occupation as owner cultivation.

Sahajapur

All three households that moved from owner cultivation to agricultural labour are landless. Two of them are in the poorest 4 deciles of per capita income.

Owner cultivation to trade: 7 households.

Only one these is in the lowest 4 income deciles, while two are landless. Five households are shop owners, while two are milk sellers.

Owner cultivation to service: 7 households.

Although two of these are landless, while the others are in the top 40 per cent in terms of land ownership ranking, all 7 households fall within the top 40 per cent in terms of income ranking. Four of the household heads are teachers, one works in a husking mill in Sahajapur, while one is employed at a nearby factory. One household head works in a sweet shop. As in the case of Kuchly the teachers all come from households with high land

and income rankings.

Bhagabanbasan

Bhagabanbasan displays the highest level of stickiness around owner cultivation out of the four South Bengal villages. It is also the village with the highest level of irrigation and crop intensity.

The largest move out of this occupation is in the direction of service (10 households). All households heads were employed by the public sector. Two of these were landless, but overall contribution of land income to total income was found to 32 per cent on average. It is also worth noting that one of the landless households had the second highest per capita income in the village. The head of this household (which belongs to ST) was found to be employed by the Railways[17]. The other landless household was the only one of the 10 to be in the poorest 4 deciles of income, and the head was temporarily employed by the National Volunteer Force. Another household head had a temporary job with the Water Commission, and had 55 per cent of household income from land.

The other 8 were found to be in the top income decile. Nearly all households' income ranking was above their per capita land ownership ranking. There were 4 teachers, one surveyor, one

[17]Railways have a nationally negotiated quota of reserved employment opportunities for scheduled tribe people.

manager of a cooperative society (whose other sources of income include hiring out of a thresher and the supply of water for irrigation), one peon in the Department of Irrigation, and one in the Railways.

Simtuni

11 households reported a shift from owner cultivation to agricultural labour. In terms of per capita income ranking, only two of these were in the poorest 4 deciles, while 8 were in the top 4 deciles. None were landless, and 3 were in the lowest 4 deciles of per capita land ownership. All save one were found to have a higher ranking in terms of income as compared with their land ranking. The average proportion of income from land was relatively high for agricultural labourers at 29 per cent. It is interesting to note that all except one were involved in migrant labour.

5 households reported a shift from owner cultivation to service. One of these has the top per capita income in the village, and was employed by the Forest Department. All the rest were in the National Volunteer Force, with two of them being in the poorest 4 deciles, while for the other three the oldest offspring has reported owner cultivation as occupation[18].

[18]Both the Forestry Commission and the National Volunteer Force offer employment to scheduled tribe people, and the latter in particular might be an important means of income security for some households.

Both of the households that report a shift from agricultural labour to owner cultivation are in the poorest 4 deciles.

Summary

There has been a marked shift from tenant cultivation to agricultural labour. Of the six households that reported such a move in Kuchly, only two were in the lowest 4 deciles in terms of per capita income. In Sahajapur, however, all save one were in that income category.

The shift away from owner cultivation has followed different pattern in the villages, depending upon their resource endowments, including proximity to urban centres. In Simtuni, for instance, the move from owner cultivation to agricultural labour may well be associated with an improvement in the level of living. Nearly all households reporting the shift are involved in the supply of migrant labour to districts with higher agricultural wages than Simtuni.

In Kuchly there is a clear division between those going from owner cultivation to agricultural labour and those going into trade and service (salaried employment). The latter constitute some of the most well off households, both in terms of land and income. There was no significant difference in the educational status of the two respective groups. The implication, therefore, is that while some minimum educational qualifications are the pre-requisite for most formal sector activities, success in

gaining such employment might be contingent upon the existing asset position. This will particularly be the case if pay-offs are necessary for access to permanent employment.

Sahajapur's proximity to an urban centre is largely responsible for the lower proportion of the work force involved in agricultural activities. Here too, salaried employment appears to have afforded the main channel for upward mobility.

Salaried employment was almost invariably found to be in the public sector for all villages. The contrast between Simtuni and the other relatively better off villages was that school-teachers predominated in the latter. In Simtuni nearly all those who moved from owner cultivation to service went into the NVF. The only other case of NVF service amongst those who shifted occupation was found in Bhagabanbasan, and this was the poorest household in this category. In general, those who moved from owner cultivation to salaried employment in Bhagabanbasan and the Birbhum villages had relatively good land and income rankings, and belonged to the general caste.

7. Concluding remarks

The village profiles show that the inter-village contrasts in income, wages and education are substantial. These inter-village contrasts represent to some degree inter-regional contrasts between West Bengal's agro-economic zones. North Bengal

stands out in terms of poverty, and Simtuni in Purulia district paints a similar picture. Seasonal migration only partly compensates for these inter-regional differences in wages and income. Some of these results are confirmed in the analysis of consumption and nutrition.

There are also important differences between villages that seem to be explained in terms of their caste composition. The tribal village Simtuni appears to have a different structure of income distribution and poverty from the other south Bengal villages.

Caste is an important correlate of poverty, land ownership and education. Its importance as an independent predictor of poverty drops out once we carry out a multivariate analysis, (i.e. asset ownership etc. and not caste in itself explain income differences). This should not be much cause for celebration. It merely means that people are poor because they have no assets or no access to outside employment. The relationship between asset ownership and access to outside opportunities may itself still be correlated with caste.

Land ownership is an important determinant of current income, but assigned land does not in itself appear to have significant impact upon private incomes of beneficiaries of land reforms. This, however, ignores the external effects of land reforms, such as the enhancement of the bargaining position of hitherto landless labourers, and thus leading to a real rise in

the general wage level.

On a broader level, our analysis of poverty rankings using "apparent" poverty shows that any results using income-based measures of poverty need to regarded with some element of circumspection. Due to the dearth of appropriate data on other poverty measures, many of the results are nevertheless based upon income measures.

The land reforms and other measures of the Left Front government brought about important social changes, for instance in the strengthening of the position of scheduled caste and scheduled tribe people. These are not trivial changes, and represent a significant break from the past. As such it is hazardous to put any strict economic value to them. Perhaps the proof of their success lies in the political support extended by these groups to the state government.

In the meantime the rural economy has remained fairly stagnant. There is evidence, however, that in the recent years new varieties of higher yielding rice have increase productivity greatly. At the time of the survey, the main channels of upward mobility were through salaried employment in the formal sector. Most of these opportunities occurred in the public sector, and many were accessible to people with education and other assets. Scheduled caste and scheduled tribe people were able to take up these opportunities only in so far as some quotas allowed them to.

The foregoing study has raised as many questions as it has sought to answer. What, for instance, has been the impact of the Left Front reforms on agricultural wages? If agricultural productivity were to rise (through the introduction of higher yielding varieties of rice), what impact will it have on the marginal farmers and beneficiaries of assigned land? What accounts for the differences in the patterns of poverty and inequality in the tribal villages? Some of these themes, it is hoped will be taken up at a later stage.

Table 1: Demographic Summary

Age Group	KUCHLY	% fem of age	SAHAJAPUR	% fem of age	BHAGABAN-BASAN	% fem of age	SIMTUNI	% fem of age	MAGURMARI	% fem of age	KALMANDAS-GURI	% fem of age
0-5	81	50.6%	173	51.4%	82	37.8%	62	50.0%	82	54.9%	56	46.4%
6-15	176	49.4%	290	44.1%	156	50.6%	77	33.8%	142	47.2%	145	55.9%
15-25	177	42.9%	204	52.0%	159	51.6%	78	61.5%	89	49.4%	83	44.6%
26-40	187	50.3%	304	50.0%	176	45.5%	91	45.1%	133	50.4%	99	46.5%
41-60	116	47.4%	169	46.2%	81	49.4%	62	48.4%	66	40.9%	59	42.4%
ABOVE 60	23	52.2%	21	71.4%	35	54.3%	2	50.0%	19	52.6%	16	50.0%
All	760	48.0%	1161	48.9%	689	48.0%	372	47.6%	531	49.0%	458	48.7%
No. of h/holds		141		216		133		72		99		88
Av. size		5.39		5.38		5.18		5.17		5.36		5.20

Table 2: Caste-wise Distribution of Population

	KUCHLY	SAHAJAPUR	BHAGABAN-BASAN	SIMTUNI	MAGURMARI	KALMANDAS-GURI
Caste Hind	49.9%	40.2%	72.7%	12.6%	39.5%	17.5%
Scheduled Caste	38.4%	37.5%	15.5%	1.3%	57.8%	33.4%
Scheduled Tribe	11.7%	22.3%	11.8%	86.0%	-	8.3%
Muslim	-	-	-	-	2.6%	40.8%

Table 3: Literacy, by Age Group

Age Group	KUCHLY % of pop. literate	SAHAJAPUR % of pop. literate	BHAGABAN-BASAN % of pop. literate	SIMTUNI % of pop. literate	MAGURMARI % of pop. literate	KALMANDAS-GURI % of pop. literate
6-15	52.8%	47.9%	87.8%	22.1%	47.2%	55.9%
15-25	58.8%	60.3%	72.3%	23.1%	49.4%	44.6%
26-40	55.6%	46.1%	77.8%	12.1%	50.4%	46.5%
41-60	37.1%	31.4%	54.3%	19.4%	40.9%	42.4%
ABOVE 60	52.2%	14.3%	28.6%	0.0%	52.6%	50.0%
TOTAL	52.4%	46.4%	73.0%	18.7%	49.0%	48.7%

Table 4: Educational level by caste
Proportion of population above 5 in caste group

	Liter.	Prim.	Second.	H Sec.	Grad.	P-Grad	Prof
KUCHLY							
Caste Hindu	82.3%	35.4%	24.6%	15.1%	5.8%	1.7%	0.0%
Sch Caste	26.3%	15.3%	5.7%	4.6%	0.8%	0.0%	0.0%
Sch Tribe	7.8%	5.2%	1.3%	1.3%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
SAHAJAPUR							
Caste Hindu	83.4%	32.9%	43.2%	3.4%	2.7%	0.5%	0.7%
Sch Caste	25.5%	15.7%	9.0%	0.8%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Sch Tribe	10.7%	7.8%	2.9%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
BHAGABANBASAN							
Caste Hindu	88.5%	34.2%	45.5%	5.3%	2.6%	0.7%	0.2%
Sch Caste	22.4%	18.8%	2.4%	0.0%	0.0%	1.2%	0.0%
Sch Tribe	33.8%	21.1%	11.3%	1.4%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
SIMTUNI							
Caste Hindu	56.4%	38.5%	17.9%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Sch Caste	25.0%	25.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Sch Tribe	13.1%	4.9%	6.7%	0.4%	0.7%	0.0%	0.4%
MAGURMARI							
Caste Hindu	68.8%	33.3%	30.6%	1.1%	3.8%	0.0%	0.0%
Sch Caste	38.3%	29.3%	8.2%	0.4%	0.4%	0.0%	0.0%
Muslim	30.0%	30.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
KALMANDASGURI							
Caste Hindu	50.0%	35.1%	14.9%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Sch Caste	55.0%	42.1%	12.1%	0.7%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Sch Tribe	25.8%	25.8%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Muslim	19.6%	19.6%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%

Notes:
- Liter. = all literate persons above 5.
- Prim. = completed primary schooling.
- Second. = completed secondary schooling.
- H Sec. =completed higher secondary schooling.
- Grad. = graduate.
- P-Grad. = post graduate.
- Prof = attained professional or technical qualification.

Table 5: Occupational profile, all workers

OCCUPATION	KUCHLY	SAHAJAPUR	BHAGABAN-BASAN	SIMTUNI	MAGURMARI	KALMANDAS-GURI
1. Owner Cultivation	35.3%	18.4%	36.2%	49.3%	10.5%	34.8%
2. Tenant Cultivation	0.3%	0.6%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	2.4%
3. Agricult. Labour	50.5%	43.9%	29.0%	37.6%	1.3%	30.5%
4. Other Agriculture	0.0%	0.6%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Total Agric	86.1%	63.5%	65.2%	86.9%	11.8%	67.7%
5. Trade	4.2%	7.2%	8.7%	0.5%	29.8%	3.7%
6. Craft	1.8%	4.1%	10.5%	0.5%	4.4%	1.2%
7. Salaried Employment	5.1%	11.9%	5.8%	2.7%	4.4%	4.9%
8. Profession	1.5%	3.7%	8.7%	5.4%	24.1%	2.4%
9. Mainly non-agr. labour	1.2%	9.6%	1.1%	4.1%	25.4%	20.1%
Total non-Ag.	13.9%	36.5%	34.8%	13.1%	88.2%	32.3%

Table 6: Wage labour and wages

	KUCHLY			SAHAJAPUR			BHAGABAN-BASAN			SIMTUNI			MAGURMARI			KALMANDAS-GURI	
	No. (%)	Av.wg (s.d)	Days wkd	No.	Av.wg (s.d)	Days wkd	No.	Av.wg (s.d)	Days wkd	No.	Av.wg (s.d)	Days wkd	No.	Av.wg (s.d)	Days wkd	No.	Av.wg (s.d)
All	183	13.6	160	289	12.2	149	90	14.8	133	127	13.3	91	94	7.7	219	94	10.9
		2.3	112		3.5	101		1.3	65		3.1	55		3.9	78		2.6
Female	61	13.4	64	124	12.7	84	38	14.9	104	59	13.8	85	56	11.0	190	16	8.5
	33.3%	0.9	39	42.9%	3.2	73	42.2%	0.2	45	46.5%	2.4	40	59.6%	3.7	75	17.0%	1.6
Migrant	10	13.2	152	32	12.3	163	-	-	-	101	14.7	92	-	-	-	2	15.6
	5.5%	1.5	76	11.1%	3.6	128	-	-	-	79.5%	0.9	39	-	-	-	2.1%	4.3
Own/cult	14	13.9	83	8	12.9	101	9	15.0	109	41	12.1	58	1	5.0	240	13	10.8
	7.7%	1.1	90	2.8%	0.5	73	10.0%	0.4	66	32.3%	3.4	26	1.1%	-	-	13.8%	1.0
Agr.lab	159	13.5	169	224	12.6	138	77	14.7	131	78	14.3	101	3	8.7	257	48	10.2
	86.9%	2.4	109	77.5%	2.7	89	85.6%	0.9	63	61.4%	1.8	38	3.2%	3.1	15	51.1%	1.9
Non-agr lab.	-	-	-	28	10.6	227	-	-	-	-	-	-	88	7.6	218	27	12.8
	-	-	-	9.7%	7.2	111	-	-	-	-	-	-	93.6%	3.9	79	28.7%	2.8

Notes: Av.wg = Mean daily wage in category
Days wkd = Mean number of days worked per worker year
s.d = standard deviation
Migrant = wage labourer temporarily resident outside village
Occupational groups:

- Own/cult= Primary occupation given as owner cultivation, but also reporting some income from wage labour.
- Agr.lab = Primary occupation agricultural labour.
- Non-ag lab = Primary occupation non-agricultural labour.

Table 7: Income and inequality
(Annual income, in rupees)

	KUCHLY	SAHAJAPUR	BHAGABAN-BASAN	SIMTUNI	MAGURMARI	KALMANDAS-GURI
Household						
Mean income	8853	8349	11195	5355	7832	5841
Coef.var.	0.860	0.930	0.740	0.386	1.100	0.605
Gini	0.387	0.406	0.359	0.210	0.375	0.312
Per capita						
Mean income	1647	1544	2213	1160	1441	1212
Coef.var.	1.329	1.291	1.118	0.584	1.778	0.882
s.e.	0.304	0.187	0.237	0.151	0.723	0.204
Gini	0.635	0.627	0.550	0.264	0.706	0.430
s.e.	0.117	0.078	0.094	0.038	0.236	0.072

Table 8: Characteristics of poor households using poverty lines and per capita household income.

South Bengal: Incidence of poverty by intensity

POVERTY MEASURE	KUCHLY	SAHAJAPUR	BHAGABAN BASAN	SIMTUNI
ALL POOR	0.41	0.55	0.22	0.64
Of whom:				
Destitute	0.01	0.06	0.02	0.04
Extremely poor	0.04	0.06	0.03	0.12
Very poor	0.15	0.19	0.05	0.31
Poor	0.21	0.24	0.12	0.17

POVERTY LINE	ANNUAL PER CAPITA HOUSEHOLD INCOME (rupees)
ALL POOR:	Less than or equal to 1280
Destitute:	Less than or equal to 453
Extremely poor:	Over 453 but less than or equal to 700
Very poor:	Over 700 but less than or equal to 960
Poor:	Over 960 but less than or equal to 1280

Table 9: Relative poverty: characteristics of poorest 40% households, south Bengal.

Probabilty of being in lowest four per capita income deciles given the household characteristic

HOUSEHOLD CHARACTSTC.	ALL VILLAGES	KUCHLY	SAHAJA PUR	BHAGABAN BASAN	SIMTUNI
Landless	0.59	0.62	0.56	0.79	0.00
Sch Caste	0.58	0.50	0.57	0.78	0.00
Sch Tribe	0.52	0.50	0.49	0.58	0.40
Owner cultivator	0.23	0.22	0.10	0.16	0.52
Agricultural Labourer	0.60	0.59	0.64	0.77	0.26
Salaried Employee	0.19	0.11	0.21	0.18	0.40

Notes: Sch Caste - Scheduled caste
Sch Tribe - Scheduled tribe

Table 10: Land ownership and caste, south Bengal.

Contribution to landlessness and "large" per capita land holdings by caste

	KUCHLY	SAHAJAPUR	BHAGABANBASAN	SIMTUNI
LANDLESS				
Caste Hindu	0.25	0.12	0.15	0.40
Scheduled Caste	0.49	0.45	0.60	0.00
Scheduled Tribe	0.26	0.43	0.25	0.60
OWN ABOVE 5 ACRES PER CAPITA				
Caste Hindu	1.00	0.96	1.00	0.00
Scheduled Caste	0.00	0.04	0.00	0.00
Scheduled Tribe	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.00

Table 11: Income determinants, correlates

DEPENDENT VARIABLE: HOUSEHOLD ANNUAL INCOME

EXPLANATORY VAIRABLES	Kuchly	Sahaja-pur	Bhagab-anbasan	Simtuni	Magur-mari	Kalman-dasguri
a Intercept	2642.5	2020.3	1786.3	2041.0	-4382	258.9
Sig. T	0.0009	0.0195	0.0489	0.0004	0.0024	0.7240
b H/hold size	679.2	569.1	800.8	195.7	917.4	812.5
Sig. T	0.0000	0.0005	0.0000	0.0258	0.0000	0.0000
c Land owned	1391.3	1768.7	2419.4	683.6	4637.4	813.9
Sig. T	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0002
d Season. lease	2524.6	-	2111.3	..	..	..
Sig. T	0.0063	-	0.0958	..	..	..
e Assigned land	-	-	-	4481.9	-	-
Sig. T	-	-	-	0.0419	-	-
f Implements	5149.1	-	2508.4	..	..	..
Sig. T	0.0011	-	0.0085	..	..	..
g Occup 3	-	-	-	868.1	-	-
Sig. T	-	-	-	0.0412	-	-
h Occup 4	-	3100.1	-	-	5679.9	1820.5
Sig. T	-	0.0069	-	-	0.0000	0.0994
i Occup 6	7448.4	4230.4	7188.7	3363	6256.3	-
Sig. T	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0084	-
j Occup 9	-	-	-	-	3990.7	1278.8
Sig. T	-	-	-	-	0.0030	0.1028
k Caste 1	-	-	-	-	1933.8	1243.7
Sig. T	-	-	-	-	0.0288	0.0997
l Literate	-1892	-	-	706	-	-
Sig. T	0.0076	-	-	0.0952	-	-
Adj R sq.	0.757	0.611	0.736	0.570	0.780	0.479
D.F	6, 134	4, 211	5, 127	6, 65	7, 91	5, 82
F-stat	73.49	85.49	74.88	16.75	50.61	16.98
Sig. F	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000

Explanatory variables:

b	Number of household members	
c	Land owned by households in acres	
d	Land seasonally leased in acres	
e	Land assigned in acres	
Dummies		
f	Whether own farm implements, e.g thresher, pump, sprayer, bore.	
g	Primary occup h/hold head	Agricult. labou
h	Primary occup h/hold head	Trade
i	Primary occup h/hold head	Service
j	Primary occup h/hold head	Non-agr. labour
k	Caste	Caste Hindu
l	Whether head of household literate	

Notes: - = not significant, dropped from model
.. = not applicable

Table 12: Apparent poverty and income measures

Ranking of households by apparent poverty, total household income and per capita household income.

	SAHAJA PUR		BHAGABAN-BASAN		SIMTUNI	
Apparent poverty	House-hold income	Per capita income	House-hold income	Per capita income	House-hold income	Per capita income
1	55	72	8	75	16	67
2	77	53	1	1	14	65
3	81	56	22	3	46	69
4	67	18	5	67	8	61
5	62	39	2	12	9	20
6	91	169	32	32	12	63
7	128	153	48	57	56	16
8	131	111	87	25	18	5
9	132	42	11	9	23	73
10	88	63	33	13	6	34
11	145	64	62	12	11	27
12	87	61	20	8	37	37
13	181	133	38	16	30	44
14	18	77	36	81	5	10
15	92	32	34	36	15	9
16	26	36	42	5		
17	41	62	9	23		
18	12	3	39	40		
19	127	110				
20	3	2				
TOTAL HOUSE-HOLDS	216	216	132	132	73	73

Table 13: Cereal consumption
Grammes per cons. unit per day
(rice equivalent in calories)

VILLAGE	SEASON Peak	Lean
Kuchly	653.29	-
Sahajapur	497.10	389.39
Bhagabanbasar	530.85	553.10
Simtuni	524.36	409.37
Magurmari	440.05	366.50
Kalmandasguri	492.58	431.74

Table 14: Child nutrition and household income

	Not under-nour'd	Slightly under-nour'd	under-nour'd	Severely under-nour'd	Disastrously under-nour'd	ALL
KUCHLY						
number	9	14	22	9	0	54
mean p.cap inc	1393	1676	1158	1843	-	1446
SAHAJAPUR						
number	16	28	41	16	2	103
mean p.cap inc	1741	1444	1284	1589	1116	1442
BHAGABANBASAN						
number	6	20	11	7	0	44
mean p.cap inc	3289	2292	1759	1299	-	2137
SIMTUNI						
number	1	5	11	9	1	27
mean p.cap inc	740	962	979	890	756	929
MAGURMARI						
number	3	20	15	6	5	49
mean p.cap inc	1003	1421	1206	1798	1010	1334
KALMANDASGURI						
number	4	16	14	2	2	38
mean p.cap inc	1010	1057	1010	804	804	1008

Note: mean p.cap inc = mean per capita income of household with given nutritional status.

Table 15: Redistributed land

	KUCHLY	SAHAJAPUR	BHAGABANBASAN	SIMTUNI
Total area in acres	28.17	11.97	8.8	6.45
As proportion of total land operated in village	0.12	0.04	0.05	0.04
Average area per beneficiary household in acres	0.44	0.20	0.18	0.50

Table 16: Beneficiaries of land reform, by land ownership, caste and income level, south Bengal.

Recipients of assigned land as proportion of households with given characteristic

	KUCHLY	SAHAJAPUR	BHAGABANBASAN	SIMTUNI
As proportion of all households	0.45	0.26	0.37	0.17
LAND OWNERSHIP				
Landless	0.66	0.39	0.85	0.20
Own land	0.27	0.05	0.16	0.17
CASTE				
Caste Hindu	0.20	0.00	0.11	0.20
Scheduled Caste	0.74	0.42	0.89	0.00
Scheduled Tribe	0.50	0.35	0.79	0.17
POVERTY				
Below poverty line	0.52	0.37	0.64	0.17
Above poverty line	0.41	0.12	0.29	0.19

Table 17: Occupational profile, south Bengal villages:
(All workers, heads of households, and fathers of household heads)

	KUCHLY			SAHAJAPUR			BHAGABANBASAN			SIMTUNI		
OCCUPATION	All Workers	H/hold Head	Father of H/h Head	All Workers	H/hold Head	Father of H/h Head	All Workers	H/hold Head	Father of H/h Head	All Workers	H/hold Head	Father of H/h Head
1 Owner Cultivation	35.3%	32.6%	47.3%	18.4%	18.9%	27.1%	36.2%	45.5%	62.9%	49.3%	46.7%	71.0%
2 Tenant Cultivation	0.3%	1.4%	9.2%	0.6%	0.9%	6.4%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
3 Agricultural Labour	50.5%	44.0%	38.2%	43.9%	44.1%	47.9%	29.0%	26.9%	30.3%	37.6%	30.7%	18.8%
4 Other Agriculture	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.6%	0.4%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
5 Trade, Craft, & Employment	11.2%	15.6%	2.3%	23.2%	27.3%	12.2%	25.0%	20.9%	6.1%	3.6%	8.0%	1.4%
6 Profession	1.5%	2.1%	1.5%	3.7%	5.7%	5.3%	8.7%	4.5%	0.8%	5.4%	12.0%	8.7%
7 Mainly non-agr. Labour	1.2%	4.3%	1.5%	9.6%	2.6%	1.1%	1.1%	2.2%	0.0%	4.1%	2.7%	0.0%

Tables 18: Inter-generational occupational mobility
Occupation of household head, by father's occuaption
(percentages are along columns)

KUCHLY

	FO1	FO2	FO3	FO5	FO6	FO7	FO8	FO11	NR	Total
O1	36	1			2		1		6	46
	58.1%	8.3%	-	-	100.0%	-	100.0%	-	60.0%	32.6%
O2		2								2
	-	16.7%	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1.4%
O3	10	6	45					1	1	63
	16.1%	50.0%	90.0%	-	-	-	-	50.0%	10.0%	44.7%
O4	6	1				1			2	10
	9.7%	8.3%	-	-	-	100.0%	-	-	20.0%	7.1%
O5		2		1						3
	-	16.7%	-	100.0%	-	-	-	-	-	2.1%
O6	6		1						1	8
	9.7%	-	2.0%	-	-	-	-	-	10.0%	5.7%
O7	3		1							4
	4.8%	-	2.0%	-	-	-	-	-	-	2.8%
O8			2							2
	-	-	4.0%	-	-	-	-	-	-	1.4%
O11	1		1					1		3
	1.6%	-	2.0%	-	-	-	-	50.0%	-	2.1%
Total	62	12	50	1	2	1	1	2	10	141

SAHAJAPUR

	FO1	FO2	FO3	FO4	FO5	FO6	FO7	FO11	NR	Total
O1	29			2	2				10	43
	56.9%	-	-	28.6%	22.2%	-	-	-	25.6%	18.9%
O2		1	1							2
	-	8.3%	1.1%	-	-	-	-	-	-	0.9%
O3	3	11	72		2	2	2	3	5	100
	5.9%	91.7%	80.0%	-	22.2%	28.6%	100.0%	30.0%	12.8%	44.1%
O4	7		3	5					6	21
	13.7%	-	3.3%	71.4%	-	-	-	-	15.4%	9.3%
O5			3		4			1	3	11
	-	-	3.3%	-	44.4%	-	-	10.0%	7.7%	4.8%
O6	8		3		1	4		2	12	30
	15.7%	-	3.3%	-	11.1%	57.1%	-	20.0%	30.8%	13.2%
O7	1		1						1	3
	2.0%	-	1.1%	-	-	-	-	-	2.6%	1.3%
O8			2							2
	-	-	2.2%	-	-	-	-	-	-	0.9%
O9			1							1
	-	-	1.1%	-	-	-	-	-	-	0.4%
O10	1									1
	2.0%	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0.4%
O11	2		4			1		4	2	13
	3.9%	-	4.4%	-	-	14.3%	-	40.0%	5.1%	5.7%
Total	51	12	90	7	9	7	2	10	39	227

BHAGABANBASAN

	FO1	FO3	FO4	FO5	FO6	FO11	NR	Total
O1	59	1			1			61
	71.1%	2.5%	-	-	50.0%	-	-	45.5%
O3	3	31		1				35
	3.6%	77.5%	-	33.3%	-	-	-	26.1%
O4	6	2	2				1	11
	7.2%	5.0%	66.7%	-	-	-	50.0%	8.2%
O5	3	1		2	1			7
	3.6%	2.5%	-	66.7%	50.0%	-	-	5.2%
O6	10						1	11
	12.0%	-	-	-	-	-	50.0%	8.2%
O7	1	1						2
	1.2%	2.5%	-	-	-	-	-	1.5%
O9		1						1
	-	2.5%	-	-	-	-	-	0.7%
O11	1	3	1			1		6
	1.2%	7.5%	33.3%	-	-	100.0%	-	4.5%
Total	83	40	3	3	2	1	2	134

SIMTUNI

	FO1	FO3	FO5	FO11	NR	Total
O1	31	2			2	35
	63.3%	15.4%	-	-	33.3%	46.7%
O3	11	10			2	23
	22.4%	76.9%	-	-	33.3%	30.7%
O5			1			1
	-	-	100.0%	-	-	1.3%
O6	5					5
	10.2%	-	-	-	-	6.7%
O7		1			1	2
	-	7.7%	-	-	16.7%	2.7%
O11	2			6	1	9
	4.1%	-	-	100.0%	16.7%	12.0%
Total	49	13	1	6	6	75

OCCUAPTION CODES

Occupation of head of household		Occupation of head of household's father
O1	Owner cultivator	FO1
O2	Tenant cultivator	FO2
O3	Agricultural labourer	FO3
O4	Trader	FO4
O5	Craftsman	FO5
O6	Salaried employee	FO6
O7	Other activity, not defined	FO7
O8	Attached labourer	FO8
O9	Non-agricultural labourer	FO9
O10	Poultry, fishery, dairy	FO10
O11	Professional	FO11
NR	No response	

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