PATTERN OF LAND RELATIONS AND ITS IMPACT ON AGRICULTURAL DEVELOPMENT OF WEST BENGAL - WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO AGRICULTURAL LABOUR MOVEMENTS

A thesis submitted for the award of the degree of DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY IN ECONOMICS

M.M. REHMAN

DEPARTMENT OF ECONOMICS
JAMIA MILLIA ISLAMIA
NEW DELHI-110025
1990
DECLARATION

This Dissertation entitled "Pattern of Land Relations and its Impact on Agricultural Development of West Bengal - With Special Reference to Agricultural Labour Movements" - submitted by M.M. Rehman for the Degree of Philosophy has not been previously submitted for any other degree of this or any other University. I recommend that this Thesis should be placed before the examiners for their consideration for the award of Ph.D Degree.

PROFESSOR M. RAHMET ALI
SUPERVISOR
DEPARTMENT OF ECONOMICS
JAMIA MILLIA ISLAMIA
NEW DELHI _ 110 025
DECLARATION BY THE CANDIDATE

This is to declare that the present dissertation entitled "Pattern of Land Relations and Its Impact on Agricultural Development of West Bengal - With Special Reference to Agricultural Labour Movements" is an original research work conducted by me and submitted for the award of the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Economics, Department of Economics, Jamia Millia Islamia, New Delhi - 110 025.

No part of the dissertation, in full or part, has formed the basis for award of any other Degree or Diploma on similar title from any other University or Institution.

(M.M. REHMAN)
To
Michael, Malavika
Sheila, Amita
Leila and Pushpa
# CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CONTENTS</th>
<th>PAGE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ABSTRACT (GIVEN SEPARATELY)</td>
<td>i</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ACKNOWLEDGEMENT</td>
<td>iii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TABLE OF CONTENTS</td>
<td>iii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LIST OF TABLES</td>
<td>vii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LIST OF DIAGRAMS/GRAPHS</td>
<td>xvi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LIST OF MAP</td>
<td>xvii</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
I thank my supervisor Professor M. Rahmet Ali for the keen personal interest that he took in the research work as well as his help in preparing the thesis.

I would like to express my gratitude to Jamia Millia Islamia for giving me the opportunity to complete the work and University Grants Commission for providing me a fellowship. I am also thankful to Mr. Ansari, Librarian, Jamia Millia Islamia, Ms. Aruna, Librarian, Indian Statistical Institute, New Delhi and the staff members of the National Library, Calcutta, for their cooperation at various stages of this work.

I am also thankful to Professor Satya Bhushan for his encouragement (and forcing me to complete the work) and for the congratulation ex-ante.

I am grateful to Professor Shakti Rais Ahmed for her constant encouragement and persuasion during the process of this thesis.

I thank Dr. G.D. Sharma for his cooperation and suggestions at various stages of this work.

I thank Shri R.P. Saxena for his occasional 'reminder'.

My thanks are also due to Dr. Kausar Wizarat who kept encouraging me to complete the thesis.

To Ms. Manju Narula I am especially grateful for her suggestion and kind cooperation during the preparation of this thesis.

I thank Dr. S.M.I.A. Zaidi and Mr. Irfan Ahmed for their encouragement and help.

I thank Mr. D.K. Menon who kept reminding me to complete the thesis.

I am grateful to Dr. F. Qamar for his cooperation in the process of preparation of this thesis.

My thanks are due also to Dr. S.B. Roy for his interest in my research work.

I thank Mr. Bijay Kumar Panda for his cooperation also.
I am thankful to Professor M. Sultan, Head, Department of Economics, J.M.I. for his kind cooperation at different stage of this work.

I express my heartfelt gratitude to Mr. Sudhir Dagar who has been a constant source of inspiration and cooperation during the arduous task of finalising the dissertation. I am indebted to him for his help and cooperation which he extended in many ways possible.

My thanks is due also to Mr. P.N. Tyagi for cartographic help.

I thank Mr. Asim Dabas who has been always kind enough to extend his co-operation.

I express my gratitude to Ms. Promila Khantwal and Mr. Anil Thapliyal for their continuous cooperation in many possible ways and making the process of work pleasant.

To Kanta I am especially indebted. From the very genesis of this thesis she has been extending her cooperation and all possible help to complete the work and kept me reminding to make it a socially useful and intellectually faithful document. To her I remain grateful.

I express my gratitude to Mr. Daniel Parvez and Ross Parvez (who is no more) for their cooperation during the field work.

I would like to put on record my gratitude to people who helped me during the field work unravelling the mystery of the romantic village Bengal's intricate legacy of the past, the uncertainty of the present and the subjective vision of the future.

NEW DELHI
1980

M.M. Rehman
CONTENTS

CHAPTER ONE  INTRODUCTION

1.1  BACKGROUND : PROBLEMS AND ISSUES  1
1.2  WEST BENGAL AND ITS TOPOGRAPHY  10
1.3  RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY OF THE STUDY  18
1.4  REVIEW OF LITERATURE  31

CHAPTER TWO  LAND SYSTEM IN PRE-PARTITION PERIOD IN WEST BENGAL

II.1  ANCIENT PERIOD  33
II.2  SULTANATE AND MUGHAL PERIOD (MEDIEVAL)  44
II.3  COLONIAL PERIOD  46
II.4  DEVELOPMENT OF VARIOUS TENURIAL PATTERN  47
II.5  THE BENGAL TENANCY ACT  58
II.6  EMPIRICAL EVIDENCE OF AGRICULTURAL BACKGROUND  68
II.7  SUMMARY  77

CHAPTER THREE  LEGISLATIONS, PATTERN OF LAND RELATIONS AND TENURIAL FORMS

III.1  LEGISLATIONS SINCE INDEPENDENCE  76
III.2  PATTERN OF LAND RELATIONS AND TENURIAL FORMS  93
III.3  PER HEAD HOLDING  114
III.4  SPATIAL DISTRIBUTION OF LANDHOLDING AND AREA  116
III.5  LAND INEQUALITIES  118
III.6  CHANGING STRUCTURE OF HOLDING IN WEST BENGAL  120
# List of Tables

## Chapter One

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.1</td>
<td>Population</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.2</td>
<td>Sex Ratio</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.3</td>
<td>Distribution of Working Population</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.4</td>
<td>Urban Population</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## Chapter Two

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2.1</td>
<td>Disputes between landlords and Occupancy Ryots</td>
<td>57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.2</td>
<td>Hierarchy of Intermediaries</td>
<td>64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.3</td>
<td>Landed Estate in Bengal</td>
<td>68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.4</td>
<td>Production of Jute</td>
<td>68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>Population Movement in Bengal</td>
<td>68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.6</td>
<td>Index of Per Capita All Crop Output in the Quinquennia</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(1820-21 to 1922-23 = 100)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.7</td>
<td>Trends in Food Crop Output : 1920-46</td>
<td>73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.8</td>
<td>Index of Food Crop Output in the Quinquennia</td>
<td>74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(1920-21 to 1922-23 = 100)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.9</td>
<td>Index of Per Capita Food Production in the Quinquennia</td>
<td>74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(1920-21 to 1922-23 = 100)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.10</td>
<td>Index of Cash Crop Output in the Quinquennia</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(1920-22 to 1922-23 = 100)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## Chapter Three

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>Income and Expenditure of Bargadars in 1946</td>
<td>82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.2</td>
<td>Progress of Land Reforms in West Bengal upto 1980</td>
<td>90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>District-wise Distribution of Number and Area of Holdings by Tenure - 1970-71</td>
<td>97</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
3.4 (a) Percentage Distribution of Estimated number and Area of holdings by Tenure 1970-71

3.4 (b) District-wise percentage Distribution of Number of Holdings and Area by Size-class

3.5 Farm Population, General population and per Capita Landholding in Districts - 1971

3.6 Percentage Distribution of Cash Credit Received by Sources in West Bengal

3.7 Percentage Distribution of Land and Credit Received by the Cultivators by Size-class of Owned Area, and Size-class of Operated Area in West Bengal, 1971

3.8 Estimated Number of Holdings doing with or Without Hired Labour

3.9 Size-class Percentage Break-up of Operated Area

3.10 Size-class Percentage Break-up of Operated Area

3.11 Gini's Co-efficient


3.13 Area of Land under Barga Cultivation as Percentage to Total Cultivated Area

3.14 Recording of Bargadars upto 31st Dec. 1980

3.15 Growth of Output, Land Productivity, Acreage and Population in West Bengal

CHAPTER FOUR

4.1 (a) Agricultural Machines and Implements in West Bengal by Districts : Tractors and Plough (Wooden)

4.1 (b) Agricultural Machines and Implements in West Bengal by Districts : Plough (Iron) and Carts

4.1 (c) Agricultural Machines and Implements in West Bengal by Districts : Sugar-cane Crushers
5.20 Per Acre Input and Out of Paddy under ('Boro' HYV) Contractual Farming Arrangement

5.21 Per Acre Cost and Benefit in Paddy ('Boro' HYV) Cultivation Under Contractual Arrangements

CHAPTER SIX

6.1 Population, Caste, Literacy and Workers

6.2 Details of Workers

6.3 Details of Workers

6.4 Village Directory: Landuse and Amenities

6.5 Distribution of Average Area per-holding and Per Capita Area

6.6 Distribution of Ownership Holdings: Patkelgacha

6.7 Distribution of Ownership Holdings: Bagdaha

6.8 Percentage Distribution of Population by Size-class and Household: Patkelgacha

6.9 Percentage Distribution of Population by Size-class and Household: Bagdaha

6.10 Classification of Population by Age-group: Patkelgacha

6.11 Classification of Population by Age-group: Bagdaha

6.12 Distribution of the Population of Educational Status: Patkelgacha

6.13 Distribution of the Population by Educational Status: Bagdaha

6.14 Percentage Distribution of People among Different Size-class and Households Categories According to Occupations: Patkelgacha

6.15 Percentage Distribution of People among Different Size-class and Households Categories According to Occupations: Bagdaha
6.16 Distribution of Family-size by size-class of Holding: Patkelgacha

6.17 Distribution of Family size by Size-class of Holding: Bagdaha

6.18 Distribution of Children under Study: Patkelgacha

6.19 Distribution of Children under Study: Bagdaha

6.20 Moneylender’s Rates in Bengal Districts-1929

6.21 Registered Mortgages and Prices (1917-28)

6.22 Sources of Borrowing by Households: Patkelgacha

6.23 Sources of Borrowing by Households: Bagdaha

6.24 Distribution of Agricultural Implements: Patkelgacha

6.25 Distribution of Agricultural Implements: Bagdaha

6.26 Distribution of Farm Assets: Patkelgacha

6.27 Distribution of Farm Assets: Bagdaha

6.28 Distribution of Livestock: Patkelgacha

6.29 Growth of Livestock of West Bengal

6.30 Distribution of Livestock: Bagdaha

6.31 Distribution of Consumer’s Durables: Patkelgacha

6.32 Distribution of Consumer’s Durables: Bagdaha

CHAPTER SEVEN

7.1 (a) Distribution of Opinions/Attitudes of Respondents According to Size-class of Holding: Patkelgacha

7.1 (b) Distribution of Opinions/Attitudes of Respondents According to Size-class of Holding: Patkelgacha
7.1 (c) Distribution of Opinions/Attitudes of Respondents According to Size-class of Holding: Patkelgacha

7.1 (d) Distribution of Opinions/Attitudes of Respondents According to Size-class of Holding: Patkelgacha

7.2 (a) Distribution of Opinions/Attitudes of Respondents According to Size-class of Holdings: Bagdaha

7.2 (b) Distribution of Opinions/Attitudes of Respondents According to Size-class of Holdings: Bagdaha

7.2 (c) Distribution of Opinions/Attitudes of Respondents According to Size-class of Holdings: Bagdaha

7.2 (d) Distribution of Opinions/Attitudes of Respondents According to Size-class of Holdings: Bagdaha

7.3 Distribution of Attached Agricultural Labourers: Bagdaha

7.4 Distribution of Shops and Business Establishments: Bagdaha

CHAPTER EIGHT

8.1 Distribution of Working Population by Agricultural and other Workers in West Bengal and India (1971)

8.2 Employment Pattern and Migration by Months

8.3 District-wise Profile of Agricultural Labour and in West Bengal and their Growth

8.4 Occupation-wise Distribution of Rural Workers

8.5 Money Wage Rates of Male and Female Agricultural Labourers in West Bengal and Ratios of Female to Male Agricultural Money Wage

8.6 Net Domestic Product Per Workers in Agriculture at Current Prices in West Bengal (Rs.)

xiii
Co-efficient of Variation of Money Wage Rates (Male & Female) labour in West Bengal Percentage

Index Number of Real Wages of Male and Female Agricultural Labourers in West Bengal

Average Daily Wage Rates of Agricultural Labourers in West Bengal in 1976-77 & 1979-80

Full Days in a year of wage-paid Employment in Agriculture Per Agricultural Labour in Agricultural Labour Household and Rural Labour Households

Average Daily Wage Earnings of Adult Males and Females of Rural Labour Households in All Agricultural Operations

Agricultural Labourer Households and Population : Classification by Caste and Sex

Classification of Agricultural Labour Population by Age Groups

Status of Landless Agricultural Labourers Households in Terms of Their 'Habitat'

Distribution of Agricultural Labour Population by Family Size

Distribution of Agricultural Labour Population by Occupational Status

Distribution of Agricultural Labour Population by Educational Level

Distribution of Children and Adults Studying and Working Among Agricultural Labourers

Details of Vested Land Received by Landless Agricultural Households

Sources of Borrowings by Landless Agricultural Labourers

Reasons for Which Agricultural Labourers became Landless

Agricultural Implements Owned by Agricultural Labourers

Consumer Durables Possessed by Agricultural Labour Households
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>8.24</td>
<td>Livestock Owned by Agricultural Labourers' Households</td>
<td>429</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.25</td>
<td>Distribution of the Agricultural Workers According to their Opinion, Understanding and Perception about the important Socio-Political and Economic Aspects</td>
<td>430</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.26</td>
<td>Distribution of Heads of Agricultural Labour Households about their Perceptions and Recognition of Exploiters</td>
<td>432</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.27</td>
<td>Distribution of Heads of Agricultural Labour Households who go and do not go to work Outside the Village in Which they Live</td>
<td>432</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.28</td>
<td>Distribution of Heads of Agricultural Labour Households who are members and not Members of Landless Agricultural Labour Organisation</td>
<td>433</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**CHAPTER NINE**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>9.1</td>
<td>Growth of output, Land Productivity, Acreage and Population in West Bengal</td>
<td>444</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
LIST OF DIAGRAMS/GRAPHS

CHAPTER ONE

1.1 Framework 20
1.2 Source Approach 23
1.3 Land Question 30

CHAPTER THREE

3.1 Total Holdings: Number and Area 135
3.2 Wholly Owned and Self Operated: Number and Area 136
3.3 Partly Owned and Partly Operated: Number of Area 137
3.4 Wholly for fixed Produce: Number and Area 138
3.5 Wholly for Share of Produce Number and Area 139
3.6 Others: Number and Area 140
3.7 Percentage of Holdings and Area under Size-class 0.4 ha. 141
3.8 Holding and Area Under Size-class 0.5 ha. 142
3.9 Holding and Area under Size-class 1.00 ha. 143
3.10 Holding and Area under Size-class 2.00 ha. 144
3.11 Holding and Area under Size-class 3.00 ha. 145
3.12 Holding and Area Under Size-class 4.00 ha. 146
3.13 Holding and Area Under Size-class 5.00 ha. 147
3.14 Holding and Area Under Size-class 10.00 ha. 148
CHAPTER FIVE

5.1 West Bengal: Growth in Major Landuse Categories - 1960-61 to 1980-81

5.2 Average Area Per Pumpset in Different Size of Farms

5.3 Per Acre Output-cost Benefit and Position in Various Size-class

CHAPTER SIX

6.1 No. of Sources of Borrowings by Households of Various Size-class of Holdings

CHAPTER EIGHT

8.1 Co-efficient of Variation of Money Wage Rates: Agricultural Labourers (West Bengal)
CHAPTER SIX

6.1 Location Map of the Selected Villages under the Study 260