

CHAPTER - IV

C H A P T E R I V
S O C I O - C U L T U R A L C H A R A C T E R I S T I C S O F F A R M E R S
O F T H E R E P R E S E N T A T I V E B L O C K S F R O M
T H E S E L E C T E D D I S T R I C T S

The objective of this chapter is to analyse the different socio-cultural characteristics of the sample farmers in the five blocks selected for the study. The importance of these factors in the context of technology adoption in agriculture especially in agriculturally backward regions, has been analysed in detailed in the introductory chapter.

EDUCATION

Among the socio-cultural factors the role of education of farmers-the 'human capital' factor-in the process of adoption of improved technology in agriculture has been particularly stressed by the Social Scientists. This is because the adoption behaviour of the farmers is a process involving knowledge, abilities, skills, perceptions and attitude in respect of agricultural innovations. In this study, for the purpose of measuring educational levels, a scoring system has been adopted, and the farmers have been classified into four groups according to their scores. These groups are :

- (i) illiterate farmers (0 point);
- (ii) farmers with low education, that is, who can read and write (one point);
- (iii) farmers with moderate education, that is, those having education upto the eighth standard (two points), and

- (iv) farmers highly educated, namely, those having education above the eighth standard (three points).

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EDUCATIONAL LEVELS OF FARMERS

Blocks	Levels of education			
	High	Medium	Low	Illiterate
Jamalpur	12/19 (63.2%)	6/19 (31.6%)	1/19 (5.2%)	- -
Onda	5/21 (23.8%)	3/21 (14.3%)	7/21 (33.3%)	6/21 (28.6%)
Chapra	5/11 (45.5%)	2/11 (18.2%)	4/11 (36.3%)	- -
Sagar	12/36 (33.3%)	9/36 (25%)	15/36 (41.7%)	- -
Maynaguri	5/31 (16.1%)	3/31 (9.7%)	17/31 (54.8%)	6/31 (19.4%)

Source : Compiled and tabulated from the field data.

Note : Figures in parentheses indicate percent of farmers.

It is seen from the Table, that in Jamalpur which is the most agriculturally progressive block among the five selected blocks, the proportion of highly educated farmers is the largest and that of illiterate farmers nil. In the other agriculturally advanced block, that is, Chapra, the percentage of farmers with high education is next to that in Jamalpur, and the per cent of illiterate farmers, is also nil. In the

EDUCATIONAL LEVELS OF FARMERS

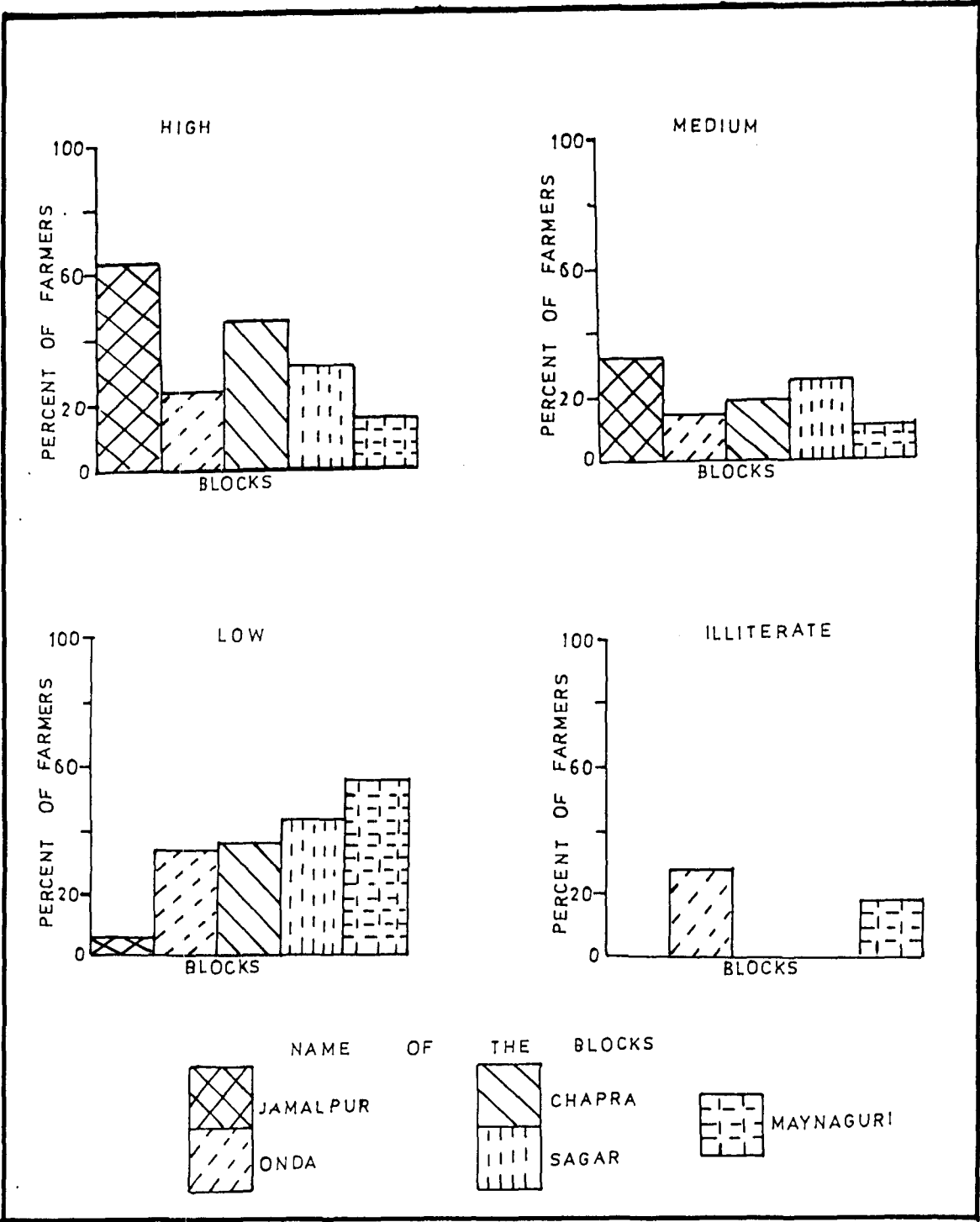


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In developed region most children
go to school.

block of Sagar the proportion of highly educated farmers is about one-third and for Onda it is about a fourth. At the other extreme, in the agriculturally most backward of the block, namely, Maynaguri, the percentage of farmers with high education is the lowest.

In the case of medium education too, the farmers of the Jamalpur block rank first, their proportion being about a third of their total. The farmers of Sagar rank next to it (one fourth) followed by the Chapra and the Onda blocks. In this category as well, the farmers of Maynaguri block lag behind the others (less than 10%). In respect of farmers with low education, the percentage is the highest in Maynaguri, more than half of the farmers falling in this category. On the other hand, only 5% farmers in the Jamalpur block has low education. Relatively high percentage of farmers with low education are found in the three blocks of Maynaguri, Sagar and Onda. Turning to the case of the nil education or illiterate group, Onda rank first followed by Maynaguri. In the too relatively advanced blocks from Burdwan and Nadia, as well as in the not-so-advanced block of South 24 Parganas illiterate farmers are absent.

MASS-MEDIA CONTACT

It is generally hypothesized that the mass-media contact of farmers plays an effective role in technology adoption in agriculture. For assessing the level of exposure to mass

media of individual sample farmers, different forms of mass media, namely, radio, TV, newspapers, voluntary organizations and literature have been considered. On the basis of individual responses the total score of each farmer has been worked out with the help of a scoring scheme, and the sample farmers have been classified into the three following groups :

- (i) farmers with high mass-media contact (that is, contacts with more than two types of media) - two points;
- (ii) farmers with low mass-media contact (contacts with one or two types of media) - one point;
- (iii) farmers with no mass-media contacts (zero point)

A table has been prepared to show the computed result.

T A B L E 38
MASS-MEDIA CONTACTS OF FARMERS

Blocks	Mass-media		Contact
	High	Low	Nil
Jamalpur	5/19 (26.3%)	14/19 (73.7%)	-
Onda	-	11/21 (52.4%)	10/21 (47.6%)
Chapra	3/11 (27.3%)	7/11 (63.6%)	1/11 (9.1%)
Sagar	5/36 (13.9%)	31/36 (86.1%)	-
Maynaguri	4/31 (12.9%)	21/31 (67.7%)	6/31 (19.4%)

Source : Compiled and tabulated from the field data.

Note : Figures in parentheses indicate percent of farmers.

MASS-MEDIA CONTACTS OF FARMERS

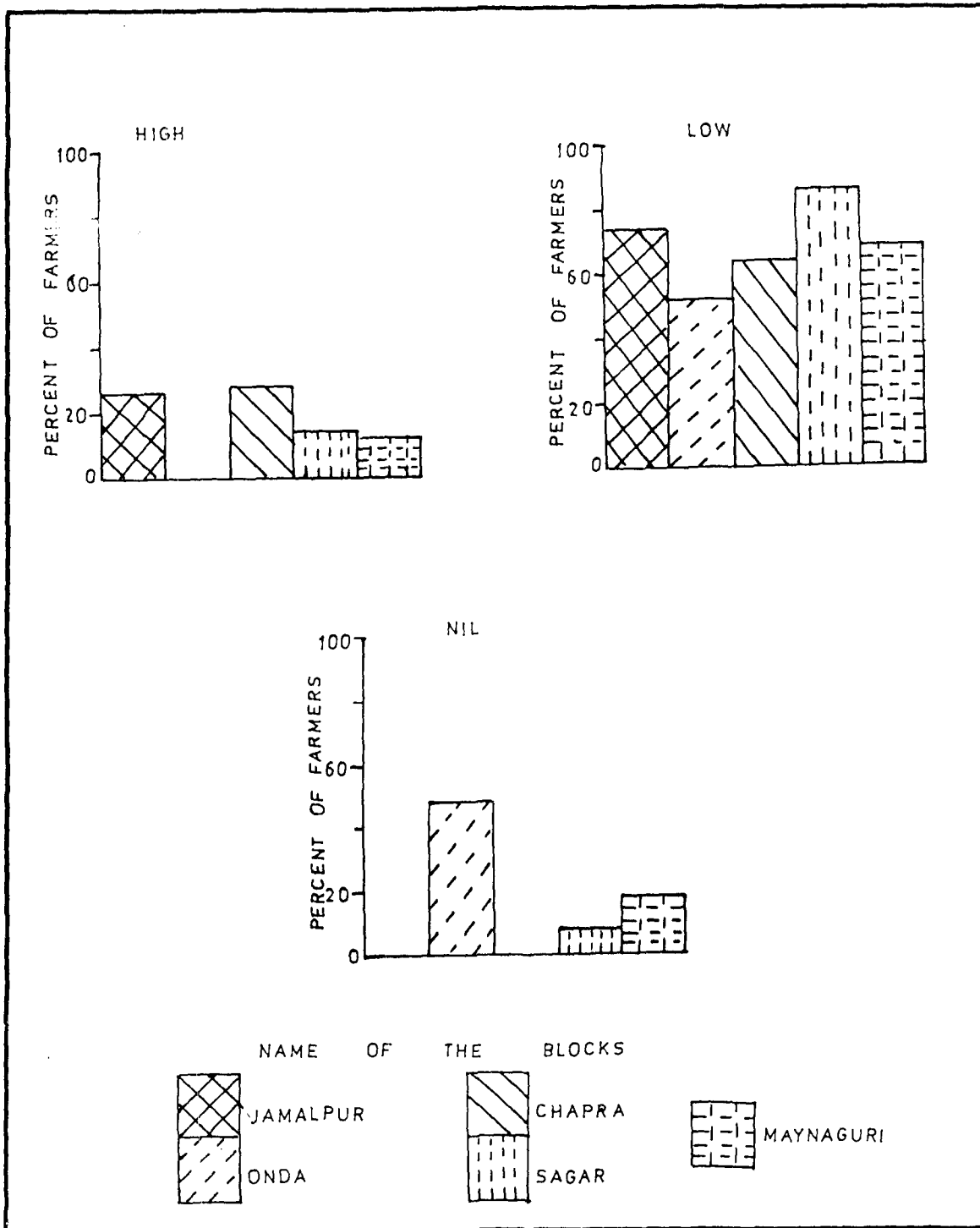


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It is observed from the Table that the percentage of the farmers with high mass-media contact is the highest in Chapra block followed by those in the Jamalpur block. Both these blocks are agriculturally advanced. There is no farmers with high mass-media in the Onda block, where as their percentage is low in Maynaguri, the agriculturally most backward block. It is striking that the concentration of farmers with low mass-media contacts is high in relation to farmers with other levels of contact in all the five blocks. The highest percentage of farmers with low mass-media is in the Sagar block. In this regard Jamalpur rank second followed by Maynaguri, Chapra and Onda. On the other hand, that is, the nil mass-media contact group, no farmer is found in the Jamalpur and Sagar blocks, whereas the percentage is very low in the Chapra block. About a fifth of farmers of Maynaguri block and almost half of the farmers of Onda(Bankura) reported to have no mass-media contact. The relatively low percentage of farmers with no mass-media contacts in Maynaguri which is a backward block, may be ascribed to the proximity of the block to the tea plantations, and the absence of no mass media category farmers in the Sagar block is due to its proximity to the urban areas.

URBAN CONTACT

Another somewhat analogous socio-cultural factor is urban contact or cosmopolitaness of farmers vis-a-vis the adoption of superior agricultural technology. For assessing the degree of urban contact of the individual sample farmers, they have

been categorised into four groups in accordance with a scale which is based on the frequency of visits of the respondents to the city, district town, and nearest town of their respective villages. The four groups are - farmers with (i) high urban contact, (ii) medium urban contact, (iii) low urban contact and (iv) no urban contact.

T A B L E 39

URBAN CONTACTS OF FARMERS

Block	Urban Contact			
	High	Medium	Low	Nil
Jamalpur	12/19 (63.2%)	7/19 (36.8%)	-	-
Onda	8/21 (38.1%)	12/21 (57.1%)	1/21 (4.8%)	-
Chapra	2/11 (18.2%)	7/11 (63.6%)	-	2/11 (18.2%)
Sagar	12/36 (33.3%)	20/36 (55.6%)	4/36 (11.1%)	-
Maynaguri	2/31 (6.5%)	23/31 (74.2%)	5/31 (16.1%)	1/31 (3.2%)

Source : Compiled and tabulated from the field data.

Note : Figures and parentheses indicate percent of farmers.

From the above table it is apparent that in respect of the proportion of farmers with high-urban contact, the agriculturally advanced block of Jamalpur is ahead of the other

URBAN CONTACTS OF FARMERS

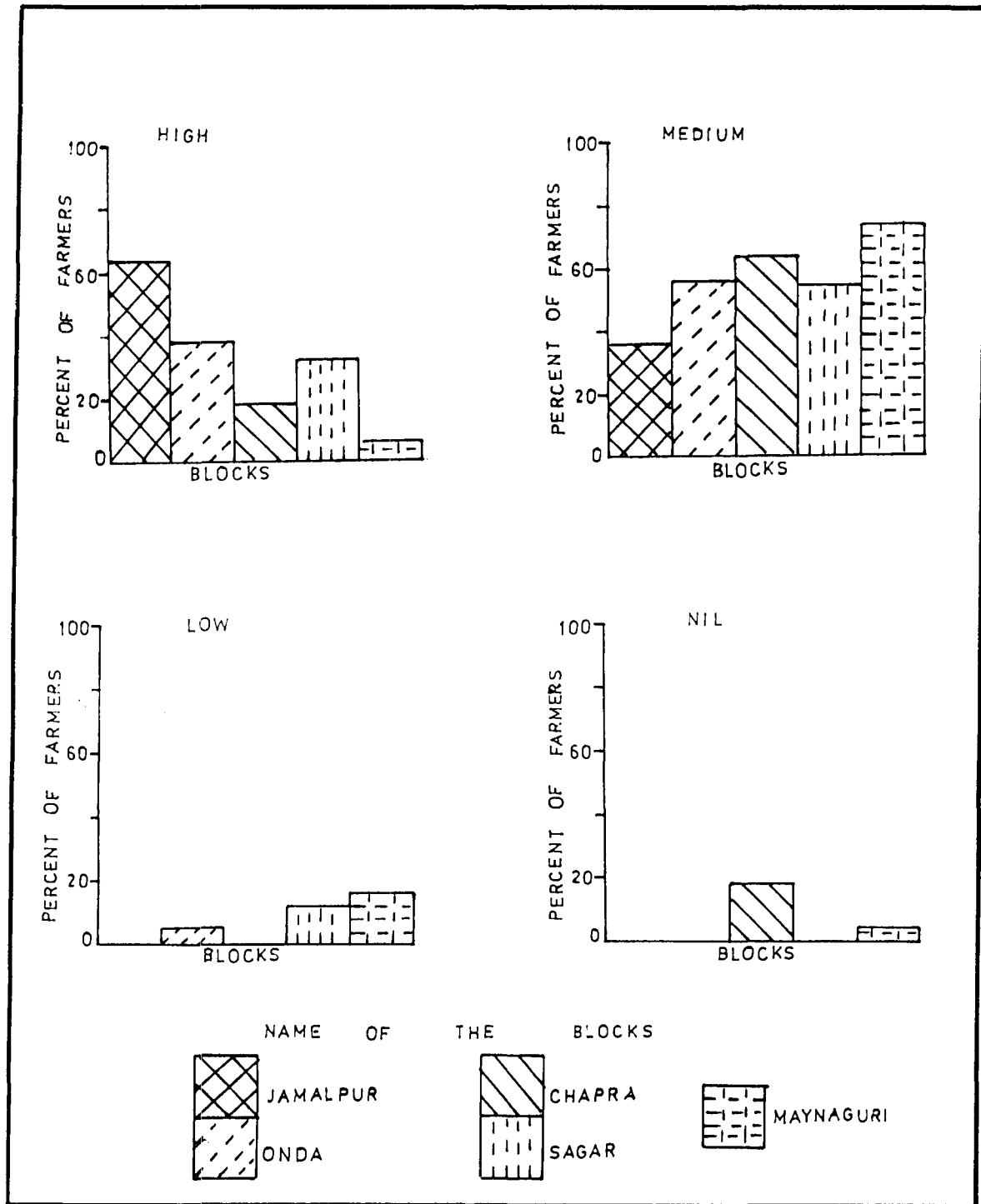


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blocks. More than one third farmers of Onda and Sagar blocks have high urban contact whereas only 2 of 11 farmers of the Chapra block have high urbanity. In terms of the percent of farmers with high urban contact, the backward Maynaguri block come last. The maximum concentration of farmers is seen in the medium urban contact category in all blocks except Jamalpur. Regarding low urban contact, the farmers in the blocks of Jamalpur and Chapra expectedly exhibit nil figures. Correspondingly, the percentage is the highest among the farmers of the Maynaguri blocks. Farmers with nil urban contact are also found in Maynaguri block, and rather surprisingly, in the Chapra block as well.

CASTE AND ETHNICITY

It has been hypothesised by many that the adoption of superior agricultural technology is significantly associated with caste and ethnic factors as well. In the context, the sample farmers in this study have been categorized into three caste groups:

- (a) high caste (comprising Brahmins, Baidyas and Kayasthas)
- (b) Lower caste (comprising other castes except the schedule ones)
- (c) Schedule castes and
- (d) Scheduled tribes(the tribes do not belong to any caste and this has not being categorized).

CASTE AND ETHNICITY OF FARMERS

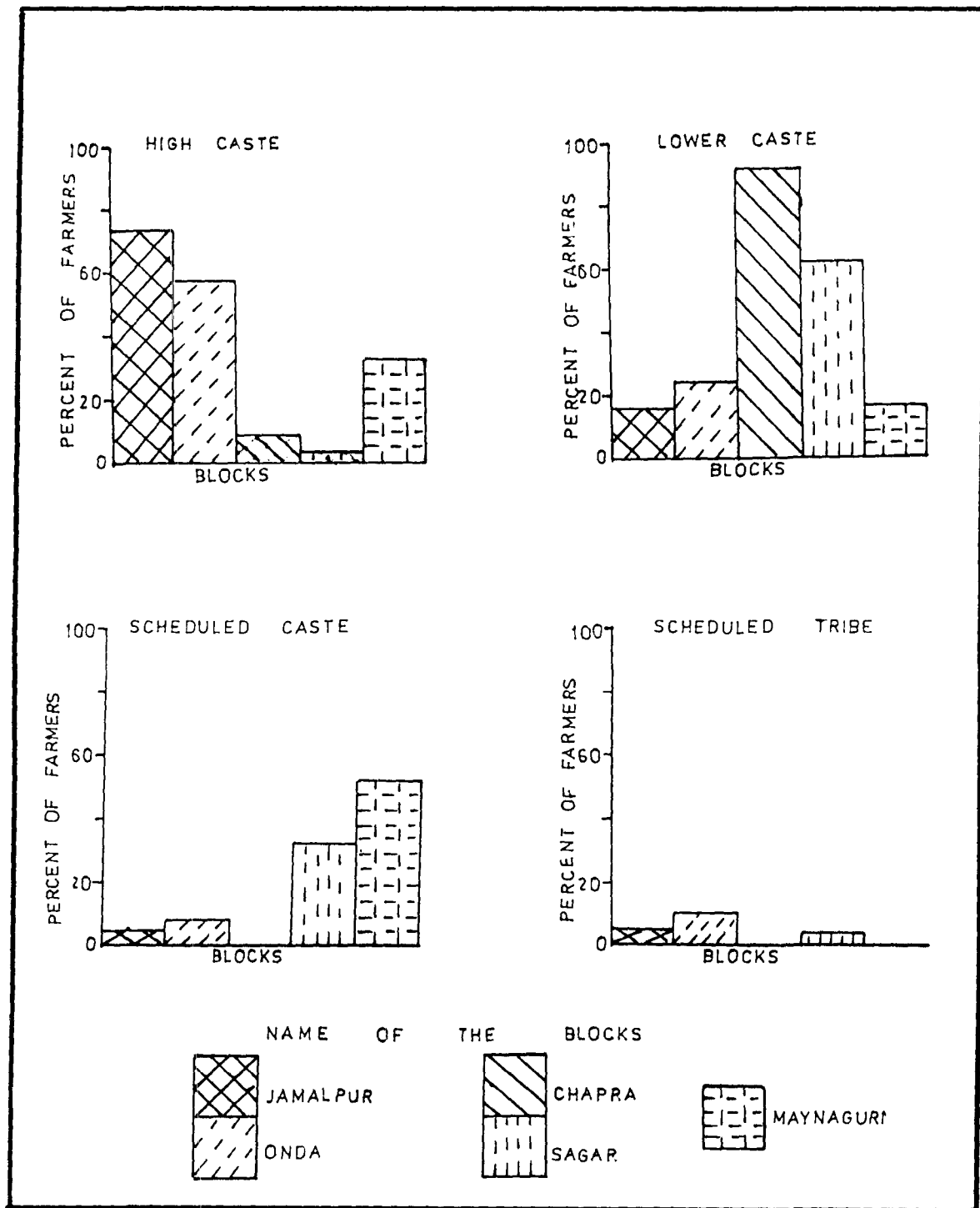


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T A B L E 40
C A S T E A N D E T H N I C I T Y O F F A R M E R S

Blocks	Caste High caste	and Lower caste	Ethnicity Scheduled caste	Scheduled tribe
Jamalpur	14/19 (73.7%)	3/19 (15.8%)	1/19 (5.2%)	1/19 (5.2%)
Onda	12/21 (57.1%)	5/21 (23.8%)	2/21 (9.5%)	2/21 (9.5%)
Chapra	1/11 (9.1%)	10/11 (90.9%)	- -	- -
Sagar	1/36 (2.8%)	22/36 (61.1%)	12/36 (33.3%)	1/36 (2.8%)
Maynaguri	10/31 (32.3%)	5/31 (16.1%)	16/31 (51.6%)	- -

Source : Compiled and tabulated from the field data.

Note : Figures and parentheses indicate percent of farmers.

The table reveals that about three fourth of the cultivators of the agriculturally progressive Jamalpur block belong to high castes, whereas the proportion of Scheduled castes is the highest in the agriculturally backward Maynaguri block. The proportion of low caste and Scheduled caste farmers is very low in Jamalpur. In Chapra and Sagar, lower caste farmers are predominant. The proportion of Scheduled caste farmers is also significantly high in Sagar and Onda. When we consider the proportion of Scheduled tribe farmers the Onda block of Bankura top the list. There are some tribal farmers in Jamalpur and Sagar, but there is none among the sample farmers in the Chapra and the Maynaguri blocks.

PERSONALITY TRAITS

The personality traits of farmers have also been traditionally emphasized as shaping their willingness to adopt improved agricultural technology. Among these attributes are (i) disinclination to innovate (lack of scientific orientation), (ii) lack of aspiration, (iii) lack of economic motivation, (iv) lack of risk orientation, (v) individualism or inability to co-operate, and (vi) absence of cosmopolite orientation.

A scoring system has been adopted by ascribing weights to each of these attributes in accordance with whether they are considered as 'extreme'(one point) ; 'moderate' (two points); 'somewhat' (three points), and 'nil' (four points), and the farmers have been categorized into the following groups on the basis of the scores obtained:

- (a) Highly progressive (19-24 points);
- (b) Progressive (13-18 points);
- (c) Moderately Progressive (7-12 points); and
- (d) Psychologically backward (1-6 points)

Accordingly a table has been prepared.

T A B L E 41
PERSONALITY TRAITS OF FARMERS

Blocks	Personality		Traits	
	Highly Progressive	Progressive	Moderately Progressive	Psychologically backward
Jamalpur	12/19 (63.2%)	5/19 (26.3%)	2/19 (10.5%)	-
Onda	9/21 (42.9%)	9/21 (42.9%)	3/21 (14.2%)	-
Chapra	11/11 (100%)	-	-	-
Sagar	11/36 (30.6%)	16/36 (44.4%)	7/36 (19.4%)	2/36 (5.6%)
Maynaguri	3/31 (9.7%)	9/31 (29%)	9/31 (29%)	10/31 (32.3%)

Source : Compiled and tabulated from the field data.

Note : Figures in parentheses indicate percent of farmers

It appears evident from Table that the maximum concentration of highly progressive farmers is in the two advanced blocks of Chapra and Jamalpur. The Onda farmers rank next whereas in Maynaguri only about one tenth of the sample farmers are highly progressive . As regards progressive farmers, Sagar rank first and in respect of moderately progressive farmers, Maynaguri top the list. In Chapra this category of farmers is absent, whereas in Jamalpur the percentage is very low. The psychologically backward farmers are to be found mostly in

PERSONALITY TRAITS OF FARMERS

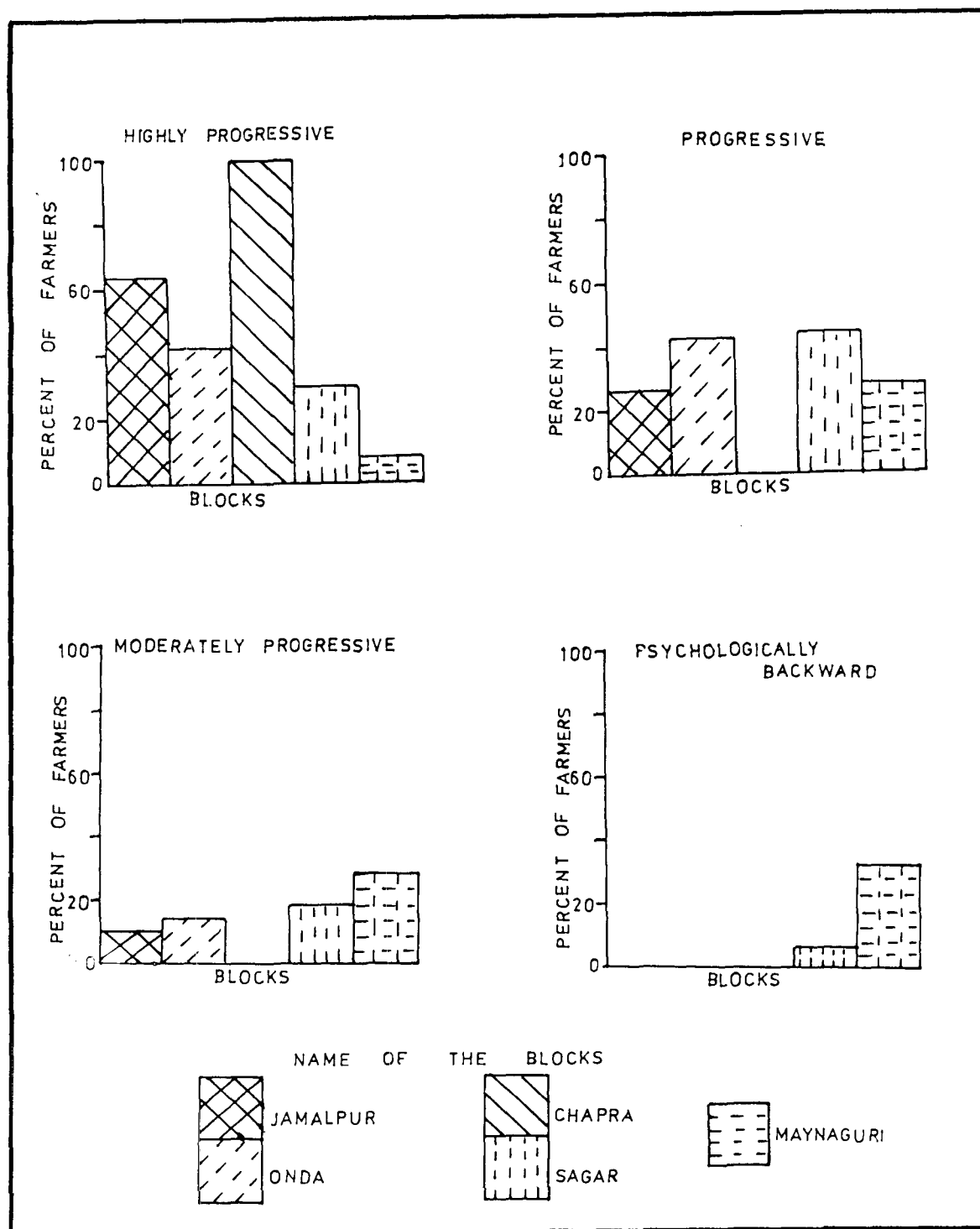


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the Maynaguri block, and only marginally in the Sagar block.

The analysis of the socio-cultural traits of the farmers of the representative blocks reveal that the advanced region have concentrations of farmers with higher socio-cultural scores than the other less developed regions, with the exceptions of the Maynaguri and Sagar blocks in mass media contact, which is due to their locations near the tea estates and near to the urban areas.