CHAPTER-IV

METHODOLOGY AND DATA BASE

The Jammu and Kashmir State has the distinction of being the only state in the whole of country, which witnessed the successful implementation of Land Reforms. The necessary and requisite political will at the appropriate point of time did not allow the bureaucratic bottlenecks to hamper the implementation. These Reforms brought about a paradigm-shift in the agrarian structure of the whole state and the exploitation of man by man was minimized to the maximum possible extent. The tenants-at-will whose status was more or less like slaves, became the masters of the Land, which they were cultivating without proprietary rights. These Reforms not only improved the economy of the Landless labourers, small peasants and marginal farmers but also gave them a kind of respectability in their social surroundings, as Land was not only the source of livelihood in rural Kashmir in the past but also a status symbol.

The ownership rights of the Land gave the peasant an opportunity to manage the Land properly and look forward for the increase in production. The increase in production helped him to raise his standard of living and at the same time strive for other sources of income. This change in the basic economic structure affected the entire social organization.
The present study has been carried out against this very background.

The present study was carried out in 'Kulgam' Tehsil of Anantnag district of Kashmir valley. The total area of Tehsil is 116839 acres, out of which the total cultivable Land is 75334 acres and non-cultivable is 41505 acres. The non-cultivable Land includes 843 acres of forest land, 8670 acres of grazing land, 876 acres of baren land and 21752 acres of un-cultivable land. Additionally, 1484 acres of non-cultivable land are under popular, willow and other stray trees. Out of the total 75334 acres of cultivable Land, 50362 acres are irrigated and 24972 acres are unirrigated. The main crop is paddy, which covers 40866 acres of irrigated land. Besides this, 2236 acres of land are under fruits, 1872 acres of land are under vegetables, 472 acres of land are under maize and 284 acres of land are under pulses etc.

Out of 24972 acres of unirrigated land, 18780 acres of land are under maize, 108 acres of land are under vegetables, 3413 acres of land are under fruits and 2147 acres of land are under different crops like, potatoes, pulses, onions etc.

Our attempt has been, on the one hand to analyse the past agrarian relations between the 'Jagirdars' and tenants of Tehsil 'Kulgam' and to examine the changes
which have occurred because of Land Reforms in its socio-economic organization on the other.

After the Land Reforms there is hardly any example in the whole rural area of Kashmir Valley that any landless labourer has not been benefited. Our attempt has been to see how these Reforms have benefited small peasants, marginal peasants and landless labourers. In our study we have tried to examine the nature of exploitation of 'Jagirdari' system in the past (pre-reforms) and analyse the nature of class relations at that time. But, at present, we have also tried to see how the various Land Reforms legislations passed by Jammu and Kashmir Government have changed the socio-economic conditions of marginal and small peasants. Furthermore, it has also been our concern to examine how the changes in their economy have brought changes in their social organisation. The researcher has tried to see the changes in the nature of social inequality, social mobility, family, marriage and kinship relations. The study tried to examine how these Reforms which were aimed primarily at reducing the economic disparities between tenants-atwill and absentee landlords, have in turn stimulated a process of social transformation in terms of general awakening, political participation, modern education etc. The study has also tried to examine the role of muslim clergy in the traditional social structure, and how the process of modernization and secularization has reduced their role.
As a matter of fact, historically the Syeds and Peers have been dominating castes/classes in the traditional Kashmiri society. They have, therefore, functioned as the custodians of Islamic world-view and value-system. They have been highly educated in traditional Islamic sciences and in touch with political establishments and bureaucratic circles from time to time. The study had tried to outline a comparative analysis of their role during pre-reform and post-reform phases of Jammu and Kashmir state. The role of traditional Islamic scholars in the educational backwardness of the state has also been examined.

To examine all these changes in the kulgam Tehsil the following hypothetical points were laid down:

1. Land Reforms have changed the basic character of agrarian social structure.

2. The socio-economic disparity has come down after the introduction of Land Reforms.

3. Size of holding and the technological changes in agriculture have influenced the social mobility in the agrarian structure.

Objectives of the Study:

The main objective of the present study has been to analyse the impact of Land Reforms on agrarian social structure. The emphasis has been on the analysis of socio-
economic changes, which have followed after Land Reforms. Broadly speaking the study has been concerned with the following objectives:

1. To analyse the changes in the economic organization,
2. To analyze the social organization in the past and at present, so that light can be thrown on the changes which have taken place,
3. To find out the nature and factors responsible for social mobility,
4. To examine the nature of inequality in the past (pre-Reforms), and
5. To assess how fairly the Land Reforms have been implemented on the ground.

In order to examine the above hypothetical points, and to understand the significance of the above mentioned objectives, the following methodology has been worked out.

Theoretical Approach: The approach used by social Anthropologists and Sociologists to study the Agrarian structure of Indian Society has mainly been dominated by Marxian perspective. The widespread assumption was that agrarian structure of Indian society based on exploitation and dominance will change after the Land Reforms in the post independence period and a more egalitarian structure
will take its place. But that didn’t happen in most of the parts of Indian Society. The loopholes in the Land Reforms Legislation were exploited by the Jagirdars and money lenders to the fullest and the subsequent introduction of technology helped these intermediaries to evict the tenants on the pretext of self cultivation. The targets of Government remained on paper, and the fruits of this programme couldn’t percolate to the targeted poor. The bureaucratic bottlenecks as well as the caste and class biases of bureaucrats mostly coming from upper castes and classes made the implementation of Land Reforms extremely difficult. In view of these avoidable or one can say unavoidable impediments, the lot of the millions of landless labourers and marginal peasants could not be improved. Above all the lack of political will at the state level was the main cause which made these Land Reforms a farce barring few states like Jammu and Kashmir, Kerala and West Bengal.

Jammu and Kashmir State has been an exception to all other states of India in this regard. The political leadership of Jammu and Kashmir was successful to implement these laws in letter and spirit despite many hurdles. The ‘land to tiller’ became a reality from 1950’s onwards.

So the Marxian framework adopted by most of the sociologists to analyze the agrarian structure of rural Kashmir can’t fulfill the need to understand the
phenomenon under study. The fact that some intermediaries did benefit by recourse to evasion or distortion of Land Reforms Legislation's can not be denied so easily or explained away. However, one can reasonably presume that the perennial land hunger in the state of Jammu and Kashmir was satiated to a considerable extent. There was an important situational factor which helped in the implementation of Land Reforms Legislation's in the State of Jammu and Kashmir and furthermore helped in the retention of land by former tenants-at-will. Unlike other states of India, the use of technology in the agriculture of Jammu and Kashmir state, owing to its mountainous topography, has been minimal. Therefore, the intermediaries and moneylenders in the state could not opt for so-called self-cultivation by taking recourse to the application of latest technology, as they did in most of the states in the rest of India. Secondly, the commercialization of agriculture in the state could not take place, as the agriculture of the state is mainly a single-crop phenomenon. The two-crop pattern is followed only in certain insignificant pockets. In view of its economic unviability, the prospective investors who could invest their money in the agricultural sector of the state, did not find doing so an attractive proposition. Thirdly, the trend to change irrigated lands into orchards could also not gain momentum as it can be done only where the soil is conducive for horticulture and therefore only those
lands were converted into orchards which were suited to this agro-climatic pattern.

In the State of Jammu and Kashmir, we have not witnessed the emergence of what Andre Beteille calls 'gentlemen farmers' who often successfully use their wide range of knowledge and experience and social contacts to develop a viable organization on their farms (Andre Beteille, 1974: 93). Neither has agriculture in the state of Jammu and Kashmir attracted men of diverse skills and vast experience. So, we have deemed structural-functional approach more relevant to analyze the changing nature of agrarian structure of our Study Area. However, we couldn't overlook the Marxian perspective while analyzing the agrarian structure of the past, which we have dealt with in the third chapter of the present study.

The Universe: The Tehsil comprises of four Blocks, namely, Qazigund, Dewsar, Kulgam and Damhal Hanjipora. As there is diversity within the Tehsil based on agro-climatic conditions, kind of soil, irrigation facilities available etc., we tried to identify those villages, which were benefited most by the Land Reforms. Because our primary concern was to see how the Land Reforms have brought changes in the traditional social structure of our Study Area, therefore we chose Tehsil Kulgam for our study as it is agriculturally a highly developed segment of Kashmir valley. However, the topography of the area puts some peasants at a disadvantage, because they live what
is called in common Kashmiri parlance *Khandi* areas where we have usually one crop pattern. So we thought it necessary to cover two villages at least from each block in order give representative character to our sample.

**Sampling:** As already mentioned, our aim has been to examine the impact of Land Reforms on the agrarian structure of the Study Area, so, we opted for the Judgemental sampling. The villages who were most benefited by Land Reforms were included in our sample. There are many villages who have been benefited by the Land Reforms. To include all those villages in our sample was neither possible due to time and financial constraints nor was it methodologically feasible. In view of the same we included only two villages from each Block in order to have an intensive study of these eight villages. It was very difficult to collect the information from all the households of the respective villages. We have opted for systematic random sampling ensuring that at least 25 per cent of the households are covered in order to make it more representative. The households were arranged in a descending order according to their size of landholdings.

As there was no census carried out in Jammu and Kashmir in 1991, the Tehsil office at Kulgam had conducted a census for their own revenue purposes and the same was utilized for the purpose of sampling.
The Table-A given below shows the number of villages taken for sampling. The population and the number of families are shown against each village in columns 2 and 3 respectively. Column 4 shows the number of samples drawn from each village.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Village</th>
<th>Total Population</th>
<th>Number of Families</th>
<th>Number of Samples Drawn</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>1500</td>
<td>255</td>
<td>64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>2436</td>
<td>406</td>
<td>102</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>2954</td>
<td>492</td>
<td>123</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>1002</td>
<td>167</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E</td>
<td>1026</td>
<td>171</td>
<td>57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>1601</td>
<td>267</td>
<td>67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G</td>
<td>2309</td>
<td>385</td>
<td>97</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H</td>
<td>1765</td>
<td>294</td>
<td>73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total=8</strong></td>
<td><strong>14593</strong></td>
<td><strong>2437</strong></td>
<td><strong>625</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Tehsil Office 'Kulgam'.
Composition of the Respondents: Land Size Holdings and Type of Family

Table: B

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Land Size Holding with Proprietary Rights (in kanals)</th>
<th>Number of House-holds</th>
<th>Type of Family</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Joint (%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marginal (1-8)</td>
<td>116</td>
<td>82.76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Small (9-16)</td>
<td>257</td>
<td>77.82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Semi-Medium (17-24)</td>
<td>162</td>
<td>76.54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medium (25-32)</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>75.76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Large (Above 33)</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>84.85</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Field Data.
It was very difficult to include all the 2437 households in the sample. So, we opted for Systematic Random Sampling technique taking at least 25 per cent of the households, except for village 'E' where 33 per cent of the sample was taken because of heterogeneous kind of landholding size of the families. The households were serially arranged in a descending order taking ownership of the size of the land as the ranking criterion.

The following formulae was used to draw the sample:

\[ N = nk \quad \text{or} \quad n = N/k \]

where, \( N \) = Total number of households in the village

\( n \) = Number of samples to be drawn

\( k \) = Sampling interval (which was 4 in all villages except village 'E' in this village it was 3).

For Village 'A'

\[ N = 255 \]

\[ k = 4 \]

Substituting the values in the above formula

\[ n = 255/4 \approx 64 \text{ approximately} \]
For Village 'B'

\[ N = 406 \]
\[ k = 4 \]
\[ n = \frac{406}{4} = 102 \text{ appx.} \]

For Village 'C'

\[ N = 492 \]
\[ k = 4 \]
\[ n = \frac{492}{4} = 123 \]

For Village 'D'

\[ N = 167 \]
\[ k = 4 \]
\[ n = \frac{167}{4} = 42 \text{ appx.} \]

For Village 'E'

\[ N = 171 \]
\[ k = 3 \]
\[ n = \frac{171}{3} = 57 \]

For Village 'F'

\[ N = 267 \]
\[ k = 4 \]
\[ n = \frac{267}{4} = 67 \text{ appx.} \]

For Village 'G'

\[ N = 385 \]
\[ k = 4 \]
\[ n = \frac{385}{4} = 97 \text{ appx.} \]

For Village 'H'

\[ N = 294 \]
\[ k = 4 \]
\[ n = \frac{294}{4} = 73 \text{ appx.} \]

Among the first four items one was selected randomly and then every fourth item was included in the sample, except in village 'E' where one item was selected randomly from the first three items and then every third item was chosen for the sample. The total number of the sampling units added upto 625 households and the same became our respondents.

The average land size holding is small in case of our Study Area, so instead of making hectares and acres as the units of landholding, we opted to take our basic units in terms of kanals with a view to make our study representative of our Area Study both vertically and horizontally. Landholders possessing land upto 8 kanals have been categorized as marginal farmers, those holding land above 8 kanals upto 16 kanals have been categorized as small
farmers, those possessing land above 16 kanals up to 24 kanals have been categorized as semi-medium farmers, those possessing land above 24 kanals up to 32 kanals have been categorized as medium farmers and finally those possessing land above 32 kanals have been categorized as large farmers.

**Technique of Data Collection**: It is always a tricky issue when it comes to field survey. But, it was more difficult in our case, given the nature of the study. As most of the respondent's were illiterate, so interview schedule was the most suitable tool of data collection. The relevant questions were put to the respondents usually the heads of the families, who had witnessed/experienced the old agrarian structure and could throw light on exploitative nature of *Jagirdari* system, both as victims and witness. The advantage of interview method is that you can interpret the question in many ways and try to extract the relevant information. But, the difficulty, which one faces during interviews, is when it comes to personal questions, like monthly income, dowry paid/received etc. To overcome this hurdle non-participant observation comes to one's rescue and one can ascertain the relevant information from other
family members particularly related through marriage, apart from, simultaneously observing their life-style. The sociologists usually face the dilemma as where to and with whom to reside in a given field of research. Anand Chakarvarti (2001) has also pointed out this problem while studying one of the villages in North Bihar. However, Chakarvarti was studying the agrarian transformation with reference to caste-system. He had to face the problem in view of carrying out his research in a village deeply informed by caste divisions. However, in our Area of study, the question of higher castes and lower castes did not arise. We were concerned with the responses of the people of the area regarding the impact of Land Reforms and our setting of the research was purely on secular and non-denominational lines. So, it was not difficult to develop rapport with any household. Moreover, there is another kind of difficulty which one faces while studying agrarian related topics in rural Kashmir. The first impression which a common villager frames about a researcher is that of a revenue official, as the questions pertaining to proprietorship and yield make them believe so. But, once these doubts were cleared they were forthcoming and co-operative.
As the field study was carried out during 2000 and 2001, it was the time when near drought-like conditions were prevailing because of shortage of water due to less snowfall in winters during previous years. The Government had launched a scheme to provide free ration for about six months to those farmers who were affected most. The respondents always tried to exaggerate or underplay some of the facts according to their convenience. But, the Tehsil records were utilized in order to verify the figures pertaining to land.

All the secondary sources like books, Land revenue records from the Tehsil Kulgam head quarters and district censuses of Anantnag were utilized to have a comprehensive information regarding the field to be studied.