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Bangladesh with its traditional, subsistence and over-populated agriculture has been unable to supply its own people with adequate food, not even enough of their staple, rice. The problems of food shortage have become chronic under different time periods. It has been estimated that the total annual requirement of food grains in Bangladesh is approximately 12 million to 13 million tons. The three major crops (Aman, Aus, and Boro) yield annually (as of 1970-71) approximately 11 million tons. Of this, after deducting a normal loss of 8 per cent due to seed and wastage and approximately 5 to 8 per cent loss due to natural calamities, the net total quantity of rice available for domestic consumption is nearly 10 million tons. Thus there is an annual deficit of about 2 million to 3 million tons. This deficit is met by importing rice and wheat from abroad. The ever-increasing quantities of food imported (shown in Appendix Table 2) has definitely imposed an unbearable burden on the country's poor economy.

The present shortage in food supplies and low productivity are a consequence of the cumulative effects of negligence of the agricultural sector over a long period of time. Bangladesh

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LAND TENURE AND SOCIO-STRUCTURAL
IMPEDIMENTS TO AGRICULTURAL
MODERNIZATION IN BANGLADESH

by

© KAZI SADRUL HOQUE, B.A.(Hons.), M.A.
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A thesis submitted to the Faculty of
Graduate Studies and Research in partial
fulfilment of the requirements
for the degree of Master of Arts

in

Anthropology

Department of Sociology and Anthropology
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The undersigned recommend to the Faculty of Graduate Studies
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September 15, 1980

ABSTRACT

This thesis attempts to investigate the phenomenon of low rice productivity and the impediments to agricultural modernization in Bangladesh by focusing on a number of closely related socio-anthropological factors centering on agrarian structure (land tenure system, the organization of agricultural production, the structure of incentives, and the possibility of ancillary services like credit, markets, extension services, etc.) as influenced by socio-structural and environmental conditions and their mutual relationships in historical perspective.

The concern of this thesis lies primarily in understanding the basic institutional heritage of Bangladesh's agrarian economy and its impact on the productivity, equity and rural income distribution. Agricultural operations, especially rice production in Bangladesh have long suffered from structural defects and have frequently been impeded by a combination of institutional, technological and environmental constraints, and complicated by the widespread practice of patron-client relationship. Few perceptible changes have taken place in the rural and agrarian economy of Bangladesh. The organization of agriculture characterized by semi-feudal and pre-capitalist production relations in one form or another, has resulted in low productivity, poverty, inequitable land ownership and distribution, and access to other productive resources. The ever-increasing pressure of population on fixed land areas has further multiplied the number of the landless, and the poor linkages between the national and local-level governmental structures are incapable of resolving the problem. Some suggested solutions are proffered at the end of this study.

The factors that have made and continue to make Bangladesh unable to supply her own people with sufficient food, or to fully modernize her agricultural economy are discussed for their implications for the problem of agricultural modernization and rural development.

To ADNAN

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Glossary

<u>Aman</u>	The main rice crop sown in May and June and harvested in November-December; the crop is partly broadcast (also known as <u>deepwater aman</u> or 'floating' rice) but principally transplanted.
<u>Aus</u>	Seasonal paddy crop sown in late March or April and harvested in June-July. Most of this crop is sown broadcast, but transplanted.
<u>Banian</u>	Tradesman attached to East India Company's rule.
<u>Barga</u>	Sharecropping arrangement.
<u>Bengalée</u>	Citizen of Bangladesh (also called Bangladeshi).
<u>Boro</u>	Rice crop sown from November to January and harvested between April-May; the crop depends either on rain or on irrigation, heavily the latter.
<u>Chukti</u>	Cash lease arrangement of land, particularly in the Sylhet district of Bangladesh.
<u>Dhamas</u>	Land unit measurement in some areas; approximately 8 <u>dhamas</u> are equal to 1 acre.
<u>Gomastha</u>	A clerk of the <u>zamindar</u> .
<u>Gondas</u>	Land unit measurement in south-eastern Bangladesh; 20 <u>gondas</u> are equal to 1 <u>kani</u> .
<u>IRRI</u>	A particular high yielding variety of rice developed at the International Rice Research Institute (IRRI) in the Philippines.
<u>Jagir</u>	Land grant by Mughal rulers. It is also a revenue assignment.
<u>Jagirdar</u>	The person who was granted a <u>jagir</u> . He was also an assignee of revenue.
<u>Kanis</u>	Land unit definition in south-eastern Bangladesh; 2½ <u>kanis</u> are equal to 1 acre.
<u>Khas land</u>	Land not sublet, occupied directly.

<u>Kotwali</u>	Headquarters, usually refers to the thana (county) where the district office is located.
<u>Krishak Praja Party</u>	Farmer's and worker's party formed by A.K. Fazlul Huq which contested the East Bengal provincial election of 1937.
<u>Lagit</u>	Annual cash lease of land in advance.
<u>Maund</u>	Unit of weight measurement equivalent to 82.2 lbs.
<u>Mofussil</u>	Refers to out station, commonly used to denote any small town or countryside, when a government officer is on tour from his original place of work.
<u>Naib</u>	Kind of a steward.
<u>Phuran</u>	Refers to a flat-rate lease of land for a single annual crop in northern Bangladesh.
<u>Rehan</u>	It involves cash money in exchange for a long-term usufructuary mortgage of land.
<u>Ryotwari</u>	A settlement (individual peasant proprietorship) introduced by the British in southern India.
<u>Seer</u>	Unit of weight measurement equivalent to 2.1 lbs.
<u>Sher-e-Bangla</u>	Tiger of Bengal (title conferred on A.K. Fazlul Huq).
<u>Subdivision</u>	An administrative unit of a district (above thana level), administered by a sub-divisional officer (SDO).
<u>Taccavi-loan</u>	It is a disaster-relief loan.
<u>Taka</u>	Monetary unit in Bangladesh. In May 1975, the taka was devalued to taka 30 = 1 sterling.
<u>Tebhaga</u>	It is a tenure form that gives one-third of the crop to the cultivator, and two-thirds to the landowner in exchange for his contribution of a substantial amount of input-costs.

Thana Literally, it means police station. It is the smallest administrative unit of a district.

UMPCS Abbreviation for Union Multipurpose Co-operative Societies, were the traditional co-operatives organized by rural people and supervised by the officials of co-operative department.

Union A union consists of a number of villages; it is the lowest level of local government administrative unit in Bangladesh.

V-AID Abbreviation for Village Agricultural and Industrial Development - an organizational attempt at rural development, introduced in both wings of Pakistan in 1954. But the program was abolished in 1961 due to various reasons.

Zamindar Non-cultivating absentee landlord.

Zamindari A system of land settlement introduced by Lord Cornwallis in Bengal, Bihar and Orissa in 1793.

MAP 1
SOUTHEAST ASIA AND BANGLADESH

Source: The Times Atlas of the World, Times News Papers Limitd
Printing House Square, London, 1974, compiled from
plates 25, 27, 29, and 31.

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

In this study an attempt will be made to understand the phenomenon of low rice productivity and the impediments to agricultural modernization in Bangladesh (a small but over-populated South Asian country) by focusing on a number of closely related socio-anthropological factors centering on agrarian structure as influenced by socio-structural and geo-physical conditions. The main emphasis of this study is on the agrarian structure (land tenure system, its distributional factor, the organization of agricultural production, and the possibility of ancillary services) as well as the total context in which agricultural production operates in Bangladesh. These factors are correlated with the twin problem of excessive population growth and acute shortage in food supplies.

The purpose of this study is to examine the impact of the agrarian structure upon rice productivity, income distribution and poverty in a predominantly rural and agricultural country, in historical perspective. It seeks to establish whether the land tenure and the social structure of Bangladesh had a significant but dysfunctional role in hindering agricultural modernization in the past (pre-British and the British period), and whether the situation has changed since the achievement of independence. It analyses the extent to which governments in power (in the pre-colonial, colonial, and post-colonial era) tried to modernize Bangladesh's agriculture,

especially rice production, and the degree to which their rhetorical commitments were constrained by the forces of the traditional social structure and by the vested interests which acquired social status, political power, and economic affluence by virtue of land control. Since Bangladesh was a part of Pakistan from 1947-71 and, before that, of undivided India, the term 'Bengal', 'East Bengal', 'East Pakistan', and 'Bangladesh' have been used interchangeably. On December 16, 1971, Bangladesh emerged as a politically independent nation-state in South Asia to become the eighth most populous country in the world.

The discussion in this study is concentrated on understanding the basic institutional heritage of Bangladesh's agrarian economy, its incidence and nature, and its impact on productivity, efficiency, and on the power structure at both macro (national) and micro (local) levels. An attempt is also made to view the major structural defects of Bangladesh's agriculture which leads to low productivity and perpetual indebtedness of most peasant farmers. The organization of agriculture characterized by the elements of feudal, semi-feudal and pre-capitalist production relations, in one form or another, has worked and is still working for low productivity, poverty, and an inequitable distribution of income. These forces have been reinforced by the asymmetrical relationship between the land owner and the tenant, by the village and the national level power structure as well as by the

kinship and supportive factions dominating the rural society.

Bangladesh, with its predominantly rural and subsistence agricultural economy, is one of the poorest and most densely populated countries of the world, with approximately 1400 persons per square mile (see Table I and Table II). Of a population which is now approaching 85 million within an area of 55,126 square miles, over 90 per cent live in more than 64,000 villages and 75-80 per cent depend directly on land for their livelihood. Population growth has been rapid in the past 13 years (1961-74) and the population density has increased from 928 to approximately 1400 persons per square mile (see Table I), while food production has remained far below that level. A recent estimate (Griffin and Ghose, 1979: 364) shows that the rate of growth of agricultural output per capita in Bangladesh during 1950-1973 has been negative (-1.1 per cent per annum), which is much less than the rate of population growth. The pressure of population has increased the volume of surplus labor on land, has made the land-man ratio highly adverse, and land more fragmented through the operation of inheritance laws and the practice of sub-letting or crop-sharing arrangement. These affect productivity.

Agriculture holds a key position in the economy of Bangladesh. It employs over 80 per cent of the country's labor force, supporting 85 per cent of the population, and contributing 56 per cent to Gross Domestic Product (GDP) of the economy (N. Islam, 1974:2). Rice and jute are the two

TABLE I
POPULATION OF BANGLADESH: 1881-1974

<u>Year</u>	<u>Population (millions)</u>	<u>Percentage Increase</u>	<u>Natural Increase</u>	<u>Persons per square mile</u>
1881	25.09	-	-	456
1891	27.10	8.01	n.a.	493
1901	28.92	6.71	1.2	527
1911	31.55	9.09	1.2	582
1921	33.25	5.39	1.6	612
1931	35.60	7.07	1.9	667
1941	41.99	17.94	n.a.	775
1951	42.06	0.28	1.3	777
1961	50.84	20.37	2.6	928
1974	72.47	40.60	3.1	1,385

Source: The Green Horizon: Bangladesh, Government of Bangladesh, 1974, Table 3, p. 40.

Table II
BANGLADESH: AREA, POPULATION AND DENSITY COMPARED
WITH OTHER AREAS: 1961

<u>Country</u>	<u>Area in '000 square miles</u>	<u>Population in millions</u>	<u>Density per square mile</u>
Bangladesh	55	50.84	923
Pakistan	310	42.88	138
India	1,262	439.07	370
China	3,692	686.40	186
U.S.S.R.	8,650	214.40	25
U.S.A.	3,615	179.32	50
Japan	143	93.41	665
Indonesia	576	95.18	165
West Germany	96	53.37	558
U.K.	93	52.70	554
Italy	116	50.46	437
France	213	45.54	214
Brazil	3,287	70.79	22
Burma	261	20.66	79

Source: Nafis Ahmed, An Economic Geography of East Pakistan (Oxford University Press: London, 1968), p. 285.

major agricultural crops in Bangladesh, the latter being the principal export crop, while the former is the major food crop which covers nearly 80 per cent of the total cropped acreage (A.R. Khan, 1972:45-46). Rice is grown the year-round in conjunction with three main crop seasons - Boro (winter crop), Aus (spring crop), and Aman (summer crop) and with the appearance of the monsoon rains. Since the cultivators of Bangladesh cannot cultivate much of their land during the dry winter (Boro) season due to few irrigation facilities, they depend mostly on the summer and spring crops, Aman and Aus, (which supplies 54 per cent and 24 per cent of the total rice harvests respectively), and thereby defines the rice economy for much of the year (see Appendix Table 1).

Bangladesh is a land of small owner-operator and tenant farmers. The majority of the farmers own less than the country's average farm size of approximately three acres; their holdings usually are fragmented into many tiny and scattered parcels. The tenants operate land either on cash-rent or on a sharecropping basis which is usually on a fifty-fifty division of the produce. The tenants do not have secure tenancy rights, but are tied to the rented land by illegally high rents and debt burdens. Given these conditions, they lose the incentive to modernize agriculture. The level of technology and cultivation practices are too traditional and backward and the yield per acre is one of the lowest in

the world, as can be seen in Table III. A major factor behind this low level of productivity has been the inequality in the ownership distribution of land and the failure of tenure reforms to create favorable institutional conditions as well as the continuation of the age-old techniques of production in agriculture.

Bangladesh with its traditional, subsistence and over-populated agriculture has been unable to supply its own people with adequate food, not even enough of their staple, rice. The problems of food shortage have become chronic under different time periods. It has been estimated that the total annual requirement of food grains in Bangladesh is approximately 12 million to 13 million tons. The three major crops (Aman, Aus, and Boro) yield annually (as of 1970-71) approximately 11 million tons. Of this, after deducting a normal loss of 8 per cent due to seed and wastage and approximately 5 to 8 per cent loss due to natural calamities, the net total quantity of rice available for domestic consumption is nearly 10 million tons. Thus there is an annual deficit of about 2 million to 3 million tons. This deficit is met by importing rice and wheat from abroad. The ever-increasing quantities of food imported (shown in Appendix Table 2) has definitely imposed an unbearable burden on the country's poor economy.

The present shortage in food supplies and low productivity are a consequence of the cumulative effects of negligence of the agricultural sector over a long period of time. Bangladesh

TABLE III

YIELDS OF VARIOUS CROPS IN BANGLADESH AND SELECTED COUNTRIES:
1969-70

Crops	(1000 kg per hectare)						
	Bangladesh	India	Thailand	Taiwan	Italy	Japan	Mexico
Rice	11.6	16.6	18.7	39.9	53.0	56.4	28.6
Wheat	8.7	12.1	-	21.0	23.3	20.7	28.4
Jute	13.4	13.5	12.0	17.4	-	-	-
Gram and pulses	4.5	4.6	-	12.8	30.7	17.1	25.0
Tobacco	9.1	7.8	10.9	20.6	16.6	21.3	15.0
Sugarcane	44.4	48.3	33.5	73.6	-	58.4	62.5

Source: A. Robinson, 1973:20.

has experienced foreign domination and colonial rule; the former, under British rule and the latter, as an internal colony of Pakistan. This has led us to an examination of the causes of low rice productivity in Bangladesh, partly from the point of view of colonial exploitation or past neglect, and partly from the viewpoint of the agrarian institutions and the policies pursued by the governments of the post-colonial era.

From an historical perspective, Bangladesh has inherited one of the most defective agrarian systems in the Indian sub-continent. The socio-economic and political effects of colonial rule coupled with the traditional social structure and a defective land tenure system has permitted the continuation of a class structure disinterested in the process of production and in the improvement of land. Therefore, taking the patterns of land tenure and the social structure as independent variables, I shall try to demonstrate how these are acting as a brake in the modernization of the traditional agriculture in Bangladesh.

Since agriculture in Bangladesh is principally dominated by rice production, the development of the country is fundamentally tied to rice and to its productivity in order to close or reduce the gap between population growth and food shortages. Furthermore, for an equitable growth strategy and to ensure the broader participation of the actual cultivators in the process of agricultural modernization, attention

must be placed upon the basic institutions underlying Bangladesh's agrarian economy. Since the country's existing institutions of land tenure, credit, markets, technology and rural development programs do not support the translation of a broadly participatory agricultural production strategy into reality, the concept "agricultural modernization" in this study has been taken to mean a process of institutional reorganization or reform in the existing agrarian institutions. The changes in technology and improvements in irrigation, drainage, and flood control as well as the reduction of population growth rate should also proceed at the same time.

Admittedly, our approach is multi-dimensional. This perspective helps us to analyse the process from an historical, socio-structural, institutional, and environmental framework. The data for this study have been collected from secondary sources (mainly from library studies). Although some empirical evidence has been presented on the ownership pattern, productivity, and rural class structure of Bangladesh, these again are based on secondary sources. We are aware that without primary data or field work, it is difficult to measure the above indices of agricultural modernization and to draw conclusions with regard to the causes of low rice productivity in Bangladesh. However, basing our analysis on the available secondary data, we have produced some evidence in this direction.

Since we lack primary data, the scope of this study

must be limited. Again, as we did not attempt to reveal all the socio-economic and politico-environmental realities in understanding the causes of low rice productivity in Bangladesh, we do not claim that this study is an exhaustive one. Since a good number of studies on the rural and agrarian economy of Bangladesh are not available locally, we had to restrict severely our arguments on many points and thus to limit the scope of the study. The reliability of some of the statistical data, especially those from Bangladesh Government publications,¹ are highly questionable. Last but not least, the heavy reliance on historical data and on the secondary sources in this thesis is a testimony to the fact that the present study is more descriptive than analytical. Therein lies the final limitation of this study.

The study is divided into six chapters. In the first chapter, i.e., in the 'Introduction', we present an overview of the thesis and also give a rationale for selecting the area under study. The crucial role of agriculture in the economy of Bangladesh is briefly discussed in this chapter.

¹ Bangladesh lacks trained manpower in the collection of statistical data. There is no central data collection department or data bank. Data are primarily collected at the Union and Thana (county) level by the lower level functionaries (who lack interest and basic knowledge in this work) of the various Government Departments or Ministries which are added at the District and national level. Different ministries collect different figures and one Ministry can often provide conflicting figures.

The second chapter contains the theoretical framework that has been followed in this study. Here, we argue that agrarian institutions, particularly land tenure, credit, and the pattern of ownership distribution of land in countries with traditional, subsistence agriculture and over-population are defective and inequitable and impede agricultural modernization as well as rural development. As land is the strategic resource in this economy, ownership and control of it govern not only access to other productive resources but also confer political power, social status and economic affluence. An equitable land tenure system and satisfactory land relations are, therefore, essential prerequisites for agricultural modernization. This chapter also contains the operational definitions of key concepts. The definition of other terms and terminologies which are peculiar to Bangladesh ethnography is presented in the glossary.

The third chapter consists of four sections. In Section A, we deal with the land tenure system and social structure of Bengal (now Bangladesh) prior to the British rule. In Section B, an attempt is made to assess the impact of the British conquest of India with particular reference to the introduction of landlordism in Bengal and commercialization of agriculture. Here the impact of the introduction of the Permanent Settlement Act of 1793 is analysed in the context of the pre-existing land relations and socio-economic framework. The impact of British rule in general and the effects of the

new system of land tenure in particular on the village community, agricultural productivity, and on the class structure of rural Bengal is examined in Sections C and D respectively. In short, this chapter as a whole is concerned with the land tenure system, productivity, and agrarian relations in Bengal prior to 1947. The discussion in this chapter is primarily based on historical accounts which form the basis of our subsequent inquiry.

Chapter four examines the political economy of pre- and post-independence Bangladesh. At the beginning of this chapter, an attempt has been made to present a political-economic explanation of government policies in pre-independence period (1947-71) which resulted in the stagnation and under-development of Bangladesh's agricultural sector. Finally, a brief background of land reform legislations introduced in 1950 and 1961 and the land reform policies of the post-liberation government of Bangladesh has been presented. The different aspects of these reform measures have been examined in the context of their impact on the agrarian structure including effects on efficiency, equity, and on the power structure at both local and national levels.

Chapter five is devoted to the analysis of the land ownership pattern and the rural class structure of Bangladesh on the basis of the findings of some recent empirical studies. This chapter deals particularly with the factors impeding agricultural modernization, and examines the weaknesses of the

of the existing institutional framework for rural development in Bangladesh.

Chapter six summarizes the findings of the study and attempts to throw light on the need for formulating a viable land policy for Bangladesh and on the broad objectives of a new agricultural production strategy into reality.

CHAPTER II

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK: REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The basic problem that exists in the agricultural sector of most developing countries in South Asia, including Bangladesh, is due in the main to the high degree of inequality in the distribution of land ownership. In addition to this, low agricultural productivity, acute poverty and a low standard of living afflict most of these areas where rice cultivation is widely practised, since this is the staple food. The cultivation methods are still traditional and backward and the yield per acre is one of the lowest in the world. Malnutrition is a chronic problem.

We must seek here an explanation for the general stagnation and the impediments to agricultural modernization.

Earlier writings on economic growth centred mainly on industrialization. Recent literature (Mellor, 1966; Southworth and Johnston, 1967; Johnston and Kilby, 1975; Schultz, 1964; Hayami and Ruttan, 1971; Wharton, 1969; and many others) shows an almost universal acceptance of the key role that agriculture must play in the socio-economic development of any country. However, there are startlingly few agricultural success stories and underdevelopment still remains the most difficult problem in many countries with traditional subsistence farming.

The most general explanation that has been given by many social scientists (Dantwala, 1972; Paige, 1975; Alavi, 1975;

Nations, 1971; Abdullah et.al., 1976) with regard to this stagnation or underdevelopment of agriculture in the 'Third World' countries was that most of these countries were previously under colonial rule. The colonial rulers by virtue of their socio-economic and political interests always favored industrial growth to the comparative neglect of agriculture. When attempts were made by the colonial powers to modernize cultivation, all was done with regard to some commercial crops which the mother country needed for its expanding industrialization. As for foodgrain, no enlightened policy is known to have been adopted (Paige, 1975:2-3). The above explanation may partly hold true of Bangladesh which was under colonial rule for more than two hundred years.

Although Marx saw British colonialism ending the age-old stagnation of Indian society, he also underlined the harmful structural consequences of British rule by their introduction of a new notion of ownership in land, their neglect of public works, and the attempt to replace subsistence farming by cash crops. The results of this "merciless exploitation" brought hunger, poverty, deprivation and disease (Marx, Capital, Vol. 1, p. 523).

Whatever underdevelopment or stagnation there was in the agricultural sector of Bangladesh, it has had a long and sordid history. This will lead to an examination of the causes of agricultural backwardness in Bangladesh, partly from the point of view of colonial exploitation or past neglect,

and partly from the viewpoint of the agrarian institutions and the policies pursued by the governments of the post-colonial era. Furthermore, the common notion is that rice cultivation in the developing countries is backward and 'low' because their technology is inferior and based on a 'cow-dung' economy.

The peasants in this economy are traditional and fatalistic. They have no capital, no savings, and are not receptive to innovation. Their ritual pattern hinders the accumulation of savings and affects the prospect for modernization. Barnett (1970:293) suggests that religious beliefs among such subsistence agriculturists provide examples of conservatism and the retardation of agricultural modernization.

An almost similar view has been expressed by Bertocci (1970, 1974, 1976); Morrison (1972); Beteille (1974); A.R. Khan (1972); and Dutt et al. (1973). According to them, the causes of agricultural underdevelopment in the case of Bangladesh are to be seen in the context of the problems and characteristics inherent in her indigenous rural social organization, social structure, socio-economic and political institutions, and the environmental conditions. They have also studied the relationship between different socio-economic and geo-physical factors affecting agricultural productivity in Bangladesh.

Major structural defects of Bangladesh agriculture

include: small and fragmented holdings, inefficient and poor tenure systems, an inegalitarian pattern of land ownership, low level of technology and cultivation practices, defective credit and marketing facilities, and the static character of social structure. Small farms, resulting from inheritance laws, are not compact units but scattered in tiny and fragmented parcels. This fragmentation causes difficulties not only in arranging work schedules but also in irrigation arrangements. There are problems of land dispute and tenure litigation of various types. The most serious of these structural defects is the persistence of absentee landlordism and the institution of sharecropping. This situation is further worsened by the asymmetrical relationship between landowner and the tenant. The tenants do not have secure tenancy but often stand in a semi-feudal production relationship to the landowner which discourages him from making capital investment in rented land and increasing productivity.

Agriculture in Bangladesh is not only the main occupation of 75-80 per cent of her total population but also is a way of life. But agricultural operations, especially rice production in this country have long suffered from structural defects, and have frequently been impeded by a combination of technological and environmental constraints, and complicated by the widespread practice of Patron-client arrangement which has become a more or less serious obstacle. Rothermund has

summarized these constraints as due to the following factors:

Small cultivators operate at a subsistence level due to the constraints of survival agriculture whose major concern is the avoidance of risk. The profit motive does not apply. He works land generally not his own, depending upon rainfall, draught, animals, family labor, credit, and the land system. His credit rating may not allow him to sink a well; the land system may not permit him to extend or contract cultivation. Thus he is constrained and cannot move toward comfortable self-sufficiency. But he might overcome some of these constraints if the rigidities of land tenure were reduced (Rothermund, 1970:49).

Land is one of the basic factors of production for agricultural output. With population increasing at a faster rate than food production in Bangladesh, such pressure is acutely felt on land. Given these conditions, land becomes all important; land and land control become the most crucial factors for the understanding of social structure, social relations (production relations) and causes of low productivity. Even in simple societies, the political aspects of land control constitute the bulk of the so-called "chiefly authority". The power over land allocation is thus at once political, economic and social.

Complex factors determine man's relationship to the land, both in its use and also in his tenure of it. Socio-cultural, economic, political and climatic forces determine this relationship. As a consequence, different systems of land management and tenure have emerged. Just as laws of inheritance affect land distribution and tenure, so these various complex

factors affect usufruct, crop sharing, and land use. Political ideologies can affect the system of landholding. Economic development is a determinant in land use, e.g., advancing industrialization lessens the significance of the role of land. However, in less developed countries, increasing rural population and limited alternative employment outside agriculture has increased the importance of land as more than a mere factor of production. It provides the difference between destitution and subsistence.

Clearly, agricultural modernization depends upon a re-arrangement of the inegalitarian patterns of land ownership. The income inequality resulting from the above provides the few with political and economic powers that can harm the interests of the bulk of the rural people.

The land tenure system defines the rights and obligations with respect to the acquisition and the use of land. According to the World Bank "Agricultural Land Settlement" Issues Paper of January (1978:34), it is

a crucial determinant of the size and distribution of agricultural incomes. The ideal tenure system is one that provides adequate incentives to produce, to adopt improved technologies, and to invest. It should afford reasonable security to those who till the land and give them opportunity for meaningful participation in public decisions which affect their welfare. A good tenure system can also be the means to generate adequate employment opportunities and promote a more equal distribution of income.

All these several objectives thus indicate that a better land

tenure system and satisfactory land relations are essential prerequisites for agricultural modernization. As land is the strategic resource, ownership and control of it governs not only access to other productive resources but also confers political power, social status and economic opportunities. The differential allocation of rights and duties among various groups of people determine the relationship between land tenure and social structure.

There is an increasing body of literature on the land tenure system and social structure in Indian history. Some of these pioneering works which seek to provide not only a comprehensive picture of the relationship between man and land, but also of the complex interrelations of land control and social structure under different epochs of Indian (Bengal) history are: Moreland (1929); Baden-Powell (1892); Irfan Habib (1963); Gupta (1963); Mallick (1961); Mukherjee (1933); Thorner (1956); Frykenberg (1969); and Neale (1962).

Over centuries the land tenure system in India, and for that matter in Bangladesh, became so complex that it is almost impossible to delineate its basic features. Frykenberg (1969:xiii-xv) describes the complexity of the land tenure system in the Indian sub-continent as a system of land bondage and debt where a multi-level system of land control has allocated the least of the rewards to those of the majority. In addition, he further states that the complexities and

rigidities of that land system have complicated matters even more. A result of such a system is the emergence of an iniquitous arrangement for borrowing money. He concludes that such a system produces "strata of lesser lords and larger laborers". The situation is made even more complex by land arrangements whereby the individual might be a landlord on the one hand and a tenant on the other. W.C. Neale has emphasized the crucial role of land by observing that: "Land is not only to own but to rule, to wield power...over much of earth's surface the idea of land-to-rule includes the idea of land-to-own" (Neale, 1969:7).

Neale (1969:8) further demonstrates the interrelationship of land control and politico-economic power in Indian society. According to him, control of land was a prerequisite of the Indians to acquire social status and to maintain or increase the number of their supportive factions. This historic relationship between land control and political power is nothing but a manifestation of the peculiar characteristics of the Indian rural social structure which attaches great meaning to it. This explains why Neale (1969:12-13) had observed a striking difference between English landlords' 'economic behavior' and Indian landlords' 'political behavior', where the former as an estate manager assumed the role of "improving landlord" by employing land, labor, and capital to increase the output of his fields. The latter employed nothing but land. As a result, the associations of estate

were productivity, profit, and efficiency, whereas the associations of Mahal (land) in India were faction, power, village clientele and a dominant element in village politics.

For some decades, land and the land owning system have been a major focus of debate in Bangladesh's socio-economic history, both for the men who hold it and those who cultivate it. Ownership or assured possession of a few acres provide them not only means of subsistence but also status and power. The World Bank "Land Reform" Sector Policy Paper of May (1975:16) outlines the problem as follows:

Access to land and the amount held determines an individual's status. Control of land determines the social organization and institutional structures in agrarian societies. The social organization and institutional structures formalize the control between the different categories of land users and determine the latter's access to various institutions and services.

In Bangladesh, historically, there were various kinds of interest groups in land and they were so diverse and disarmingly complex that even a precise description of the landlord class becomes problematic. The above picture, however, loosely defined, shows that at the top of the pyramid are zamindars (landlords), and below them are their numerous intermediaries, the real cultivators being at the bottom of the social ladder. The latter exist under perpetual indebtedness. The conditions under which the land is held have an important bearing on a country's agricultural productivity, income distribution, and the nature and type of

her socio-economic and political institutions. The World Bank "Agriculture" Sector Working Paper of June (1972:30-31) affirms this in the following way:

Since ownership of land and its resulting contractual and customary relationships have such impact on production, employment, and income distribution, the incentive to the more effective use of such land depends upon whether the cultivator is also the owner. If the cultivator has little or no security of tenure or guarantees of improvements he may make, such incentive is reduced.

The impact of agrarian structure upon agricultural productivity, income distribution, poverty, unemployment, and technological change has been an important issue of discussion for the last few decades. There is a growing body of literature (Griffin, 1974, 1976; Paige, 1975; Berry and Cline, 1979; A.R. Khan, 1977; Stepanek, 1979; and Ghai et al., 1979) which investigates this problem. The primary focus of this literature is on the distribution of land ownership and its relationship to agricultural productivity and rural poverty in the developing countries. The relationship between farm size and productivity and the impact of share cropping on the efficiency of agricultural production, the technological innovation and its effects, have also been discussed in threadbare fashion in these studies. A number of United Nations Agencies and the World Bank have come up with reports and studies telling us how to overcome low productivity and poverty in the developing countries. In order to overcome the obstacles already mentioned and at the same time to increase

agricultural production and to enhance social justice, many governments in developing countries have laid great emphasis on land reforms and other agrarian institutions.

Bangladesh is one of these countries which has enacted land reforms since 1950. But the enactment of land reform legislation is one thing and its implementation is another. Several studies (Blair, 1978:69; Ghai et al., 1979:8-9; Stepanek, 1979:91-111) have shown the basic failure in the implementation and have pointed out that land reform in Bangladesh, far from creating a system of egalitarian peasant farming ensured growth with mass impoverishment. In a recent study, Ghai et al. (1979) clearly affirms that:

In Bangladesh, the high concentration of land ownership produces a further concentration of agricultural surplus under that ownership control. In addition, this minority has established monopolies in labor markets and can influence the political and administrative structure in their favor. Thus this inequalitarian system is perpetuated (Ghai et al., 1979:7).

AGRARIAN DEVELOPMENT AND THE CONCEPT OF MODERNIZATION

Recent literature on agricultural modernization in the developing countries has tended to draw a sharp distinction between those who have been able to achieve a high rate of growth in this sector within a short period of time and those who have failed to do so. These differences in achievement and growth have been attributed to the successful transformation

of traditional agriculture¹ in the former through changes or reorganization of existing agrarian institutions, removal of most of the socio-structural constraints as well as changes in technology. The theoretical basis of this study and the subsequent discussion lies in the examination of the factual basis of this hypothesis as well as its conceptual, analytical, and policy implications. Commenting on the reorganization of the existing institutions which retard agricultural modernization and erode rural well-being in Bangladesh, Stepanek (1979:29-30) writes:

For an equitable growth strategy in Bangladesh, attention must be centred upon the basic institutions underlying the economy. Understanding this institutional heritage will reveal the causes of poverty and low productivity and will demonstrate that the country's existing institutions of land tenure, credit, price, technology, water development, and rural programs do not support the translation of a broadly participatory agricultural production strategy into reality.

Any examination of these underlying institutions requires an understanding of the process whereby the agrarian structure may be 'modernized'. Modernization in its generic term, refers to a deliberate transformation of a traditional or pre-modern society into one of all-out prosperity. In other words, it

¹Traditional agriculture may be described as that stage of agriculture where productivity is low and where farmers use most of what they produce. According to Schultz (1964:3-4), the methods of farming in traditional agriculture are predominantly based on a few production factors such as land and labor which have been employed by the farmers for generations without substantial change.

refers to a process of change towards pre-determined or pre-destined ends. Modernization is also a many-sided and complex process of change in which several factors such as social, economic (including technological), political, institutional, and personal interact. And that is why there exists considerable variations in the way the scholars have defined the concept.

Modernization is the social process of which development is the economic component. If economic development produces 'rising output per head', then modernization produces the social environment in which rising productivity is effectively incorporated... (Lerner, 1968: 82)

Lerner's definition of modernization is oriented toward the economic process and is close to the definitions put forward by Levy (1967) and Moore (1963). (Levy (1967:190) defines modernization directly in terms of technology. Moore defines it as involving the..."total" transformation of a traditional or pre-modern society into the types of technology and associated social organization that characterize the "advanced", economically prosperous, and relatively politically stable nations of the western world (1963:89). Like many other modernization theorists, Moore also speaks of the process as a correlate of industrialization or economic development. Modernization is said to be conceptually related to economic development, by which Smelser means:

...at least four distinct but interrelated processes...(1) In the realm of technology, a developing society is changing from simple

and traditionalized techniques toward the application of scientific knowledge. (2) In agriculture, the developing society evolves from subsistence farming toward the commercial production of agricultural goods. This means specialization in cash crops...(3) In industry ...a transition from the use of human and animal power toward industrialization proper, or men working for wages at power-driven machines, which produce commodities marketed outside the community of production. (4) In ecological arrangements, the developing society moves from the farm and village toward urban concentrations (quoted in Appelbaum, 1970:37).

But modernization is more comprehensive in its scope, as it is a many-sided process. Socially, modernization is to be associated with evolutionary social change marked by increasing specialization of function (roles) and increasing differentiation of structure. Politically, it is characterized by the development of a highly differentiated political structure in terms of representation, systems of suffrage, political parties, and specific political roles and bureaucracies. In the cultural-religious sphere, the process of modernization is characterized by the spread of literacy, growing secularization, change in the values and belief systems, and by an increasing differentiation or conflict between the forces of tradition and modernity. Modernization, therefore, is a multivariate and multidimensional process by which a society changes from a traditional way of life to a more complex, technologically advanced and rapidly changing styles of life.

The process of modernization refers both to what may be called (1) change in the socio-demographic aspects of societies

and (2) to change in the institutional or structural aspects of social organization. Daniel Lerner (1958) and Karl Deutsch (1961) thus equated modernization with psycho-social changes in human behavior. Both of them have identified it more as a condition that pertains to a state of mind termed as 'modernity' rather than as mere institutional change. Karl Deutsch has conceptualized the term "social mobilization" to refer to the socio-demographic aspects of modernization. Lerner's model of modernization in terms of 'psychic mobility' (empathy) and 'mobile personality' (urbanization which leads to literacy - mass media exposure - wider economic and political participation), and Karl Deutsch's (1961:494-95) conceptualization of it as "the process in which major clusters of old social, economic and psychological commitments are eroded and broken and people become available for new patterns of socialization and behavior", - are basically, a treatment of the problem from socio-psychological viewpoint. Rogers (1969) conceptualization of modernization is also close to Lerner's and Karl Deutsch's. According to Rogers (1969), level of living, literacy, mass media exposure, empathy, achievement motivation, innovativeness, aspiration, and political knowledge - are all factors that determine modernization. Modernity can be measured on the continuum of the above variables. This will be evident from our subsequent discussion which will lead us to look at the agricultural modernization efforts in Bangladesh without proper development of modernity,

that is to say, a changed attitude and participation of the actual tillers of the soil is highly lacking for attaining the desired goal.

There are other sociologists and political scientists who tend to view modernization as a process of institutional reorganization or institution-building. Among them, are Huntington (1968), Lucian Pye (1966), and Eisenstadt (1966) who deal principally with the question of institutionalization and alteration of the existing institutional arrangements. Huntington and Pye, of course, have placed emphasis on political rather than socio-economic institutions. Eisenstadt places emphasis on institutional reorganization (mainly socio-economic institutions) for accelerating modernization as well as for containing the stresses and strains that are the concomitants of the process. Eisenstadt (1966:49) defines modernization as

the conditions under which a society not only undergoes continual changes and growing structural differentiation, develops mass consensual tendencies, and even accepts modernity with its emphasis on progress and change, but also develops an institutional structure capable of dealing with new, changing problems and of absorbing within its central institutional sphere, new social groups and strata with their problems and demands.

Eisenstadt's definition holds true of Bangladesh with regard to her agricultural modernization. The concept "agricultural modernization" in this study will be taken to mean a process of institutional reorganization or reform in

the existing agrarian institutions of land tenure, credit, marketing, etc. which presently retard rice productivity and erode rural well-being. It will also mean a changed attitude (behavioral change) of the actual tillers of the soil through extension education, dissemination of information about improved methods of cultivation (particularly high yielding varieties), and ensuring the supply of agricultural inputs to the actual cultivators.

The transformation of traditional agriculture of the developing countries to modern agriculture has been the subject of much controversy and excitement in recent years. Many hypotheses have been advanced as to how to achieve it and what might be the explanatory variables in the process. Both classical and some neo-classical economists have laid emphasis on the need for a 'big push' in modernizing traditional agriculture. It is this ideal of 'big push' that has inspired many governments of developing countries to introduce modern techniques through agricultural extension, co-operatives, and public works programs in the rural areas.

But to many development economists, this ideal of 'big push' is not only wasteful, but also uneconomic. According to them, 'emphasis on unsuitable methods' may result in wasteful farming and it also tends to discredit the extension work to the people as a whole (Bauer and Yamey, 1957:218). Some have also contended that, in the subsistence economies, the key to rapid economic development lies not only in increasing

the agricultural productivity, but also in increasing the non-farm productivity and creating employment opportunities outside agriculture (Clark and Haswell, 1964:137; Mellor et al., 1968:9-12). The problem of modernizing traditional agriculture, therefore, could hardly be solved in an isolated manner.

A.T. Mosher (1969:9-10) has talked about five essentials for transforming traditional agriculture. These are: transportation, marketing, new technology, access to supplies, and incentive to produce. Mosher (1969) further emphasized that the process of transformation in most of the chronic deficit nations may start with the introduction of new technology (Green Revolution) based on high-yielding varieties and needed inputs alone. Lester Brown (1970), another spokesman for the "Green Revolution" also shares the same view. But perhaps the proponents of the "Green Revolution" have already been outnumbered by the critics. As regards socio-economic and political implications of the introduction of the "Green Revolution" in India, many of these critics (Griffin, 1974; Frankel, 1969, 1971; Michie, 1973; Mencher, 1974; Sharma, 1973; Gough, 1978; and others) maintain that technological innovation through the introduction of high yielding varieties of crops has no doubt increased food output in India, but it has also resulted in greater income inequality and class polarization. The core of their argument is that, technical change without institutional

reform or reorganization of agrarian institutions is bound to increase the gap between the rich and the poor farmers. According to them, the major cause of rural income inequality and class polarization is the inequality in the ownership distribution of land and unequal access to the other productive resources.

The modernization process gives rise to a demand for institutional changes. Hayami and Ruttan (1971); Hsieh and Ruttan (1967); Dorren Warriner (1970); Ladejinski (1964); Stepanek (1979); Joshi (1972); Abdullah (1976); and many others thus maintained that technological change without proper institutional reform would not only aggravate the existing income inequality, but also would lead to 'enclave' development or dualism in the agricultural sector. Since the existing agrarian institutions in Bangladesh promise more benefits to the rich farmer-cum-trader-moneylender than to the small and landless peasants and thereby increasing the rural income inequality, we will use the term "agricultural modernization" in this study to mean a process of institutional reorganization or reform in the existing agrarian institutions which include land tenure, tenancy laws, credit, marketing and extension services.

CHAPTER III
LAND TENURE SYSTEM AND PEASANT CONDITIONS IN BENGAL
(NOW BANGLADESH) IN HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

This chapter is intended to discuss the introduction of landlordism in Bengal by a foreign power namely, the British, and its impact on agricultural productivity and social structure prior to 1947. More specifically, the impact of the introduction of the Permanent Settlement Act of 1793 by Lord Cornwallis will be analysed in the context of the pre-existing land tenure system, socio-structural framework and agricultural production and its differential effect on various classes of land relations. The rise of new social categories and the disintegration of the self-sufficient village communities will also be analysed in the context of the new notions of ownership of property in land introduced by the British.

SECTION A: LAND TENURE AND SOCIAL STRUCTURE PRIOR TO BRITISH
RULE

There exists a great deal of controversy over the system of ownership of land which was (and still is) the chief means of production in Pre-British Bengal, and for that matter in India. The characteristic features of the Indian land system preceding British rule were so different from that of the European that some scholars on Indian problems are reluctant to use the term feudalism to designate the Pre-British Indian

state and society. But Karim has argued that:

...If we take feudalism to mean a type of culture and society where landholding is the basis of political and economic power, I see no reason, why the term 'feudalism' be applied to European conditions only. However, it must be admitted that we should not expect the presence of all the features of European feudalism when we apply this term to Indian conditions. The term has associations from European history which must be modified before it can be used also for India (Karim, 1961:47).

The above explanation would definitely hold true for our subsequent discussion where we would use the term 'Indian feudalism' with certain qualifications. It is true that there existed some fundamental differences between European and Indian feudalism. But in spite of those differences, the fundamental 'land relations' which existed in both these societies would lead us to call the Indian system 'feudal'. The main form of wealth in pre-British India was land. The social relations and the social stratification pattern that existed were based upon such an agricultural economy and a particular type of land relations (Karim, 1961:21). Human relationships, according to Henry Maine, were 'status bound' rather than 'contractual'. According to Ishwari Prasad (1939:517), the King was the apex of the system; below him were his nobles and intermediaries, and the cultivators, artisans and other classes were placed at the bottom of the social ladder.

But who the actual owner of the soil was, still remains

obscure. According to some scholars, ownership was vested in the King and the peasants were merely rent paying tenants, while others have asserted that the peasants were the actual owners and the King's share was assigned only to taxation.

Karim affirms this in the following way:

In India, the King did not, in theory, create subordinate owners of land, because he himself was not, in theory, the supreme owner of land. What he delegated to his intermediaries was only the specific and individual right of Zamin, i.e., the revenue collecting power (Karim, 1961:49).

The feudal nobility in pre-British India were thus revenue collectors, who appropriated land revenue over a specific number of villages, but did not own the land unlike their European counterparts. Marx classified them as 'native tax-gatherers' - a caricature of European feudal lords (Marx, quoted in Wittfogel, 1957:377). "The King...is entitled only to a share of the produce by reasons of his sovereignty and by reason of his affording protection to the subjects" (Sabara Avami, quoted in Karim, 1961:49). Many such other passages can be cited from various sources to illustrate the differing notions of Indian land tenure from that of the European. However, the important point to be kept in mind is that unlike Europe, the feudal lords in India did not own land prior to British rule. They were mere revenue collectors appointed and removable by the state (the King). Shelvankar (1940:79) suggests that: "Indian feudalism remained fiscal and military in character, it was not manorial".

French traveller Bernier's view also lends support to the above arguments. Bernier, who worked as a physician to Mughal Emperor Aurangzeb for nine years, declared that the King in India is the sole proprietor of all land in the Empire. He argued:

...The King as the proprietor of the land, makes over a certain quantity to military men, as an equivalent for their pay; and this grant is called jah-gir,...Similar grants are made to Governors, in lieu of also for the support of their troops, on condition that they pay certain sums annually to the King out of any surplus revenue that the land may yield... (Bernier, 1941:225).

Bernier's argument, it appears, is based on the fact that the King was the supreme owner of all land (so long as he could retain his 'crown' which was the source of power) in the Empire - a fact which will be evident in our subsequent discussion. This inspired Marx to use the term Asiatic Mode of Production¹ as most typical to Pre-British India where the State was the supreme landlord and gained strongly centralized political power. Marx upholds this idea even more strongly in

¹There are three basic features in Marx's Asiatic interpretation of India. First, there is no private property in land, in the last resort, the land belonged to the King as a representative of the State, not as a Private person. Second, the base is a system of self-sufficient villages combining agriculture and domestic handicrafts that permitted its age-old stagnation and perpetuation. Third, climate and territorial conditions necessitated government-directed water works, flood control and other public works, in consequence of which the State gained strongly centralized political power. Hence the tendency towards despotism, i.e., officials appointed for fixed terms but in theory always removable.

Capital, where he writes:

...(in India)...no private ownership of land exists, although there is both private and common possession and use of land...The State stands over them as their direct landlord and sovereign...The State is then the supreme landlord. The sovereignty here consists in the ownership of land concentrated on a national scale (Marx, Capital, Vol. III, 1960:791).

Marx certainly did not present this situation as ideal, because he mentioned "both private and common possession and usage of the soil". However, what Marx and some Marxist scholars have tried to emphasize is the fundamental absence of private property in land under the Asiatic (Indian) system. "The key to the whole East" wrote Engels to Marx on June 6, 1853, "is the absence of private property in land" (Engels, quoted in Dutt, 1940:94). In a letter to Engels, Marx also wrote: "The absence of private property in land... is the real keystone of the oriental vault" (Marx, quoted in Melloti, 1977:54).

Here we accept the views of Marx, Engels, and Bernier on the question of the fundamental absence of private property in land in Pre-British India. The point of argument is that the King ('not as an individual', but as 'the supreme representative of the state' or by virtue of 'his superior authority and strongly centralized power') was the sole proprietor of all land in the Empire. Many authorities on this subject, such as Baden-Powell (1892); R.K. Mukherjee (1933) and many others have argued that both under

Hindu and Muslim period, the peasant had the right to occupation of his land as long as he paid the State's share, but our analysis suggests that the peasant did not have undisputed ownership of land. What the peasant had, was the right of occupation of his land as long as he could pay the State's share, which varied from reign to reign (under Hindu Period, one-sixth of the produce and at the time of Mughal Emperor Akbar, it amounted to one-third). In our view, mere occupancy right should not be treated as private ownership in land since it was not alienable by gift, sale, mortgage or otherwise. The crucial issue is the distinction between ownership (a right of absolute control over land) and usufruct (a right of undisturbed use of someone else's property). Kosambi in this connection holds that the question of private property in land in Pre-British India makes no sense if regarded from the modern capitalistic sense, namely, the "right to buy and sell" (Kosambi, 1956:300). In a strict sense, people did not own land (the thing itself), but owned rights to land. It is the exercise of these rights that defined the relationship between the State, its numerous intermediaries, and the people.

From the foregoing discussion, if we restrict ourselves to the view that proprietary right in land was vested in one who took away the surplus of agricultural produce (irrespective of its name) on the basis of a title to land, then it would appear that the State, along with its horde of intermediaries, had exercised that right. The right was not vested

in individuals de jure but exercised only through the powers of the State. The intermediaries exercised their rights merely by virtue of their being the representatives or assignees of the state revenue. Whatever they claimed, therefore, they claimed in the name of the State and for the State.² According to Karim (1961:52):

During the period just preceding the British ascendancy, we find in Bengal the following three important constituents of the feudal order: (1) The cultivator, as organized in the village communities; (2) The revenue collectors, known as the Zamindars; (3) The State, as represented by the King.

This is rather an 'ideal typical' model of pre-British class structure in Bengal. The picture becomes more complicated if we look at the presence of a number of intermediaries between the actual cultivators and the revenue collectors. Calkins (1970:801) has shown that the class structure of Pre-British Bengal was in the following hierarchical order: ...Mansabdars (Mughal officials equivalent to Governors), who held jagirs (revenue assignment) in Bengal; Zamindars, who played an important role as revenue collectors and peace keepers; and the intermediate collectors who held the right of revenue collection between the village level and that of the zamindari. At the bottom of the social hierarchy, of course, there were cultivators, artisans, and numerous other groups having various skills.

² From time immemorial, the sovereign or the State in India was entitled to a certain share of the produce of every acre of land. This share, whether collected direct or through the intermediaries (revenue collectors), was called 'land revenue'.

In the land relations that existed in the Pre-British Period, the villages³ played an important role. The agricultural economy of India, and for that matter of Bengal, was organized on the basis of the village communities. The self-sufficient village as the basic economic unit had survived till the advent of British rule. Dynasties and Kings rose to power and tumbled down, foreign invasion, violent territorial shiftings in inter-state struggles were found, but the self-sufficient village stood impregnable. In the words of Charles Metcalfe, a British official in India:

The village communities are little republics, having nearly everything they want within themselves, and almost independent of any foreign relations. They seem to last within themselves where nothing else lasts. Dynasty after dynasty tumbles down; revolution succeeds revolution; Hindu, Pathan, Mughal, Maratha, Sikh, English, are all masters in turn, but the village communities remain the same (quoted in Desai, 1959:7).

³"India has been called a land of villages,...practically the whole country is parcelled out among villages, about half a million in number" (O'Malley, 1934:100). Any discussion of the Indian social phenomenon must therefore take into account the role of villages and village communities. The term "village"....does not refer merely to a street or group of buildings - as in England of today; it includes both the cluster of houses and the surrounding lands cultivated. Such a group has always a local name and known limits" (Baden-Powell, quoted in Karim, 1961:21). This definition holds true of Bengal villages in all the known periods of her history.

Thus, economically, the village was predominantly autarchic. The village communities produced almost all of their needs - agricultural and industrial, and consumed locally almost the whole of what they produced. A self-sufficient village, based on the unity of agriculture and domestic handicrafts carried on with the primitive techniques, was the main feature of Pre-British Indian society. Since the village community was more or less static,⁴ therefore, the social structure also assumed an almost unchanging character.

The continuation of primitive techniques of production was not only a result of a low level of productive skills but also of a particular type of production relations, i.e., the existence of a class disinterested in the process of production. This class during Mughal rule was comprised of mansabdars, jagirdars, zamindars, and numerous other intermediaries whose task was simply to collect revenue for the state and maintain peace. Since the amount of revenue to be collected was fixed, and since they did not own land, they were neither interested in increasing the output nor were concerned with changing the techniques of production. Moreover, as the jagirs and revenue collecting power were liable to be transferred any moment by the King, the jagirdars and revenue collectors could hardly follow a far-sighted policy for

⁴Marx gave a vivid description of the static character and functioning of these village communities in Capital, Vol. 1, Chapter XIV, Section IV.

agricultural modernization or for the betterment of the peasantry. In Bengal, the conflict was more between these 'superior right' holders than among the peasantry. Writing about this phenomenon during Mughal rule, Shelvankar (1940: 102) observed:

None of the major struggles in Indian history had for its object the exercise of rights within the village, but the exercise of rights over the village. They were conflicts between overlords of various grades for the right or power to get a payment from the peasant, not to ~~size~~ seize his land. European history, on the contrary, shows a direct conflict between the peasantry and the manorial lord over the question of land and labor services, because the latter not only demanded a share of the produce, but desired to retain a particular method of cultivation - by forced labor - or introduce new methods of cultivation (large scale farming). The Indian conflict was one between lords who were not at all concerned with methods of cultivation, but to draw on income from the peasantry....

Such was the condition of agriculture and rural social structure in Pre-British Bengal. The rural society of Bengal with its plough agriculture had a subsistence economy till the advent of the British, but with the conquest by the British and with the introduction of private property in land by Lord Cornwallis, the subsistence economy gave way to a market economy. This led to the emergence of the phenomenon of what is known as the commercialization of agriculture. In the next section, we will be dealing with this changing phenomenon basing our analysis on the impact of the introduction of landlordism in Bengal by the British.

SECTION B. LANDLORDISM AND COMMERCIALIZATION OF AGRICULTURE

UNDER BRITISH RULE

The British conquest of India was a slow but gradual process in which Bengal was the first area to come under British rule. At the end of the Mughal rule in India, feudalism was in a moribund condition. But the British Government through the establishment of the East India Company in the seventeenth century and also the introduction of the Act of Permanent Settlement in 1793 again established the feudal zamindari system in Bengal in line with the British model. The actual details of the development of the East India Company are not so much of material importance in our present study; the important feature, however, is associated with the company's thinking towards questions of ownership in land and land revenue administration in Bengal.

The East India Company came to India as traders; maximization of profit and stability of the sources of earnings were, therefore, its main concern. With the grant of Dewani (the right of revenue collecting power) of Bengal, Bihar, and Orissa to the East India Company by the Mughal Emperor Shah Alam on August 12, 1765 (Zaman, 1976:7), the company's hold over the revenue administration of these provinces was firmly established and a sizable share of its profits came from land revenue collection. The company needed, first, to consolidate its position and, second, to set up a dependable agency for the appropriate collection of revenue. It was

this search for regular collection of revenue that inspired the company to make a Quinquennial Settlement in 1772 by "letting the lands in farms to the highest bidders for a term of five years", and a settlement of every ten years (Decennial Settlement) in 1790 with different collection agencies in Bengal. The rules of the Decennial Settlement were incorporated with modifications and amendments in the Permanent Settlement Act of 1793 under Lord Cornwallis⁵ which imposed landlordism of the Irish model in Bengal, Bihar and Orissa and undermined the basis of all pre-existing land relations and socio-economic framework.

The main economic features of Permanent Settlement Act of 1793 was that (1) it sought to create a class of landed aristocracy in Bengal by conferring the right of private property in the soil; (2) it introduced money-payments of revenue; and (3) transformed the land into a saleable or

⁵ Cornwallis believed that both speedy collection and improvements in agriculture could be realized if private persons were endowed with rights of property in land; and that "nothing could be so ruinous to public interest as that the land should be retained as the property of government" (quoted in Gupta, 1963:74). This pious hope of Cornwallis is subject of much modern political and economic controversy, because, as we will see, the Permanent Settlement enhanced the position of the Bengal zamindars at the cost of the cultivators. The Permanent Settlement ensured speedy collection of revenue no doubt, but under it, the zamindars did practically nothing in the modernization of Bengal agriculture.

transferable commodity. Under it, the proprietary right in the soil was declared to be vested in the zamindars who, historically, were not the actual proprietors of land but mere revenue collectors.

The heterogeneous zamindars were suddenly rendered homogeneous by a uniform legal title. The zamindars now became the hereditary proprietors of land on a perpetually fixed land revenue with absolute rights of transfer by means of sale, bequest, mortgage or gift (S. Gopal, 1949: 20).

But what was the ultimate motive behind this settlement? The most important motive, according to Karim (1961:55) was that: "As a foreign power the British required a powerful class of landlords in Bengal to buttress their administration and, therefore, for the first time in Indian history, they created a class of landlords with proprietary rights in land on the British Pattern". That the British Administrators were fully aware of the implications of their policy is evident from the following remarks of Government General Lord William Bentinck in 1829:

If security was wanting against extensive popular tumult or revolution, I should say that the Permanent Settlement, though a failure in many other respects, has this great advantage at least, of having created a vast body of rich landed proprietors deeply interested in the continuance of the British Dominion and having complete command over the mass of the people (quoted in R. Gopal, 1963:37).

Lord Bentinck's remarks bear ample testimony to the fact that the purpose of the Permanent Settlement in Bengal was to

create a powerful class of landlords as the social buttress of the British colonial rule. The new system of property and the new class relationship which was solidly based on the landlord-tenant pattern had other purposes too, e.g., it was geared to extract a surplus and to ensure accumulation by the landlords, although the system obviously "failed" to modernize Bengal agriculture. Why did it fail or why the landlords preferred the non-productive type of investment in agriculture, will be discussed in the next section.

The Permanent Settlement not only made "permanency and punctual" realization of revenue but also created the pre-requisite for the monopoly control of land and other productive resources in Bengal by the landlords. As a noted Indian scholar affirms,

with the introduction of Permanent Settlement land capitalism was established in Bengal. Land was no longer a basis of functions and obligations, but became a commodity for the payment of debt and a subject of business speculation. The new land tenure system based on private property, the creation of new class of zamindars, improved transport and communication system, sounded the death-knell of the traditional village communities, which steadily disintegrated. The Permanent Settlement enhanced the position of the zamindars at the cost of the cultivators and peasants. It created new interests in land and disturbed others of long standing (S. Gopal, 1949:7).

By thus undermining the position of the cultivators, and giving a new bias to the interests of the landlords, the Permanent Settlement altered the balance of the rural society

of Bengal. In Pre-British Bengal, crop was produced mainly for meeting the needs of the village population. But during the British rule, owing to the reasons already mentioned and the introduction of fixed money-rent in place of traditional rent in kind, this production for village use was transformed into a market economy.

Owing to the need for cash for payment of revenue in the form of fixed money and the debt claim of the moneylender in whose hand he subsequently fell, the agriculturist or the tenant was more and more constrained to produce for the market. Agricultural production, instead of satisfying the needs of village population, gradually came to be adopted as the requirements for the national and subsequently even for the world market. This led to the commercialization of agriculture and also to the practice of growing specialized crops by the peasants (Desai, 1959:39-40).

However, that does not mean that traces of a money economy were totally absent in Pre-British India. The point here is that monetization remained as a marginal aspect of economic life, because payment of wages and charges on the land during Mughal rule consisted of payments in kind rather than in cash. The growth of manufacturing industries was also insignificant. There was some production of cash crops but no significant sector of commercial agriculture did emerge. The land revenue policy of the Mughals did not function as an incentive for commercial agriculture as it was primarily based on fiscal considerations, that is, the charges varied and fixed according to investment and yield (Siddique, 1965:373ff,

quoted in Rothermund, 1970:56), not on annual produce as it was during the British rule.

The introduction of a money economy during British rule accelerated not only the pace of commercialization of agriculture but also the production of specialized crops, e.g., jute, indigo, tea, cotton, etc. This policy was pursued to meet the growing needs for raw materials by industries in England. A noted scholar on Indian economic history has pointed out that:

The commercialization of agriculture had progressed in those tracts where the crops were largely grown for export out of the country. This was so in the Burma rice area, the Punjab wheat area, the jute area of Eastern Bengal (now Bangladesh) and the Khandesh, Gujerat, and Berar cotton tracts. Through the operations of exporters, an efficient market organization for moving the crops quickly to the ports had come into existence (Gadgil, 1944:154).

With the establishment of British rule, the agrarian economy of Bengal thus entered a new phase which led to a great expansion of the external demand for her agricultural raw materials. Production for domestic consumption tended to give way to the production for external market. Growing emphasis began to be put on the production and marketing of certain crops, such as jute, tea and indigo,⁶ which were

⁶In the nineteenth century large tracts of land in Eastern Bengal (now Bangladesh) were put under indigo, jute and tea cultivation by European planters. By a clever device, cultivators were bound to grow indigo, and when they wanted to refuse indigo growing, they were compelled and coerced... Even the police and the magistracy were in league with the planters (R. Gopal, 1963:45-46).

needed for export on the world market. The improved means of transport and communication, the increase of both volume and value of export and the growth of certain industrial and commercial centres within the country made the agricultural sector of Bengal more market-oriented (M. Islam, 1978:188). But in spite of that the expected capitalistic development of agriculture did not take place in Bengal as it happened in England. Instead, agricultural production in India including the Province of Bengal remained one of the lowest levels in the world.

The establishment of British rule created conditions for both productive and non-productive investment in Bengal agriculture. But the Bengal landlord preferred the latter type of investment. This was partly due to the absence of favorable objective socio-economic conditions in Bengal during British rule, and partly due to the parasitic nature of the landlords at that time - a phenomenon which will be discussed in Section C. However, as the rate of industrialization⁷ and urbanization remained insignificant, the economy of Bengal continued to be characterized by heavy dependence on agriculture, as can be seen in Table IV(a). The result was increasing overcrowding on land which led to the deterioration of the land

⁷ If we believe that there was substantial 'deindustrialization' or 'ruralization' in India during British rule, this would mean that the overcrowding on land did not only increase in absolute terms, but also in relative terms. For details, see D. and A. Thorner, Land and Labor in India (Bombay, 1962).

- man ratio and causing land to be more fragmented and subdivided. The price of land steadily went high and land became the most valuable property, an income yielding investment and also a commodity in the market which could be purchased, sold or mortgaged.

TABLE IV (a)
PERCENTAGE OF POPULATION DEPENDENT
ON AGRICULTURE DURING BRITISH RULE
IN INDIA

1891	61.1
1901	65.5
1911	72.2
1921	73.0
1931	75.0

TABLE IV (b)
PERCENTAGE OF POPULATION DEPENDENT
ON INDUSTRY

1911	5.5
1921	4.9
1931	4.3
1941	4.2

Source: Desai, A.R., 1959:48-49 (for both the tables).

SECTION C. VILLAGE COMMUNITY AND AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTIVITY

We have already said that although in her long history, India, including the Province of Bengal, experienced many a foreign domination, there was little change in her socio-economic structure. For centuries the society remained static and social relationships based on the village communities and a particular type of land relations remained more or less the

same. This is due to the fact that none of the conquerors, except the British, were able to introduce a new system of land tenure which could shatter the unchangeable characteristics of the Indian village communities and their thousand years of self-sufficiency.

The British brought to India the early forms of market-oriented production and, of course, a new system of land tenure. It was the British capitalist who beforehand had replaced in their motherland the notion of feudal society with a modern bourgeois society, brought about a change in the socio-economic and political structure of Indian society, disrupted its old economic system and introduced a new form (Desai, 1959:31). The major changes in the social structure of Bengal began with the establishment of British rule.

"England", declared Karl Marx:

had to fulfil a double mission in India: one destructive and the other regenerating - the annihilation of old Asiatic society, and the laying of the material foundations of Western society in Asia...The British destroyed it (Hindu civilization) by breaking up the native communities, by uprooting the native industry...The political unity of India, more consolidated, and extending further than it ever did under the Great Mughals, was the first condition of regeneration...the zamindari and ryotwari themselves, involve two distinct forms of private property in land - the great desideratum of Asiatic society (quoted in Dutt, 1940:102-3).

In predicting these developments Marx certainly stressed the age-old stagnation of Asiatic (Indian) societies, whose 'stationary social condition' he saw as a direct consequence

of a mode of production that was incapable of autonomous development without external impulse. However, it should not be conceived that Marx saw British rule in India as only 'historically progressive' - India's incorporation into the world capitalist economy. Marx also underlined the harmful structural consequences of British rule in India. So far, the destructive side had been more visible than the work of regeneration.

Historically, though British rule had managed to end the long-drawn out stagnation of Indian society, it involved much tragic destruction. By introducing new notions of ownership in land and the creation of a new class of landlords, the commercialization of agriculture, new bureaucratic administration, and other political-legal measures, the British not only struck a mortal blow to the seemingly impregnable village communities but also neglected public works⁸ and thus brought about the collapse of India's irrigated agriculture - the most remarkable aspect of the Asiatic mode of production. The change that occurred with

⁸In 1854, Sir Arthur Cotton, the pioneer of irrigation works in British India remarked: "Public works have been almost entirely neglected throughout India...The motto hitherto has been: Do nothing, have nothing done, let nobody do anything. Bear any loss, let the people die of famine, let hundreds of lakhs be lost in revenue for want of water or roads, rather than do anything". Sir William Willcocks and G. Emergon, two eminent hydraulic engineers also made similar comments after an investigation of the neglect of water control and irrigation systems in Bengal during the British rule (quoted in R. Gopal, 1963:57).

the gradual dissolution of the village communities, therefore, was far-reaching. Tarachand speaks of the changes in the following way:

With the disintegration of the old village organization, the social bonds that had held different elements of rural society together were snapped. The joint family system, and the Panchayats (council of elders) received shattering blows. Co-operation was replaced by competition. Prices, rents, and wages, all came to be determined by the contract between buyers and the sellers. The collective life of the village gave way to individualism. The modes of production, and the structure of rural economy also underwent fundamental changes. Agricultural production instead of catering to the needs of the village population, came to be adopted to the requirements of the external market (Tarachand, 1951:353).

One argument that featured prominently in the mind of Cornwallis was that conferment of right of private property in the soil on the zamindars and fixing the land revenue demand on them in perpetuity would provide an incentive for them to 'improve their estates'. But in practice, this pious hope of Cornwallis was not achieved, because the desired effectiveness of the Permanent Settlement was not 'supported by the experience of any civilized country' and that under this institutional arrangement the 'cultivator was rack-rented, impoverished and oppressed'. Again, according to the Bengal Land Revenue Commission Report, the "Permanent Settlement imposed on the province an iron-framework which has had the impact of stifling the enterprise and initiative of all classes of people" (quoted in M. Islam, 1978:184).

Thus, the Permanent Settlement, though it created the pre-requisite for the capitalist development of agriculture by introducing the individual ownership of land and money-rent, the expected capitalistic development did not take place in Bengal. Why did it fail? At the present stage of our knowledge about the economic history of Bengal, it would be difficult to suggest any definite answers to this complex question.

However, some possible lines of investigation may be made by following three assumptions. First, the landlords of Bengal did not take the needed initiative⁹ in agricultural modernization. Second, the business class invested its

⁹As is well known, during British rule, the zamindars had 'superior right' and 'monopoly control' over land. But since the zamindars were predominantly absentee landlords, they had neither any interest in the improvement of their estates nor of the lot of their tenants. "They were men of capital which they could have invested profitably in the improvement of agriculture, but the majority of the higher order of the landed aristocracy cared little to acquire a knowledge of the subject. Although born to considerable estates, most of them even lacked incentives to educate themselves. They were receivers of rent rather than entrepreneurs in agricultural production. While their contemporary English counterpart was being fast induced to organize agriculture so as to produce a saleable surplus, the Indian landholders, frequently given to vice like other men of rank, thought nothing but of extorting the utmost possible from the laboring tenancy. Moreover, since the landed interest was dominated by upper caste Hindus, who regarded mercantile pursuits as inferior, the commercialization of agriculture was an object foreign to them" (Misra, 1961:43-44).

capital only in purchasing or taking leases on land instead of showing interest in land improvement. Third, the objective social and economic environments in Bengal were not conducive to the development of capitalism in agriculture. We have already said that British rule created conditions for both productive and non-productive investment in Bengal agriculture. But the Bengal landlords due to their tendency to live as social parasites obviously preferred the latter type of investment in agriculture. Since they were predominantly absentee landlords, they invested their capital not to improve the productive quality of their estates but to purchase proprietary rights in land (M. Islam, 1978:188-89).

This tendency of the landlords may be generalized under the following considerations: (1) the expected rate of return on non-productive investment appeared to be higher to them than that on productive investment; (2) since there were usually high fluctuations in the price level and the yield per acre, this discouraged the landlords to make large-scale investment in production; and (3) since the export trade in agricultural produce in Bengal was largely monopolised by the foreigners, and because there were various types of risks and uncertainties involved, Bengal landlords showed little incentive to make productive investment in agriculture. M. Islam (1978:189) suggest that:

The Bengal landlords' preference for non-productive investment would seem to have been due to the fact that their monopoly control of land enabled them, under conditions of the adverse land-man ratio, to gain a rate of return higher than that on productive investment in agriculture. Their preference in making investment in land purchase, money lending and trade in agricultural produce to those fields was directed to achieve a net gain.

Again, the lack of incentive in this direction was due to the existence of different grades of sub-infeudation¹⁰ - a product of Permanent Settlement, which created large numbers of intermediate interests between the zamindar and the actual cultivator. The almost exclusive interest of the Bengal landlord was to extract maximum rents from the tenant through various intermediaries or agents. The landlords instead of taking any active interest in the agricultural operations on his land, parcelled out their holdings in small plots either to the tenants-at-will or to the sharecroppers (bargadars) and lived on rent extracted from the peasantry.¹¹

¹⁰ The Patni Regulation of 1819, legalised sub-letting, and since then a large number of idle intermediaries between the zamindars and the actual cultivators were created. The Simon Commission Report summed up: "In some districts the sub-infeudation has gone to astonishing proportions, as many as fifty or more intermediary interests having been created between the zamindar at the top and the actual cultivator at the bottom" (quoted in R. Gopal, 1963:63).

¹¹ Many zamindars cultivated a luxurious life style and had a high propensity to consume. According to Tapan Raychaudhuri (1969:173), feudal pretensions were particularly marked in the zamindars style of life. A zamindar's house with a hundred rooms having palatial structure was not exceptional. Nearly every zamindar had a second residence at some urban centre, where he cherished the value of his English counterpart.

Due to the practice of renting and sub-infeudation, the zamindars lost actual contact with the land and its cultivators, although it was the cultivator who bore all the burden of the non-cultivating rent receivers.

Little was done to improve agricultural technology. Though there was some research and experimentation to evolve new varieties of seeds under the supervision of the Provincial Department of Agriculture (established in 1885), but efforts in the field of demonstration or extension service remained inadequate. There was no improvement in livestock and no official encouragement to use fertilizer.¹² This was due to the fact that from the very beginning the Provincial Agricultural Department remained badly understaffed. The demonstrators were poorly trained. There was a trained Agricultural Officer in every District, but the number of demonstrators was very small (there were only 130 demonstrators and 23 government farms in the whole province of Bengal). This suggests that the Agriculture Department was poorly staffed, in consequence of which the extension or demonstration activities remained at a very low level (M. Islam, 1978:11). Majority of the peasantry, thus, remained

¹²The Bengal Paddy and Rice Enquiry Committee remarked that 'witness after witness told us in course of our tours in the Mofussil that the great majority of the Paddy growers had never heard of improved seeds and did not know where they could get them from' (Government of Bengal, Report of the Paddy and Rice Enquiry Committee, Calcutta, 1939, Vol. I, p. 72, quoted in M. Islam, 1978:11).

ignorant of the knowledge of improved seeds and the use of chemical fertilizers.

There were also organizational difficulties in changing the techniques of production and increasing productivity. The division of labor and caste hierarchy in the village and traditional attitudes to work as a semi-religious ritual (as religion inculcated the idea that manual labor was polluting, some of the cultivating landowners probably worked less) rather than a means to improve income were obstacles to change (Maddison, 1971:49). Moreover, since the landlord class in Bengal was predominantly composed of upper caste Hindus, they lacked commercial orientation and regarded mercantile pursuits as inferior, modernization of agriculture by adopting more efficient methods was an objective foreign to them. The attitudes of the peasantry towards increasing agricultural production also remained passive due to the particular structural conditions (i.e., traditional values, beliefs, ignorance, lack of capital, and the exploitative production relations) within which the entire productive system operated.

A technological stagnation also engulfed the whole of the Bengal society. That the continuation of the primitive techniques of production was a result of the particular type of land relations and socio-structural conditions has led Shelvankar (1940:116) to assert:

The weakness of Indian technology was not that it was primitive, but that it was unprogressive, it was bound up with a social order antagonistic to its development. And the political expression of its stagnancy was a state apparatus that continued to be dominated by a class with a vested interest in land.

As indicated earlier, the British system of property had a purpose - to extract a surplus and to ensure the accumulation of profits, although the system obviously "failed" to modernize agriculture. Due to the absence of a sufficiently favorable economic environment, the Bengal landlords did not show any interest in agricultural modernization either through their own efforts or through those of their tenants. This factor may be compared with England, France, and other countries where, with the introduction of capitalist relations in agriculture, not only did agriculture and its productivity reached higher and higher peaks, but the rural population also achieved a higher and higher level of prosperity. The Industrial Revolution in England through its impact on the labor market and product market, created favorable environments for the landlords to make productive investment in agriculture. In India, and for that matter in Bengal, this condition did not obtain after the establishment of colonial rule (M. Islam, 1978:187).

As the scale of industrial-urban development and the size of domestic market for agricultural production remained low or limited, the land-man ratio gradually deteriorated and land continued to command a high price in terms of rent. The

institutional monopoly granted to the landlords enabled them under conditions of adverse land-man ratio, to gain a rate of return higher than that on productive investment in agriculture. The cumulative effect of all the factors enumerated above explains that under the British rule, Bengal agriculture not only stagnated but also its yield per acre steadily declined, as can be seen in Table V.

TABLE V
AVERAGE YIELD IN POUNDS PER ACRE IN BENGAL
DURING BRITISH RULE

<u>Quinquennium</u> <u>ending</u>	<u>Wheat</u>	<u>Winter</u> <u>Rice</u>	<u>Gram</u>	<u>Rape and</u> <u>Mustard</u>
1906-07	801	1,234	881	492
1911-12	861	983	881	492
1916-17	698	1,036	867	460
1921-22	688	1,029	826	485
1926-27	721	1,022	811	483
Decrease in twenty years	80	212	70	9

Source: Dutt, R.P., 1940:199.

SECTION D: LAND RELATIONS AND THE DIFFERENT CLASSES

As pointed out earlier, private property in the modern bourgeois sense was only introduced by the British in Bengal. They redefined agrarian relations in terms of the relation between landlord and tenant and created a new class of landlord with a vested interest in land. The new British land tenure system was bound up with the decay and extinction of the old system and production relations. It was also bound

up with the decay of old classes associated with the old land system and the rise of new classes resting on new land relations. There arose a class of speculators and absentee landlords disinterested in the process of production, and the peasantry not only lost its hereditary right to land use, but also found itself suddenly in the midst of a new type of exploitative production relationship. According to Barrington Moore, the Bengal monied class invested their capital in buying or taking leases on land from the old landed class and that this practice assumed such proportions as to dry up capital for commercial or industrial enterprise (Moore, 1967:345-70). However, in this section, I will mainly assess the impact of the new British land tenure system on the old landed aristocracy in Bengal and also its impact on the cultivators.

THE OLD LANDED CLASS:

The new British land tenure system, no doubt, made zamindars the absolute and hereditary proprietors of their estates, but their property could be sold if they failed to pay the revenue to the government within a certain stipulated date before the sunset. To secure timely collection of revenue the East India Company enacted a law in 1794, known as 'The Sunset Law', which required the landlords to pay revenue to the government before sunset on a specific day, failing which their land would be sold and no excuse would be accepted (S. Gopal, 1949:20).

The rigidity of the rules of the 'Sunset Law', therefore, brought a great disadvantage to the old landed class (who were mostly Muslims), who could not pay up their revenue before sunset on a particular day or who showed great inability in the management of their estates and in this way many of them were ruined and eliminated. Failing to pay the high revenue demand the "descendants of old houses found their estates pass into the hands of money-lenders and speculators from Calcutta" (Romesh Dutt, 1908:61). N.K. Sinha (1961:4-5) has estimated that perhaps,

...one-third to one-half of the zamindaris of Bengal were sold by the rigour of the Sale Law and they were mostly bought by rich Parvenus, the banians from Calcutta, who had amassed their fortunes in their transactions with the English, the French and the Dutch, and by those who had made money by banking, contracts, inland trade and such other activities.

Dutt (1940:209-10) calls them:

...a new type of sharks and rapacious businessmen...who were ready to stick at nothing to extract the last farthing from the peasantry in order to pay their quota and fill their own pockets. This was the character of the new "class of gentlemen proprietors".

What seems important here is the new ethic of monied and business versus an older patriarchal ethic. Both were land-owners, both paid revenue. But for obvious reasons (which have been pointed out earlier), the Bengal landlords did not show any interest in making productive investment in agriculture.

The Act of 1793 not only brought about a total change in the pre-British Land tenure systems and land relations, but also initiated a change in the class structure of Bengal society. During Mughal rule, the Muslims who constituted the upper class in Bengal, were replaced by the upper caste Hindus during the British rule. In Bengal, during British rule, the new landlord class was mostly composed of upper caste Hindus, while the peasantry was predominantly Muslims. To quote Anil Seal:

The working of the Permanent Settlement step by step eliminated most of the Muslim Landlords....By the late nineteenth century most of the land was owned by Hindus. In Backergunge (now Barisal) district, for example, Muslims were 64.8 per cent of the population but owned less than 10 per cent of the estates....(Anil Seal, 1968:301).

Speaking of the decline of the Muslim nobility in Bengal, Sir William W. Hunter, a British official remarks:

A hundred and seventy years ago it was almost impossible for a well-born Mussalman in Bengal to become poor; at present it is impossible for him to continue rich (Hunter, 1872:158).

The Permanent Settlement, therefore, came as a final process that destroyed the old landed class who were predominantly Muslims, and in their place a new landlord class emerged who were predominantly composed of upper caste Hindus, although the peasantry remained overwhelmingly Muslims.

THE PEASANT CLASS: CULTIVATORS

With the introduction of the Permanent Settlement, while the state revenue to be paid by the zamindars was fixed in perpetuity, the demands of the zamindars on the cultivators were least undefined and unspecified. As a result, the zamindars acquired unlimited opportunity to squeeze the peasantry. The rai-yats (cultivating tenants) were not consulted about the arrangement and were in no sense a party of it (Azizul Haque, 1939:231). Under Permanent Settlement, Cornwallis thus left the tenants at the mercy of the new landlords. According to R. Gopal (1963:35), "...the customary rights of the Bengal rai-yats have passed away sub-silentio, and they have become to all intents and purposes tenants-at-will". High rates of rents, the zamindars unlimited and illegal exactions and oppression of the rai-yats by various agents remained a constant feature of the agrarian life throughout British rule in Bengal.

The practice of sub-letting and crop-sharing had created a large number of intermediaries between the zamindar and the actual cultivator. "Farm within farm became the order of the day, each resembling a screw upon screw, the last coming down on the tenant with the pressure of them all" (Baden-Powell, 1892:407). The misery of the cultivator increased and middlemen and speculators came to grind the tillers down to the bare subsistence level. Private property,

tended to lead to absentee landlordism. The Land Settlement of 1793 did not protect the peasants by appropriate educational, political, and economic measures, especially in the sphere of credit. The Indian peasants soon fell prey to money-lenders (Wittfogel, 1957:433).

The notorious Haftum (Regulation VII of 1799) and Panjum (Regulation V of 1812) Regulations empowered the zamindars almost without restriction to distrain cattle, ploughs, crops and other personal property of the rai-yats. Distraintment was hitherto unknown in Indian laws. The Rent Laws Commission of 1880 described it as an "off-set of English Law" (quoted in Azizul Haque, 1939:248). No statutory provision was made to protect the rai-yats from oppression and increase of rent until the passing of the Rent Act of 1859 and the Tenancy Act of 1885. The Rent Act of 1859 conferred "occupancy rights" upon cultivators¹³ who had cultivated their lands continuously for 12 years. But contrary to the interest of the Rent Act, intermediary, non-cultivating interest in land was encouraged to grow. As a result, land speculators and village money-lenders acquired occupancy rights. Hence though on paper there was a considerable

¹³The Rent Act of 1859 defined a cultivator as "one who primarily acquired lands for the purpose of cultivation with his own labor or by his hired labor...." Thus actual cultivation of the land and residence in the village in which the land was situated were no longer required of such cultivators. As a consequence of the flexibility of the definition of cultivator, many intermediary and non-cultivating interest in land began to grow, which was contrary to the intention of the Rent Act (Zaman, 1976:9).

number of occupancy tenants, in practice the number of actual cultivators who acquired such rights was very negligible.

The agrarian relations firmly based on the landlord and tenant pattern which the British had set for Bengal, soon led to the growing indebtedness of the peasants and large-scale transfer of land from cultivating to non-cultivating owners. The immense poverty of the cultivators and their indebtedness also led to the decline of agricultural productivity. Table VI(b) reveals that the number of cultivating owners and tenants steadily diminished in Bengal while that of the non-cultivating landlords and agricultural laborers grew.

The transfer of land from the hands of the cultivating owners into the hands of non-cultivating landlords brought about increasing polarization of classes among the agrarian population. Property in land accumulated at one pole and the class of non-cultivating landlords grew increasingly at the other; the rapidly swelling class of agricultural proletariat as well as the poorest peasants and sub-tenants who were hardly distinguishable from landless laborers (Desai, 1959:66).

The British, realizing this, tried to prohibit land alienation by enacting "The Bengal Tenancy Act of 1885" which proclaimed the protection of tenants against illegal eviction and undue increase of rent. The Tenancy Act provided that, a tenant who has held any land for twelve years in a village, whether the same plot or not, should be entitled to occupancy rights over all plots of land held by him for the time being

TABLE VI(a)

CLASS DIFFERENTIATION IN AGRICULTURE
IN BRITISH INDIA: 1921-1931

	<u>1921</u> <u>Millions</u>	<u>1931</u> <u>Millions</u>
Non-cultivating Landlords	3.7	4.1
Cultivators (owners or tenants)	74.6	65.5
Agricultural laborers	21.7	33.5

TABLE VI(b)

CLASS DIFFERENTIATION IN AGRICULTURE
IN BRITISH BENGAL: 1921-1931

(Per thousand of the agricultural population)

	<u>1921</u>	<u>1931</u>	<u>Change</u>
Non-cultivating landlords or rent-receivers	390,562	633,834	+61%
Cultivating owners and tenants	9,274,924	6,079,717	-50%
Laborers	1,805,502	2,718,939	+34%

Source: Dutt, R.P., 1940:216-217 (for both the tables).

in that village....The Act also tried to protect the occupancy railyats against frequent increase of rent by laying down that once the rent was increased, a period of fifteen years must elapse before it could be raised again (quoted in Qadir, 1960:25-26). But in actual practice, the Act failed to solve in many respects the relation between the landlord and his tenants. The abwabs (illegal collections) were rampant all over the country. Since the Permanent Settlement was made between the zamindar and the Government, the zamindar could fix up and increase the rent in any way he liked, and "the system of rack-renting was possible" (Mallick, 1961:52) in consequence of which the peasants were in many ways impoverished and oppressed.

The growing process of indebtedness, and the accompanying mortgage, sale, and transfer of lands to non-agriculturists, were the sharpest measures of the growth of the agrarian crisis in British Bengal. There was a common saying in India during British rule that "the Indian peasant was born in debt, lived in debt, and died in debt" (R. Gopal, 1963:44). The British did not grant any significant amount of taccavi-loan to the cultivators. However, in the twentieth century, there arose co-operative credit societies and joint Stock Banks, but in the first instance, they did not possess adequate resources to meet the increasing requirements of vast numbers of peasants, and in the second, these credit institutions remained confined to the large land holders, the

indigo planters and others who possessed tangible marketable security. Even where such credit was slightly provided, the applicants were faced with many bureaucratic obstacles (R. Gopal, 1963:44; Rothermund, 1970:57). It is 'only a tragic reality that debt is the curse of Bengal farmers; "it robs him of the full fruits of his labor, saps his initiative, destroys hope and ambition and darkens the whole outlook of his life" (Azizul Haque, 1939:341).

During British rule, commercial crops such as, indigo, jute, tea, and cotton became serious rivals of food crops, and more areas were brought under its cultivation.¹⁴ In the nineteenth century large tracts of land in Eastern Bengal (now Bangladesh) were put under indigo cultivation. The East India Company took active interest in indigo cultivation and European indigo planters were brought from the West Indies and larger numbers of indigo factories were established in the northern (Dinajpur, Bogra, Pabna and Rajshahi) and western districts (Khustia, Faridpur, Jessore and Khulna) of East Bengal where indigo growing was most suitable.

¹⁴ While the area under food crops increased between 1892-93 and 1919-20 by 7 per cent, that under non-food crops increased by 43 per cent. Between 1910-11 and 1914-15, the percentages were 12.4 and 54 respectively....The commercial interests pushed themselves so much that during 1934-35 to 1939-40, the area under non-food crops increased by 1.6 million acres, and that under food crops fell by 1.5 million acres...(R. Gopal, 1963:61).

But the cultivators did not find it profitable as compared to the food crops. The return for indigo was far less than that of paddy in consequence of which the cultivators refused to grow indigo. Since the indigo was profitable from the planter's point of view, they compelled and coerced the cultivators to grow this crop.

The indigo system completely took away the peasants' right to choose his own crop. Although the peasant found food crops more profitable than indigo, he was forced to grow this crop. His best lands were earmarked for indigo cultivation. The system of advances and the ways of manipulation by the planters in the measure of the land and in the weight of the weed put him under perpetual debt (P. Sinha, 1965:15-16).

During the middle of the nineteenth century there developed much ill-feeling¹⁵ against indigo planting which in 1873 led to the agrarian uprising in the Pabna district of Eastern Bengal. The Pabna uprising against indigo cultivation created the conditions for similar agrarian discontent in other parts of the province and was a clear expression that the indigo system had become a drag on the growth of the agrarian economy of East Bengal.

Why it had become a drag on the growth of the agrarian

¹⁵The causes of ill-feeling in the indigo districts are attributed by the raiyats to the planters treating them as slaves after they have once taken advances and refusing to allow them to repay balances and relinquish cultivation. Also to his servants cheating them in the measure of the land and the measure of the weed (Mymensingh Gazetteer, 1917:75, quoted in Sinha, 1965:15fn).

economy and why there had been widespread protest, was inherent in the various manipulative and exploitative production-market arrangements of the system itself. Since indigo was a forced cultivation (in the sense that the cultivators did not find it at all profitable and their best lands were earmarked for it) and since the capital-labor system was mediated through advance money payments to the rai-yats by the factory servants of the planters (who were all foreigners), the rai-yats could not hope to pay off the debt and relinquish cultivation. Moreover, there were various mechanisms of cheating by the factory servants in the measure of the land and the weight of the weed.

All these mechanisms suggest that the indigo system was all the more intolerable to the cultivators and they demanded an order from the Government for its abolition. The Government appointed an Inquiry Commission to investigate the complaints of the cultivators. The Commission received unanimous complaints from the cultivators that they were not at all benefiting by the indigo system. As a result of the Commission's recommendations the previous element of compulsion or forced cultivation of indigo disappeared and the tenants felt great relief. The planters then transferred their capital to Bihar (Sinha, 1965:20), where also after a few years, the tenants refused to grow indigo.

However, the agrarian protest in the late nineteenth century was caused not only by the indigo system alone, its

root may be found in the frequent increase of rents and illegal collections by the zamindars and their persistent attempts to do away with the newly-conferred occupancy rights of the tenants¹⁶ by the Rent Act of 1859. Earlier I pointed out the dangers inherent in the faulty laws of 1859. The agrarian discontent in the late nineteenth century amongst certain sections of the cultivators underlined not only the unstable nature of landlord-tenant relationship, but also pointed to the inadequacy of the Act of 1793 which governed these relationships. The British, realizing this, enacted several tenancy laws in subsequent years such as the Tenancy Act of 1885, the Act V of 1928 and the Act VI of 1938, which, taken together, was directed to give some security of tenancy and assurance of less inequitable rent to the tenants. But granting such rights in a system where zamindari was profitable, where the term "cultivator" was loosely defined, where institutional credit facilities were lacking, and where land revenue was fixed but not rent, only perpetuated a situation where the number of intermediary rent-receiving interests between the Government and the actual cultivator increased over time (Zaman, 1976:10).

The British made no attempts at land reform. The system of remedial legislations and inadequate protection of the

¹⁶ See K.K. Sen Gupta, Pabna Disturbances and the Politics of Rent, 1873-1885 (People's Publishing House, New Delhi, 1974).

tenants and sub-tenants rather was geared to an exploitation of man, instead of an improvement of the productivity of the land. Those who acquired control over land were busy squeezing as much rent as possible out of those who had to find a living on this land. This suggests that in Bengal the land had been 'locked up' and that those who were excluded from a share in the land had to work for those who had retained a share.¹⁷

Under these circumstances, the abolition of landlordism by the establishment of a direct relationship between the Government and the cultivators had to be the first step towards modernization of Bengal agriculture. But such an idea was not favored either by the Government or the major political parties (the Congress and the Muslim League) of undivided India. It was the 'Krishak Praja Party' under the leadership of A.K. Fazlul Huq (known as Sher-e-Bangla) which made the first serious proposal for the abolition of landlordism. The Muslim League subsequently abandoned its opposition (M. Islam, 1978: 196-97) when it entered into a coalition with the 'Krishak Praja Party'. A Land Revenue Commission was appointed under

¹⁷ There exists much controversy with regard to the emergence and exact number of a landless class of agricultural laborers in British India, but it is true that their number must have increased in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries due to the change in agrarian relations. Desai showed a progressive rise in the number of agricultural laborers: "The number which stood at 7½ million in 1882, swelled to 21½ million in 1921 and about 33 million in 1931since 1931, there was a further growth of the agricultural proletariat" (Desai, 1959:60).

the chairmanship of Sir Francis Floud in 1939 to
devise ways and means to replace the Permanent Settlement.
The Floud Commission recommended the abolition of the
Permanent Settlement with compensation, but this was not
implemented for various reasons till 1950. In the next
chapter, I will be dealing with this aspect more in detail.

CHAPTER IV
THE POLITICAL ECONOMY OF PRE- AND
POST-INDEPENDENCE BANGLADESH

This chapter will be devoted to the understanding of the pre- and post-independence political economy of agricultural backwardness in Bangladesh basing our analysis on governmental policies, type of government, and the complex structures of both class and colonial exploitation. More particularly, we seek to present a political-economic explanation of government policies in pre-independence Bangladesh and post-independence internal class alignments which resulted in the stagnation and underdevelopment of the agricultural sector. Attempts will also be made to understand the various aspects of land reform measures introduced in both pre- and post-independence Bangladesh, their socio-political background, and their impact on the agrarian structure including effects on the efficiency, equity, and on the national and local level power base. An examination of the different aspects of land reform measures will show that, although landlordism was abolished in East Pakistan by the introduction of State Acquisition and Tenancy Act of 1950, yet pre-capitalist semi-feudal production relations still persisted in Bangladesh agricultural sector. The institution of sharecropping and the practice of usurious moneylending that persisted during British colonial rule also

prevailed in pre- and post-independence Bangladesh agrarian society, and reduced or diminished the incentives of the actual cultivators to increase productivity.

AGRICULTURAL BACKWARDNESS AND LAND REFORM LEGISLATIONS

In August 1947, the Indian sub-continent was partitioned into two independent states - India and Pakistan. Pakistan was comprised of two wings, the East and the West Pakistan, separated from each other by more than one thousand miles of Indian territory. This physical separation which many authors have often called a 'geographical absurdity', was further aggravated by a complete difference in race, language, culture, climate, economy and social structure of the two wings of Pakistan. Religion (Islam) was the common unifying factor on the basis of which the Muslims in British India demanded a separate homeland for themselves against Hindu domination. It was on that basis that Pakistan was created.

But as we will see, religion was not in itself sufficient to cement the disparate and geographically separated economic and socio-cultural entities between the two parts of Pakistan. The 24-years of the history of Pakistan (1947-71) has shown that religion, instead of making a strong feeling for unity and sense of brotherhood between the people of the two wings of Pakistan, had produced conflict and bitter resentment. In other words, religion took a back seat to the economic and

political issues.

From the beginning, the political and administrative leadership was centred in the West Pakistan, while in trade and commerce, East Pakistan, though being the principal supplier of foreign exchange crops like jute and tea, was turned into a dumping ground for manufactured consumer goods of the West. If the whole of Pakistan was subjected to the bizarre experiments of political adventurers, it was the lot of the East Bengal people to play, in the name of Islam, the role of a loyal but subordinate colony (S.R. Chowdhury, 1972:1).

Many recent studies - Griffin and Khan (1972); Bose (1972); Maddison (1971); Jahan (1972); Mahbub Ul Haq (1963); Lewis (1970); Dutt et al, (1973) have documented the economic disparity between the two wings of Pakistan, and have pointed out that the country (East Pakistan) entered into her second phase of colonial exploitation when it was partitioned out of India in 1947. Table VII shows the widening economic disparities between the two wings of Pakistan during 1949-70. It can be observed from the Table that initially there was not much disparity between East and West Pakistan. Disparity began to grow with years. The backwardness of East Pakistan is clearly visible from the relative incomes per head in the two wings. The Table also shows that since the launching of Pakistan's First Five Year Plan (1955-60) the disparities began to grow and increased much higher by the end of the Third Five Year Plan (1965-70). Arjun Sen Gupta (1971:79-101) has thus called Pakistan's

TABLE VII
ECONOMIC DISPARITIES BETWEEN EAST AND WEST
PAKISTAN: 1949-70

	<u>1949/50</u>	<u>1950/60</u>	<u>1964/65</u>	<u>1969/70</u>
<u>GROSS DOMESTIC PRODUCT</u>				
(Rupees M. at 1959/60 Prices)				
East Pakistan	11,473	14,245	17,881	23,219
West Pakistan	12,992	16,228	21,872	29,484
West Pakistan as % of East Pakistan	113.2	113.9	122.3	127.0
<u>POPULATION (Million)</u>				
East Pakistan	42.3	53.9	62.8	72.4
West Pakistan	35.8	45.0	52.2	59.9
<u>INCOME PER CAPITA</u>				
(Rupees at 1959/60 Prices)				
East Pakistan	271	264	285	321
West Pakistan	366	361	419	492
West Pakistan as % of East Pakistan	135	137	147	153
<u>ANNUAL GROWTH RATE</u>				
(Percentage)	<u>1949/50-1959/60</u>	<u>1959/60-1964/65</u>	<u>1964/65-1969/70</u>	
<u>GROSS DOMESTIC PRODUCT</u>				
East Pakistan	2.2	4.6	5.4	
West Pakistan	2.3	6.1	6.2	
<u>POPULATION</u>				
East Pakistan	2.5	3.1	2.9	
West Pakistan	2.4	3.0	2.8	
<u>INCOME PER HEAD*</u>				
East Pakistan	-0.3	1.5	2.4	
West Pakistan	-0.1	3.1	3.3	

Source: A. Robinson, 1973:16-17

*Per Capita "Income" is calculated from Gross Domestic Product, dividing it by total population.

economic policy during the last 24 years as "planning for disparity". Bengalee alienation and the demand for autonomy which culminated in the achievement of independence of Bangladesh on December 16, 1971 is rooted in the widening economic disparity and political subordination of East Pakistan by the West.

In this study, we do not intend to enter into a full-scale discussion of the forces that led to Bengalee alienation and the demand for autonomy to the independence movement of Bangladesh. However, while discussing the main cause of agricultural stagnation in East Pakistan during Pakistani rule, we shall give a brief account of the economic, military and administrative disparity that existed between the two wings of Pakistan.

It has often been recognized by experts that East Pakistan had a higher potential for economic development in agriculture because it had sufficient water and fertile soil. But during the quarter-century of its partnership with Pakistan, East Pakistan's agriculture-dominated economy remained backward and stagnant, while West Pakistan's economy prospered and was able to build up growing industrial and agricultural sectors. The crux of the problem was, however, that the bureaucratic-military rulers of Pakistan pursued a policy of economic exploitation of East Pakistan and drained out its resources for the development of the western wing

(Dutt et al., 1973:14-15). The political-economic policies pursued by the bureaucratic-military government has been one of utilizing all its policy-instruments to promote industrial growth at the expense of agriculture. There was very little incentive and a low rate of public sector investment in agriculture. The agricultural sector was subjected to a very heavy concealed taxation in addition to the moderate direct taxation of land. As a result, the sector lagged seriously behind both the rest of the economy and the growth of population (A.R. Khan, 1972:38).

An estimate made by S.R. Bose during the seven year period 1960-61 to 1967-68 (Table VIII) reveals that, in West Pakistan during the 1960s value added in agriculture increased at 4.6 per cent per annum, while the corresponding growth rate in East Pakistan was only 2.1 (less than half) per cent. Production of rice grew at even a lower rate of 1.7 per cent. According to Maddison, from 1947 to 1966 total crop output in Pakistan as a whole rose by 2.3 per cent a year, in East Pakistan by 1.6 per cent and in West Pakistan by 3.2 per cent. The total agricultural labor force rose by 1.9 per cent a year, by 2.3 per cent in East Pakistan and 1.0 per cent a year in West Pakistan. This means that production per employee rose by 2.2 per cent a year in the West Pakistan and fell by 0.7 per cent in East Pakistan (Maddison, 1971:148).

TABLE VIII

RECENT AGRICULTURAL GROWTH IN PAKISTAN:
1960/61 to 1967/68

<u>Value added</u> <u>(in 1959/60</u> <u>prices)</u>	<u>West</u> <u>Pakistan</u>	<u>East Pakistan</u> <u>(Per cent per</u> <u>annum)</u>	<u>All Pakistan</u>
Total agriculture	4.6	2.1	3.2
Major crops	5.5	2.2	not estimated
Output:			
Rice	5.3	1.7	not estimated
Jute	-	2.6	not estimated
Wheat	4.5	-	not estimated
Cotton	6.8	-	not estimated

Source: S.R. Bose, 1972a:70, Table 2.1.

One argument for the disparity in agricultural growth between the two wings of Pakistan is that there was large investment in irrigation and expansion of irrigation facilities, extension services, use of fertilizer and improved seeds in the west to the comparative neglect in the East. Tables IX and X give a fair idea of the discrimination practised by the central government of Pakistan against East Pakistan in matters of agricultural modernization. The breakthrough in agricultural production in West Pakistan has been largely achieved by the policy decisions regarding increased availability of agricultural inputs and ancillary services in the wheat-growing areas - particularly in Punjab.

2

TABLE IX
FERTILIZER DISTRIBUTION IN PAKISTAN IN RECENT YEARS
1960-61 to 1967-68

<u>Year</u>	<u>Quantity (in thousand nutrient tons)</u>	
	<u>West</u>	<u>East</u>
1960-61	31	24
1964-65	87	45
1965-66	71	54
1966-67	116	77
1967-68	193	115

Source: Bose, 1972a:81, Table 2.3

TABLE X
DISTRIBUTION OF IMPROVED SEEDS OF MAJOR CROPS:
1961-62 to 1967-68

<u>Year</u>	<u>East Pakistan</u>	<u>West Pakistan</u>
	<u>----- (000 tons) -----</u>	
1961-62	3	-
1964-65	9	31
1965-66	8	56
1966-67	6	38
1967-68 ^a	12 ^b	128 ^c

^aPlanned

^bIncluding 2 of IRRI Rice

^cIncluding 40 of Mexican wheat

Source: Bose, 1972a:84, Table 2.4

This was what brought about the "green revolution" in Punjab, while in East Pakistan rice production stagnated. To quote S.R. Bose (1972a:91):

East Pakistan's very sluggish agricultural growth is explained by poor progress in winter irrigation, fertilisation, plant protection and use of improved seeds and by the lack of flood control and effective water use in summer.

This stagnation in the production of rice coupled with the decline in the world price of jute, led to a sharp increase in the numbers of landless laborers and a pronounced fall in the per capita income of the agricultural population of East Pakistan. It has been estimated that the average per capita income in East Pakistan at 1959-60 price was Rs. 228 during the period 1949-50 to 1953-54 but it declined to Rs. 202 in the early 1960s (see Table XI), and went further down to Rs. 198 during the period 1964-65 to 1967-68 (Sobhan, 1969:136-47). Table XI also shows that output of rice per head of agricultural population was lower in the middle 1950s and in the early 1960s than in the early 1950s.

In matters of jute policy also, East Pakistan was discriminated against. Jute was the main cash crop of East Pakistan which earned Pakistan's major foreign exchange, but the Pakistan government remained indifferent to the interests of the jute growers of the region. {The minimum price of jute was not fixed by the government for a long time. As a result, the actual growers had to sell their jute at a very

TABLE XI
AGRICULTURAL INCOME AND RICE OUTPUT PER HEAD
OF AGRICULTURAL POPULATION: EAST PAKISTAN

<u>Year</u>	<u>Agricultural value added per head of agricultural popula- tion (in Rs. at 1959- 60 prices)</u>	<u>Rice output per head of agri- cultural population (in Maunds)</u>
1949-50	228	5.9
1950-51	229	5.6
1951-52	225	n.a.
1952-53	228	n.a.
1953-54	230	n.a.
Average	228	n.a.
1954-55	216	5.0
1955-56	194	4.4
1956-57	212	n.a.
1957-58	199	n.a.
1958-59	184	n.a.
Average	201	n.a.
1959-60	196	4.9
1960-61	203	5.2
1961-62	207	5.3
1962-63	195	4.7
1963-64	208	5.2
Average	202	n.a.

Source: Bose, 1972b:254-55, Table 10.1 and 10.2

- Notes: 1. n.a. means not available.
2. one maund = 82.2 lb.
3. The value added in agriculture + Agricultural population = Agricultural value added per head of Agricultural population.

low price and the big merchants who sold jute in foreign countries made a huge profit (Bhattacharjee, 1973:160).

Appendix Table 3 shows that, apart from very sharp short-term fluctuations in jute acreage, the long-term trend is one of stagnation and low yield per acre. Jute production declined from 6.84 million bales in 1947-48 to 3.33 million bales in 1949-50 and again rose to 6.82 million bales in 1952-53 (Appendix Table 3). But the prices of raw jute declined from about Rs. 20-40 per maund to Rs. 9-12 per maund (Nafis Ahmed, 1968:184). This upset the jute growers in consequence of which jute cultivation was drastically reduced in 1953-54 and 1954-55. Following the devaluation of Pakistani currency (Rupees) in 1955, jute production again increased and since 1964 though we find an increasing trend in output, the yield per acre declined and fluctuated from 1955-56 to 1967-68 (see Appendix Table 3).

The general economic policy pursued by the Central Government was geared to favouring West Pakistan at the expense of East Pakistan making the latter a captive market for the former by the huge transfer of resources from East Pakistan, as can be seen in Appendix Table 4 and Appendix Table 5. The inter-wing terms of trade were also deliberately turned against East Pakistan's agricultural sector (see Appendix Table 6). The Third Five Year Plan of Pakistan states:

There was a considerable transfer of savings from agricultural to industrial sector...as terms of trade were turned against agriculture through such policies as licensing of scarce foreign exchange earned primarily by agriculture to the industrial sector, compulsory government procurement of good grains at low prices to subsidize the cost of living of the urban dwellers, generous tax concessions to industry and lack of similar incentives for commercial agricultural investment (quoted in Griffin, 1972:36-37).

The story of the above transfer of savings from agricultural to non-agricultural sector is to be understood in the context of the realities of the class structure of Pakistan. Political power in Pakistan has been concentrated on the bureaucratic-military elite. In the 1950s [it] functioned with a parliamentary facade of politicians and ministers drawn largely from landlord interests, and the government has been a military dictatorship since 1958. (Maddison, 1971:136). Given their class origin the bureaucratic-military elite saw the opportunity of 'industrializing' and 'modernizing' the economy with the help and support of a client private capitalist class which would ensure their leadership. Maddison (1971:138) comments:

....The chief modernization efforts of the bureaucratic-military elite have been to create a fairly large capitalist industrial sector in West Pakistan, and to transform the agriculture of West Pakistan into a modern capitalist economy.

The above explanation lends support to the fact that East Pakistan's agriculture-dominated economy was neglected and stagnated within the complex structures of both class

and colonial exploitation under the rubric of a single nation-state. The increasing extraction of surplus from agriculture coupled with the rapid growth of rural population and lack of alternative employment opportunities outside agriculture increased, on the one hand, rural income inequality and, on the other, unemployment and under employment. The labor force in agriculture was also highly underutilized which led to the low yield per acre. The estimate of unemployment shown in Table XII indicates that in 1959-60 while only 8 per cent of the labor force is unemployed in West Pakistan, the figure is 33 per cent in East Pakistan. This suggests that there had been substantial development of agricultural and industrial sector in West Pakistan which created employment opportunities for the growing labor force in that region. In East Pakistan, on the other hand, the slow rate of industrialization and a large, stagnant agricultural sector could not provide adequate employment to the growing labor force.

TABLE XII
EMPLOYMENT SITUATION IN EAST AND WEST PAKISTAN
(in millions)

<u>Year</u>		<u>Total Labour Force</u>	<u>Employed</u>	<u>Un- employed</u>	<u>Unemployed as a per- centage of total labor force</u>
1949-50	East Pakistan	13.3	9.9	3.4	25
	West Pakistan	10.7	10.4	0.3	3
1954-55	East Pakistan	14.5	10.2	4.3	30
	West Pakistan	12.0	11.5	0.5	4
1959-60	East Pakistan	15.8	10.6	5.2	33
	West Pakistan	13.5	12.4	1.1	8

Source: Mahbub ul Haq, 1963:108.

In this connection, the understanding of the class structure in East Pakistan is important for an understanding of the subsequent unequal development. Before partition, it was the Hindus who formed the elite class; most of the landlords were also Hindus. It was the Hindus who formed the bureaucracy.¹ After partition in 1947, the Hindu elites and landlords migrated virtually en-bloc to India. Partition, therefore, created a vacuum in the administrative structure, in the professions, and in the power structure of East Pakistani urban society.

In the rural society, however, after the mass exodus of Hindu landlords and moneylenders to India, a peasant economy dominated by rich and middle peasants emerged, who quietly stepped into the power vacuum and took up the moneylending functions instead of making productive investments in agriculture. The various state policies, such as the land reform legislations of 1950 and 1961 due to their 'elite farmer bias' (this has been examined later on) strengthened the rich peasants. In addition, the technology-oriented approach to agricultural modernization in the 1960s also benefited these rich peasants who by virtue of their superior economic position were able to control all infrastructural

¹At the time of partition, there were 1,157 officials in the Indian Civil Service and the Indian Political Service of whom only 101 were Muslims. 95 of them opted for Pakistan. Among the Muslim officers who opted for Pakistan, only 2 were from East Pakistan (K.B. Sayeed, 1967:132).

facilities and assumed new political role in the rural areas.

In the urban areas the bulk of what modest industry developed, was under the monopoly control of the non-Bengalee investors. This was possible because in East Pakistan, there was the virtual absence of a Bengalee commercial bourgeoisie class. In the absence of a native bourgeoisie, the class structure in East Pakistan was composed of petty bourgeoisie consisting of small traders, shopkeepers, urban professionals, intellectuals, and rural rich. The influence of Bengalee petty bourgeoisie was culturally predominant, but economically it was weak. This was because of the fact that except for the few East Pakistanis (Bengalees) who had access to the lower and middle level professions, the top civil and military positions were overwhelmingly West Pakistani. Appendix Table 7 shows the relative strength of East Pakistanis in the superior civil and military services and indicates to what extent the Bengalees were discriminated against in holding civil and military posts which constituted the power base in Pakistan.

The above description of the class structure between the two wings of Pakistan reveals that the West Pakistani power structure due to its exclusive decision-making authority and economic domination of East Pakistan became the 'national' power structure. In the first few years after partition, the economic and political domination of West Pakistan was not

very apparent to the people of East Pakistan. But subsequent unequal development in industry, trade, and agriculture, widening economic disparity and income gap,² transfer of resources from East to the West, and East Pakistan's low share in central Government development expenditure (see Appendix Table 8) reflected that East Pakistan was deliberately reduced to an internal colony of West Pakistan. The following comments of Richard Nations is instructive in this connection:

...the course of capitalist development wore an intricate fabric combining the features of both class and colonial exploitation. Within this complex, East Pakistan has suffered the compound contradictions of a system which simultaneously channels the production of the poor into the consumption of the wealthy, and the surplus of an agricultural dependency into the industry of suzerian metropolis. The political economy of Pakistani capitalism as it has evolved since 1947, is the fundamental explanation of the national and class upsurge (in Bangladesh) (Richard Nations, 1971:3-4).

It appears from the foregoing discussion that during two decades of Pakistan's history, East Pakistan's interest was utterly neglected which led to an enormous concentration of wealth in the hands of a selected coterie (22 rich families) in the west wing of Pakistan. The persistent denial of the

² A recent report by a panel of experts to the Planning Commission of the Government of Pakistan stated that, while in 1959-60 West Pakistan's per capita income was 32 per cent higher than the per capita income of East Pakistan, by 1969-70 it was 61 per cent higher than the per capita income of the East. Thus, in ten years the income gap doubled in percentage terms; it increased even more in absolute terms (Government of Pakistan, Planning Commission, "Reports of the Advisory Panels for Fourth Five Year Plan 1970-75", Vol. 1, July 1970, p. 2, quoted in Ayooob and Subrahmanyam, 1972:41).

principle of equal rights and self-determination, the continuous economic exploitation, and the extremely limited representation of the Bengalees in economic, military, and administrative decision-making, was the root cause which ultimately divided Pakistan as a united nation and a new state 'Bangladesh' is born in 1971.

In Chapter III we delineated the anachronistic nature of the Permanent Settlement and its evil effects on the productivity and efficiency of Bengal agriculture. We have also pointed out that from 1793 until 1947, many Acts and Regulations have been passed which sought to govern the relationship between the landholders and tenants. But as discussed earlier, these laws (e.g., the Rent Act of 1859, the Tenancy Act of 1885, Act V of 1928, and the Act VI of 1938) failed to protect the tenants in their true sense. This was partly due to the evils inherent in the system of landlordism (e.g., subinfeudation, the collection of rent by various non-cultivating intermediaries or middlemen, insecurity of tenancy, absentee landlordism, etc.) and partly due to the mounting pressure of population on land and lack of alternative employment opportunities outside agriculture, was realised even by the British.

In 1938, the then government of Bengal constituted a Land Revenue Commission, known as Floud Commission, under the chairmanship of Sir Francis Floud. The Floud commission in its 'Report of the Land Revenue Commission, Bengal Vol. 1'

(1940:41-46, quoted in Abdullah, 1976:80) recommended the abolition of the zamindar system in Bengal with compensation and its replacement by a Raiyatwari Settlement, i.e., a settlement directly between the state and the cultivator. But the commission's proposal could not be implemented due to the Second World War and the post-war political upheaval centering around the partition of Indian sub-continent. Thus, the fundamental inconsistencies and the exploitative production relations in the prevailing land tenure system were allowed to continue, which even worsened in the wake of the great famine of 1943 in Bengal and due to the post-war inflation, resulting in large-scale land transfer by the poorer section of the peasantry to the upper strata of the most privileged landowners and usurious moneylenders.

As noted earlier, the landlord class in Bengal was predominantly composed of Hindus, while the bulk of the peasantry was Muslims. Due to this historical fact and the ever increasing exploitation by Hindu landlords, the agrarian conflict between the Hindu landlords and the Muslim peasantry often assumed communal character.³ In this study, we do not

³ Agrarian disturbances, however, should not be seen as a single factor for the growth of communalism in Bengal. Many recent studies have pointed out that the uneven development of the Hindu and Muslim bourgeoisie and the growing competition between the Hindu and the Muslim elite groups contributed more importantly to the emergence of communalism which ultimately led to the creation of Pakistan as a separate Muslim state (Desai, 1959:160; McLane, 1969:40; Abdullah, 1972:271).

intend to go into details of the emergence of communalism in Bengal. What is worth mentioning is that the growing form of exploitation and the increasing poverty of the peasantry stimulated agrarian tension which ultimately led to agrarian disturbances in many districts of East Bengal. In the years immediately preceding and following the birth of Pakistan, there was some awakening of the "lower orders" as exemplified in the Tebhaga Movement of 1946-47 by the sharecroppers for increasing their share to two-thirds instead of half of the crop, the Hajong Peasants' movement (in Mymensingh district) against the Tanka System under which the tenant had to pay produce-rent in a fixed quantity to the landlord irrespective of crop failure, and the movement against Nankar System (in Sylhet district) on bonded labor and of performing unpaid labor service for the landlords (Alavi, 1973:320-24; Dutt et al., 1973:125).

It was against this background that within three years after partition, the East Bengal State Acquisition and Tenancy Act was passed on February 16, 1950 by the East Bengal Legislative Assembly. The Act of 1950 was the first major land reform law in East Pakistan which abolished, with compensation, all landlords' estates and intermediary rent-receiving interests between the State and the actual cultivators and a ceiling on landholding was set at 33.3 acres or 100 bighas (one bigha equals one-third of an acre). The abolition of landlordism was facilitated by the large-scale

exodus of Hindu landlords and moneylenders to India after partition. Under the 1950 Act, the government of the new state of Pakistan, thus, became the direct owner of all lands (government became the single zamindar) and the direct receiver of revenue from the cultivators and the former owners. Andrus and Mohammed (1958:120-21) and Abdullah (1976:80-81) have summarized the main provisions of the Act in the following way:

1. Abolition of zamindari tenure and all intermediary rent-receiving interests and acquisition of all such interests by the government;
2. establishment of direct relation between the government and all cultivating tenants, the latter paying revenue directly to the government. All rai-yats (cultivating tenants) will have permanent, heritable, and transferable rights in their land and will cultivate their land in any way they like;
3. prohibition against subletting and renting out of land in future. Cultivation under the barga (sharecropping) system is not to be treated as subletting;
4. imposition of a ceiling of 100 bighas (33.3 acres) per family or 10 bighas (3.3 acres) per family member, whichever was greater, on landholdings;
5. land in excess of this was to be acquired by the State and redistributed among "bonafide cultivators" holding less than 3 acres of land.

The above provisions of the Act of 1950 show that the Act sought to put an end to the landlordism and to establish the direct contact between the government and the cultivating tenant. But in practice what was the outcome? According to some recent studies (Joshi, 1972; Dutt et al., 1973; Stepanek,

1979), the Act failed to effect any fundamental changes in the mode of production. Instead of the restructuring of tenure relationship, the Act was only a reaffirmation of the status quo; it failed to dismantle the semi-feudal land relation structure (Dutt et al., 1973; Stepanek, 1979:95).

The other loophole in the Act is evident from the provision of the Act itself which retained the extremely flexible Bengal Rent Act of 1859 definition of the cultivator. According to the 1950 Act, a "cultivating raiyat" is one who "holds land by cultivating it either by himself or by members of his family or by servants or by bargadars (sharecroppers) or by or with the aid of hired laborers or with the aid of partners" (quoted in Zaman, 1976:13, Stepanek, 1979:95). This extremely broad definition of the "cultivating raiyat" contributed to the persistence of non-cultivating absentee ownership and leasing out of land with no stake in land or in the organization of agriculture. P.C. Joshi (1972:70) comments:

The Act of 1950 only removed the top layer of big zamindars but did not make a serious dent into the problem of sub-infeudation...The tenancy signifying discrepancy between ownership and operation of land which earlier existed on a wide-scale continues to exist to day, even though the precise magnitude of it is not known.

Under the 1950 Act, although the ceiling on landholding was set at 33.3 acres, it had very little significance because the vast majority of the holdings were (and still are) very

much below this size. In other words, the ceiling of 33.3 acres was too high relative to the average size of holdings. As a result, the extent of redistribution was negligible since only a small amount (163,741 acres) of excess land, of a total net cropped area of around 20 million acres in 1947-48, was surrendered and most of which was unfit for settlement (Ahmed and Timmons, 1971:60; Abdullah, 1976:83). In 1961 when an amendment under East Pakistan Ordinance No. XV raised the 33.3 acres ceiling to 375 bighas (125 acres) by President Ayub Khan in his bid to win rural support (Stepanek, 1979:95), this further reduced the scope for redistribution. As some land had to be restored to previous owners after the amendment ordinance of 1961, the total number of families having more than 125 acres of land was reported to be only 529 (Abdullah, 1976:82). This suggests that the redistributive impact of the Act of 1950 and its amendment in 1961 was very negligible.

Redistribution of excess land under the Act of 1950 was to be permitted only to a "bonafide cultivator" holding less than 3 acres of land. Between 1957 and 1962 five government circulars were issued to clarify the definition of a "bonafide cultivator". The flexibility in the definition of a "bonafide cultivator" will be evident from a circular⁴ of the

⁴Report of the Land Revenue Commission, East Pakistan, East Pakistan Government Press, Dacca, 1969, p. 45, quoted in Abdullah, 1976:83.

Revenue Department in 1957 which laid down in order of priority the definition of bonafide cultivating families:

1. Tenants of diluviated land (i.e., land washed away by a river.
2. Ex-military men with "long and meritorious services".
3. Any tenant not employing hired labor.
4. Refugees.
5. Ex-rent-receivers with no retainable Khas land (land occupied directly).

This extremely broad but dubious definition of a "bonafide cultivator" demonstrates that the poor and landless families were most unlikely to be the recipients of the land. Moreover, land distribution was not made free, because the government needed revenue to make compensation payments to the zamindars. A successful applicant for Khas land had to pay to the government a sum of money called Salami (a premium money paid for the grant of settlement of any land), which in 1957 was set at 5 to 10 times the annual rental, were raised in 1962 to 100 per cent of the market value of the land which continued until 1972 (Abdullah, 1976:83-84). One could easily understand the impact of the enhancement of Salami money on the distributive aspect of the Act and on the landless peasants.

Furthermore, although the Act of 1950 prohibited subletting, this provision was rendered practically inoperative by failing to treat sharecroppers as subletters (though sharecropping is very much a form of subletting). It was, in

fact, a glaring defect of the 1950 Act, in that the bargadars (sharecroppers) were reduced to the position of agricultural laborers and, therefore, could be ejected at will (Ahmed and Timmons, 1971:58; Zaman, 1976:14). That the reforms had fallen far short of the ideal and there was extensive persistence of absentee ownership and tenancy was also admitted by the government of Pakistan. As late as in 1970 when the Fourth Five Year Plan (1970-75) of Pakistan was introduced, the Pakistan Planning Commission states: "In fact there is a tendency to absentee landlordism and the reappearance of tenancy" (Fourth plan of Pakistan, p. 309, quoted in Dutt et al., 1973:128). As a matter of fact, the sharecropping system as practised in East Pakistan (still now in Bangladesh) is nothing but tenant-farming of a pre-capitalist semi-feudal nature. We will discuss this problem more in detail in the next chapter.

As indicated earlier, the zamindari system in East Pakistan was abolished with compensation payments made to the zamindars. Since the rules of this compensation varied greatly (partly in cash and partly in non-negotiable bonds), the ultimate burden fell on the tenants. "They (the tenants) have been liberated from the zamindar only to be bound down anew in the strait-jacket of compensation" (Thorner, 1956:25). From the point of view of economic development, the attempted reforms would thus seem ill-conceived.

However, the Act of 1950 had some positive aspects too.

These included: (1) elimination of big zamindar as a force in the rural society; (2) elimination of various gross feudal and illegal exactions; (3) perceptible changes in the rural power structure in favor of the rich and middle peasants (a fact which will be discussed in Chapter V); and (4) an increase in the amount of land revenue collected by the government. The proximate economic effects of the Act, writes Abdullah, were restricted to an enhancement of government revenue. From 1947-48 to 1957-58, land revenue increased from Rs. 17.4 million to 67.5 million, jumped to Rs. 130.5 million in 1958-59 and remained stabilized to between Rs. 130 and Rs. 150 million in the years 1965-66 to 1969-70 (Abdullah, 1976:86).

It may be recalled that the Act of 1950 and its amendments in 1961 did not seriously alter the living conditions of the rural poor, the landless labor and the sharecroppers. "The main effect of the Act was a redistribution of income from a class of rural intermediaries to the (urban middle-class based) provincial government...." (Abdullah, 1976:85).

Of the many provisions of the Act and the subsequent amendments, one has only to realise the fact that it was nothing but a half-hearted attempt at land reforms. If "land reform proper" is to mean "the redistribution of property rights in land for the benefit of small farmers and agricultural laborers", as Dorren Warriner (1969:XIV) says, then it cannot be said that a "proper" land reform has taken place in

the erstwhile East Pakistan. Abdullah (1976:95) calls it

an attempted reform of revenue administration. It enabled the government to centralize agricultural surplus into its own hands. Under this Act the welfare of the rural poor was affected marginally, if at all. It purported to eliminate a parasitic class, but whether the class that replaced it was less parasitic, is debatable.

It may again be recalled that the inconsistency which existed between the ideology of the post-partition "reform" and its actual mode of implementation, can only be clearly understood with reference to the dynamics of the class structure at both macro and micro level. We will attempt to understand the dynamics of the class structure at both macro and micro level in the chapter that follows. At this point, what is worth mentioning is that the attempted reforms were more of a compromise formula of the ruling elite with the rich and middle peasants to win rural support (for example, the introduction of the Basic Democracy System by President Ayub Khan in the 1960s which provided new political role and leadership to the surplus and middle farmers in the rural society) who were against a radical land reform which would benefit the rural poor (Joshi, 1974; Jahangir, 1977a and 1977b). We now turn to a discussion of the post-liberation land reform legislation in Bangladesh.

Following independence on December 16, 1971, the new government of Bangladesh also undertook steps to make land reforms and to rationalize the unfavorable tenure relations

prevailing in the country. A brief analysis of the post-liberation land reform legislations will now lead us to consider the new government's success or failure to grapple with the country's unfavorable tenural system and to alleviate the problems of her vast rural economy.

Roughly eight months (on August 14 and 15, 1972) after the liberation, the new government introduced two Presidential Orders. One is called P.O. 96 or "The State Acquisition and Tenancy (Third Amendment) Order, 1972", and the other is P.O. 98 or "The Bangladesh Land Holding (Limitation) Order, 1972". The first exempted all agricultural families owning up to 25 bighas (8.3 acres) of land from payment of land revenue, while the second restored the land ceiling of 100 bighas (33.3 acres) imposed in 1950 (Alamgir, 1975:286; Mukherjee, 1976:455).

The pious hope for the abolition of land revenue up to 8.3 acres was that it would give relief to the small and medium farmers and would save them from considerable harassment as well as corruption by the lower government functionaries responsible for rent collection, known as Tahsildars.⁵ According to a government estimate, after the promulgation of

⁵ One consequence of the Act of 1950 was that it placed great powers in the hands of local revenue officials (Tahsildars), thus increasing the chances of petty tyranny. It was reported that the inflexible and complicated procedure of depositing rents made the Tahsildars generally corrupt and rude to the illiterate peasantry. It was further alleged that the Tahsildars were not better than the notorious Naibs and Gomasthas (see glossary) of the former landlords (Abdullah, 1976:86).

P.O. 96, the land revenue receipts fell from Rs. 80 million in 1971-72 to a little over 5 million Takas ('Taka' is the name of Bangladesh currency) in 1972-73, i.e., the government incurred an annual loss of nearly 75 million Takas (Zaman, 1975:109). With a view to giving further relief to the poor peasants, the government also waived all land revenue including arrears and interest due on agricultural land up to April 14, 1972 which incurred to the government a loss of about Taka 360 million.⁶ Since land revenue was a major source of government receipts, it has been argued whether the government and the economy could afford such a huge loss immediately after the liberation.

Leaving aside the question of justification of such a huge loss of government receipts from this traditional source, especially in view of the government's increasing involvement in public sector undertakings, let us now examine whether the exemption of land revenue under P.O. 96 rendered expected benefit to all the agricultural families in rural Bangladesh. At first blush, it will seem that exemption of land revenue up to 8.3 acres gave big relief to all agricultural families, but when this concession is considered in conjunction with the vast number of peasantry consisting of landless laborers and

⁶See "Bangladesh Progress, 1972", a brochure was published by the Department of Publications, Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, Government of Bangladesh, Dacca, p. 11.

sharecroppers, then it will appear that they were not substantially benefited by this measure.

However, the abolition of land revenue up to 8.3 acres with effect from April 14, 1972 and the waiver of all land revenue including arrears and interest due up to April 14, 1972 certainly made millions of farmers a little happier, but it is hard to accept the argument that its purpose was only to reduce the tax burden on subsistence or below subsistence farmers alone. In fact, the policy also substantially benefited the medium and surplus farmers. Moreover, though the land revenue was abolished up to 8.3 acres, the agricultural families were (and still are) liable to pay a number of cesses and fees such as the Development and Relief Tax, the Education fees, and the Local Rates, etc. levied at rates which were expressed as percentages of land revenue. The latter served as "tax base" for the estimation and collection of these miscellaneous cesses and fees (Nurul Islam, 1977:196). The old practice of squeezing the peasantry continues to-day, albeit with a lesser degree of exploitation.

As indicated earlier, the Land Holding (Limitation) Order, 1972 was promulgated in haste - roughly eight months after the country was liberated. No thorough-going assessment was made to find out if the surplus land available after the reform would meet the requirement of the landless and near-landless peasantry. After the promulgation of P.O. 98, 76,712 acres of land were expected to be released for

redistribution to the landless, but till 1979 only 33,300 acres of land have been acquired (Stepanek, 1979:96). This explains not only the rejection of any serious attempt at land reform by the post-liberation government, but also the ineffectiveness of the machinery entrusted with the enforcement of legislation. The lack of total commitment on the part of the government and the inadequacies in law is reflected in the return to the 1950 ceiling of landownership of 100 bighas (33.3 acres). The scaling down of the ceiling on land to the level of 1950 had, thus, very little significance because the ceiling is again too high relative to the average size of farm in Bangladesh which is only 2.5 acres. According to A.R. Khan (1974:15), "in an economy in which an average farm is only 2.5 acres anything above ten acres must be regarded as intolerably large". The redistributive impact of the post-independence legislation, therefore, is not likely to be very significant since the ceiling has been set at too high a level and since only a small amount of excess land is made available to-date.

The family is the most important social unit in rural Bangladesh through which each member interacts and which determines the kinship and inheritance patterns. In Bangladesh, although descent is reckoned patrilineally, the patrilineage is not a corporate group and common ownership of property is not the rule. A man (usually the father) retains his property until his death, living in a joint household with his children.

Only rarely do his children retain joint households and common property after receiving their inheritance. Rather, they divide cultivation and houseplot land, each establishing a separate family unit, or household. Thus, after the death of the father or the head of a family, his property is generally inherited by his legal heirs, e.g., sons, daughters and wife. According to the Muslim law of inheritance, when a man dies, 10 per cent of his land must go to his wife if she survives him and the rest must be divided between his sons and daughters on the basis of the principle that, "two daughters equal one son", i.e., the daughters and wives must inherit more unequally than do sons (Bertocci, 1974:108-9).

While Muslim law allows for inheritance by women, a variety of pressures operate to prevent them from exercising those rights. The reasons for this are related to post-marital residence patterns and some other socio-economic considerations. The post-marital residence pattern in Bangladesh is ideally patrilocal, i.e., the girls after marriage go to live in the homesteads of their husbands. In such a situation, it is likely that a girl may assert her rights to inheritance. But in most cases, the girls either do not claim their inheritance to father's property or are deprived of it. Bertocci (1974:110) gives an explanation for this in the sense that a woman must maintain some security against the possibility that she will be widowed or divorced, and should either of these misfortunes befall her, she has little recourse but to return

to her natal homestead. If she has not taken her share of the inheritance, it is likely that her parents or brothers will gladly take her back. It is also understandable given the smallness of land holdings and the natural desire of the members of the patrilineage to prevent loss of land to other lineages due to the out-marriage of its daughters.

Many of the loopholes (for example, the broadly framed definition of a "family") that existed in the Act of 1950 were allowed to continue so that the acquisition of excess land and its actual distribution to the landless remained, as in the past, a pious hope. The Presidential Order 98 of 1972 stipulated that a family included "such person and his wife, son, unmarried daughter, son's wife, son's son, and son's unmarried daughter" (quoted in Mukherjee, 1976:456). This maintains that the definition of a family had not excluded a son who had been living in a separate mess independently of his parents and acquired land by his own earnings. The Order, thus, had merged the property of the independent son with the property of his father, thereby allowing other heirs of the father to inherit the property of the son. Moreover, a wife under the Muslim marriage law is entitled to acquire properties in her Muhr (a socio-religious custom in which a husband bestows movable or immovable property on his wife at the time of marriage). The inadequacies in the provisions of the 1972 land reform legislation, therefore, facilitated the transfer of land among the members of a family

with a view to avoiding the surrender of excess land.

The government, however, realising this, amended the 1972 Order and added an additional clause in November to the original definition of a family (vide P.O. 135 of 1972) which read:

Provided further that an adult and married son who has been living in a separate mess independently of his parents continuously since five years before the 16th day of December, 1971, and his wife, son and unmarried daughter shall be deemed to constitute a separate family (quoted in Mukherjee, 1976:457).

The above clause stipulating independent means of living "since five years before the 16th day of December, 1971" was again relaxed by another Presidential Order in December (vide P.O. 154 of 1972) which stated that the Revenue Officer would accept the son's claim to be the head of a family, while his father was alive, if he found that the son was an adult and married with independent means of livelihood "since before the 20th February 1972" (Mukherjee, 1976:457). This suggests that the government had to make several amendments in the law with regard to the definition of a "family" in response to continued pressures from the vested interests, i.e., rural and urban power-elites.

As in the definition of a family, there have been frequent changes in the time limit for the submission of statements concerning the surrender of excess lands. The time limit for submission of returns was first set at only

two months after the promulgation of land ceiling law, but later it was extended up to January 31, 1973, and then up to March 31, 1973 (quoted in Bangladesh Progress, 1973: 81). Due to the frequent shifting of time limits and the other loopholes already pinpointed, a large number of persons had been able to transfer their lands in various ways giving understatements or no statement on excess lands and, therefore, were able to by-pass the legislation. To quote Mukherjee (1976:463).

Whatever boldness was initially introduced to prevent the circumvention of the land ceiling law has been gradually eroded by subsequent amendments in response to the demands from pressure groups. These vested interests have been quick to capitalise on the government's uncertain and hesitant attitude so that the opportunity to acquire whatever surplus land under the relatively high level of ceiling prescribed has been lost...

However, some laudable features of the 1972 legislation had been that it abolished the previous system of realizing the Salami, exempted land revenue up to 8.3 acres, and waived all land revenue including arrears and interest due up to April 14, 1972, which may be termed an improvement over the pre-liberation land legislations. But the overall impact, when considered, is not likely to be very significant with respect to either increasing efficiency or promoting equity. As Alamgir (1975:286-87) points out:

The attempted land reforms in Bangladesh have not yet had any significant impact on the agricultural and rural scene in terms of either efficiency or equity. The exploitation and domination of one class by another in various forms are still continuing. The ceilings have been set at too high a level to bring about a fundamental change in the structure of the rural society. It is clear that the ruling elite was never really very serious about redistributing landholding...

Land reform in post-liberation Bangladesh, therefore, does not indicate any radical shift from the pre-independence level. A review of the most recent legislation reveals that no legislation has yet been enacted that would require the farm owner to be the actual cultivator, assure bargadars (sharecroppers) or landless tenants' secure rights in land, or otherwise marry labor and risk with productivity and reward (Stepanek, 1979:96). Since no changes were yet made in the definition of "cultivator", his economic condition continued to deteriorate. Land reforms and agricultural development strategies in both pre- and post-liberation Bangladesh thus

did not lead to the destruction of the power-base of the rural privileged groups (composed primarily of rich and surplus farmers) and to the creation of a new socio-political order. Rather, it helped to strengthen an expanding rich peasant category,...enlarged their social base and linked them with the national power structure (Jahangir, 1977b:2063).

In Bangladesh, after the liberation the ruling elite like their predecessors followed the same compromise formula as

regards land reform and agrarian change which enriched the rich or surplus peasant category. Neither the ruling political party (Awami League⁷) nor the existing power-elite introduced any fundamental structural changes in Bangladesh's agrarian set up, nor has there been any evidence to suggest that further progress has been made in this direction after the military takeover in August 1975. A new era of patronage has started. As Tai (1968) suggested, "there was a close correspondence between the elite and the landed classes, and a deep polarisation between the landed and landless classes" (quoted in Jahangir, 1977a:158-9). In post-liberation Bangladesh, this polarisation process has been reinforced by inflationary pressures, higher cereal prices, hoarding, black marketeering, and artificial (man-made) creation of food shortages. Following the 1974 flood and famine, the crisis became more visible with the deaths of thousands of people, the sharp increase in land sales and of increasing landlessness in rural Bangladesh, as can be seen in Chapter V.

⁷The Awami League (People's League) provided major leadership in the liberation war of Bangladesh. After independence in December 1971, the Awami League formed the government which ruled the country till August 15, 1975 when President Sheikh Mujibur Rahman and his family was assassinated by a military coup d'etat. In the next chapter, a detailed discussion will be made on the class structure of Bangladesh.

CHAPTER V
LAND OWNERSHIP PATTERN AND THE
RURAL CLASS STRUCTURE

In this chapter we will present an overview of Bangladesh agriculture at the beginning and then will discuss about the nature and pattern of the land tenure system, ownership distribution, productivity, and the rural class structure of Bangladesh basing our analysis on the empirical findings of some recent studies. We will also attempt to understand the weaknesses of the existing institutional framework for rural development in Bangladesh, particularly, with regard to the availability and the distribution of agricultural credit and other inputs. This will be examined in the context of the realities of the class structure at both macro and micro levels (national and local level class structure respectively). Furthermore, a brief discussion will be made on the physical or environmental constraints to rice production in Bangladesh at the beginning of this chapter.

FACTORS IMPEDING AGRICULTURAL MODERNIZATION

In Bangladesh there is a great scarcity of land. Day by day the agricultural land area is decreasing due to urbanization, industrialization, population growth, and non-agricultural uses like construction of residential housing units on the cultivable land. But in spite of that, cropping

intensity is neither high nor are the cropped areas for rice cultivation utilized to their optimum (see Appendix Table 9). Only about 35 per cent of the total cultivated area is cropped more than once on the average (A.R. Khan, 1972:43). It seems, therefore, that rice production in a country like Bangladesh could be increased by way of intensifying the uses of existing cultivable lands and in increasing the cropping intensity. But how to achieve it, when in a country there are various environmental constraints like frequent floods, drought, periodic cyclones, and pest and disease attack of many kinds on the crop, besides constraints in the agrarian institutions? In this study, though we are not particularly concerned with the physical or environmental constraints to rice production in Bangladesh, but a brief discussion seems necessary in this regard.

Of the many agro-ecological factors that limit the growth of rice production in Bangladesh, the most important ones are: climate (weather variations, seasonal rainfall, floods, drought, cyclones, etc.), soil, topography, hydrological conditions and impeded drainage system which make not only low cropping intensity but also determine the three major crops - Aman, Aus, and Boro (see glossary). Due to the above factors and differences in soil-geomorphic conditions, the three major types of crops are not equally concentrated and the cropping patterns are not homogeneous all over the country. For the same reasons the land also remain

un-utilized or are not utilized to their optimum for rice production. Low productivity and failure of rice production are also related to the nature and intensity of annual flooding, cyclone, and hydrological conditions.

In Bangladesh, the pattern of cropping and agricultural operations is on balance adapted to the three main seasons: (1) warm and rainy monsoon months (June to October), when Aman crop is grown; Aman is the most important crop which represents about 65 per cent of the total rice acreage; (2) dry and mild winter season (November to February), when Boro paddy is grown where irrigation¹ is practised; (3) warm summer (March-May) with Northwester (locally called "Kalbaishaki") storms and little rains, when Aus is principally grown. But the yield of this crop is affected by Northwester storms and little or excessive monsoon rains.

Agriculture in Bangladesh is a gamble in monsoon. During monsoon season, most of the agricultural land is submerged under water due to heavy rainfall, inundating rivers and impeded drainage system which causes severe damage to crops (see Appendix Table 11). Since much of the country has nearly flat topography, extensive flooding is caused either by direct overflows from rivers or by impeded natural drainage. The soil and land capability survey done by U.N.D.P./F.A.O. indicated that 30 per cent of the total cultivated area is

¹In Bangladesh, expansion of winter crop (Boro) area is dependent on the expansion of irrigation. Although it is possible to make use of the river network and sub-soil water resources for irrigation, but as of 1969-70 irrigation covered only about 4 per cent of the cultivated acreage (see Appendix Table 10).

flooded annually up to depths of 3 ft. and above. Two-thirds of the total area is flooded to a depth of more than one foot. About 15 per cent of the area which goes about 6 feet deep under water can not sustain crops during the monsoon period. In addition to direct damages to crops, the uncertainty of flooding in terms of area, depth, duration and time of occurrence also inhibits long-term agricultural modernization (quoted in S.R. Bose, 1974b:143). On the contrary, during the other two seasons of dry winter and little rain in the summer months, the river levels are low and there remains insufficient water which makes irrigation work difficult. Hence due to excessive flooding during monsoon season and the lack of adequate rain-fed water and irrigation facilities for the dry winter and summer months, intensive land use and cultivation throughout the year are greatly hindered. Because of impeded drainage and flooding in the rainy season and inadequate irrigation in the dry season, the cropping intensities are low (shown in Appendix Table 9).

Under such climatic conditions it is imperative to ensure both the supply of water and the control of excess water. In other words, Bangladesh agriculture requires both (1) protection against floods and tidal waves in the rainy season through dykes, embankments, and drainage systems, and (2) irrigation in the dry season through low-lift pumps, tube-wells and gravity irrigation (Dutt et al., 1973:85).

To-day, in Bangladesh, there is an urgent need to increase

the rice production in order to reduce the gap between population growth and food shortages. An intensive type of agricultural land utilization together with the structural change in land tenure and other agrarian institutions and the application of seed/fertilizer/irrigation technology with flood control and effective drainage system, would definitely help increasing per acre rice productivity and thereby close the gap between population growth and food production in Bangladesh.

Bangladesh is a country of small farmers as well as small farms, but their distribution is unequal. Data on land ownership patterns (both operational² and ownership units) are practically non-existent in Bangladesh. However, the agricultural census of 1960, Master Survey of Agriculture, 1968 and a number of surveys carried out by the Bangladesh Institute of Development Studies (BIDS) contains some information on the land ownership pattern and on the size distribution of landholdings (operational only) in 1960, 1968, and 1974, as can be observed from Table XIII. The table shows the percentage distribution of farms and farm areas in Bangladesh. Unfortunately, for lack of data, the farm size in this table refer only to the size distribution of

²Operational holding refers to the amount of land owned plus the net amount of land obtained under sharecropping and other formal rental arrangements, while ownership units include only owned, cultivated land.

TABLE XIII
BANGLADESH: PERCENTAGE OF FARMS AND FARM AREAS
(OPERATIONAL)

Size (in acres)	Farms (%)			Farm Area (%)		
	1960	1968	1974	1960	1968	1974
Less than 0.5	13	12	32	1	1	2
0.5 - 1.0	11	13	9	2	3	3
1.0 - 2.5	27	32	25	13	17	19
2.5 - 5.0	26	26	22	26	30	34
5.0 - 7.5	12	9	7	19	18	19
7.5 - 12.5	7	5	3	19	15	13
12.5 and above	4	3	1	20	16	11

Source: M. Alamgir, 1975:268, Table IV.

operational holdings, not of ownership units. A Land Occupancy Survey (LOS) conducted in 1977, for the first time, estimated ownership distribution and proportions of landlessness in rural Bangladesh which has been shown in Table XIV and Table XX respectively.

Table XIII shows that the majority of farms in the 1960s and 1970s are small (i.e., belong to less than 2.5 acre groups) and occupies only 16 and 24 per cent of the farm area between 1960 and 1974. More importantly, a quarter and above of farms are less than one acre and their share in the total holding is 5 per cent and less. On the other hand, only 11 per cent and less farms are large (belonging to 7.5 acres and above groups) but their share in the total holding lies between 24 per cent and 39 per cent. If we take 2.5 acres and 7.5 acres and above as our dividing lines for identifying small (<2.5 acre groups), medium (2.5 to 7.5 acre groups) and large farms (7.5 acres and above), then the Table XIII will show that the small farms gained both in terms of their share in total farms (51 to 66 per cent) and in total farm area (16 to 24 per cent) between 1960 and 1974. On the other hand, the number of middle farms declined (38 per cent to 29 per cent) but their share in total farm area increased (45 per cent to 53 per cent). Several explanations can be offered for this trend in the pattern of distribution of landholding. First, is the inexorable operation of the inheritance laws coupled with the excessive pressure of

population on the limited land area leading towards subdivision and fragmentation of holdings so that more farm households were pushed into the small size group. Second, the relatively better-off medium farmers acquired new land (through purchase or liquidation on account of past debt) from other groups, thus increasing their proportion in the total farm area. As regards small size groups, the operation of inheritance law has been supplemented by the natural pauperization process under the pressure of local money-lenders and declining real income per capita and also possibly by the gradual break up of rural joint family system (Alamgir, 1975:267; A.R. Khan, 1972:38-39), thereby forcing sale, mortgage or liquidation of productive assets including land.

Table XIV shows the distribution of operational holdings in 1967-68 and the ownership distribution of land in 1977, the most recent year for which data is available. Although the two figures are not comparable, it can be ascertained that the ownership distribution is much more unequal than the distribution of operational holdings, as shown in Table XIV. The table also shows that the very small farms have smaller ownership units than operational units, while for the larger farmers the operational units are smaller than the ownership units. This explains that the larger farmers rent out some of their land to smaller farmers. The ratio of ownership units to operational units also increases with size. In 1967-68

TABLE XIV

THE DISTRIBUTION OF LANDHOLDING IN RURAL BANGLADESH
IN 1967/68 AND 1977

Size	The distribution of operational holdings: 1967/68			The distribution of ownership in 1977		
	Percentage of landholding households	Percentage of land	Average size of holding in acres	Percentage of landholding households	Percentage of land	Average size of ownership acres
Up to 1 acre	25.0	4.3	0.53	53.4	9.3	0.23
1-3 acres	39.2	23.8	1.90	28.5	27.6	1.78
3-5 acres	18.7	23.3	3.91	9.6	20.1	3.84
5-12.5 acres	14.4	33.3	7.24	7.1	28.1	7.27
Above 12.5 acres	2.7	15.5	18.58	1.3	14.9	19.62

Source: A.R. Khan, 1979:150, Table 4.16

the lowest 25 per cent of the landholding households had 4.3 per cent of the land, while in 1977 the lowest 53.4 per cent had only 9.3 per cent. At the other end, in 1967-68 the top (5 acres and above) 17 per cent of the landholding households had 48.8 per cent of the land, while in 1977 the top 8.4 per cent had 43 per cent. Again, in 1967-68, at the upper end (above 12.5 acres) of the distribution, 15.5 per cent of the land was held by 2.7 per cent of the richest landholding households, while in 1977 around 15 per cent of the land was held by 1.3 per cent of the biggest land owners. This indicates that the distribution of landownership has worsened between the period 1967-68 and 1977.

It can be observed from Table XV that those who own less than 1 acre (accounting for about 25 per cent of the landholding households) sold well over half of their land in each of the two periods - 1969-70 and 1972-73. The larger farmers (belonging to group 4 and 5) sold progressively less or no land at all. Since most of the small and landless farmers were already heavily indebted, they have been either forced to borrow from the comparatively affluent farmers or to sell assets including land most frequently.

We have already discussed in the preceding chapters that since the days of British accession to Bengal down to the post-liberation era in Bangladesh, no land legislation changes have occurred that would really swing the rewards of land ownership in favor of the actual tillers of the soil. The land

TABLE XV
LAND SALES IN BANGLADESH IN 1969-70.
1972-73

<u>Farm size group^a</u>	<u>Average amount of land owned (in acres)</u>	<u>Percentage of owned land sold</u>	
		<u>1969-70</u>	<u>1972-73</u>
1	0.53	53	60
2	1.66	16	18
3	3.48	14	16
4	7.46	7	8
5	19.58	4	4

Source: A.R. Khan, 1977:159

Note: a. Farm size group 1 includes those who own less than 1 acre. Group 4 and 5 are relatively affluent farmers who own more land than the first three groups.

reform legislations of 1950, 1961, and 1972 retained the 1859 definition of "cultivator". No perceptible changes were made in the definition of "cultivator" and, as a result, his condition continued to deteriorate. The agrarian situation deteriorated due to the pro-landlord bias of the ruling elite which in alliance with the rural power structure showed rather deep conservatism with regard to land policy and urgent implementation of agrarian reforms (Joshi, 1972: 66). Added to this historic tiering of land control is a population which is now six times larger than it was 250 years ago. What implications do these twin processes have for Bangladesh?

There is already a large degree of tension over land, income, and opportunity in Bangladesh to-day which will be increased substantially if the population doubles and tries to work the land under the same general set of institutions and conditions as exist to-day (Obaidullah Khan, 1974:6, quoted in Stepanek, 1979:91).

In the preceding chapters we have alluded to the fact that most cultivators of Bangladesh do not own the land they cultivate. Our analysis has been supported by the Land Occupancy Survey (LOS) of 1977, which revealed that approximately 10 per cent of the cultivable acreage of Bangladesh is farmed by owners and their families (LOS, 1977:6, quoted in Stepanek, 1979:101). The remaining land (about 90 per cent) is cultivated by bargadars (sharecroppers), by cultivators who lease land, and by landless laborers who own very little or

no land not even their homesteads. From one end of Bangladesh to the other (i.e., from Tetulia to Teknaf), these cultivators predominate; they grow the crops (Stepanek, 1979:101).

Figure 1 well illustrates the nature and magnitude of the changes in the size distribution of landholding patterns that have taken place between the 1960s and the late 1970s. The same figure also demonstrates that the 1960s data no longer hold good for the 1970s Bangladesh. The inequality of land ownership is clearly depicted in the 1977 Land Occupancy Survey (LOS) which revealed that 10 per cent of the farm households now own 50 per cent of the cultivable land; the bottom 50 per cent of the households own less than 9 per cent of the land; and 33 per cent of the rural households own no land, while in 1967-68 only 20 per cent were without land. Progressively, therefore, more families own smaller and smaller plots. As the population has grown tremendously, the average farm size has fallen from 3.5 to 2.3 acres; 80 per cent of the farmers now own plots of less than three acres (LOS, 1977:Tables D-II and D-III, quoted in Stepanek, 1979:98). Although the findings of the Land Occupancy Survey is not strictly comparable with the Master Survey data (see Figure 1 and note), it could be observed that the distribution of land in 1977 has skewed further into the hands of a relatively few owners.

Thus, despite the smaller size of farms it should not be

FIGURE 1
SIZE DISTRIBUTION OF LAND HOLDINGS IN BANGLADESH

Note: These curves reflect a changing distribution of land and improved data and definitions. The official data on the distribution of land in 1960, and again in 1967-68, show very little change, and so the two periods are shown as one curve. The data for the 1960s are not strictly comparable with those for 1977 because the former include total land owned and rented in, while the latter cover only owned, cultivated land. For this reason, caution should be used in comparing the two curves. A follow-up to the Land Occupancy Survey will be necessary to make an accurate assessment of changes in the distribution of holdings.

Source: Stepanek, 1979:99.

imagined that land ownership in Bangladesh is perfectly egalitarian. Table XIII, Table XIV and Figure 1 would seem to imply that the distribution of land ownership in Bangladesh is inequalitarian, for here it does not require much land to be a 'big farmer' or 'surplus farmer'. In other words, in an economy (like Bangladesh's) where the average farm size is too small, where the extent of landlessness is increasing day by day, and where the land is highly fragmented (as shown in Table XVI), farms over 3.5 acres may be referred to as "large". To quote Griffin:

Farms on the order of 3 or 4 acres will allow the owner to attain 'middle peasant' status - that is, a peasant with this much land will derive most of his income from cultivation, will have some surplus available for market, and will employ some labor from off the farm. He will also most likely resort to moneylending (Griffin, 1974:252-53).

Although Griffin was not referring specifically to Bangladesh, in the context of Bangladesh's existing pattern of land ownership distribution, Griffin's analysis is most instructive for identifying "large" or "surplus farmers" in this country.

SHARECROPPING AND LANDLESSNESS

In Bangladesh, various categories of tenure arrangements and land-unit sizes can be found which have different local names in different regions. Land-unit sizes come in bighas, kanis, gondas, and chamas, etc.; while the tenant and share-cropping terms are locally known as barga, lagit, rehan,

TABLE XVI

FRAGMENTATION OF FARMS IN BANGLADESH: 1960

<u>Number of Fragments Per Farm</u>	<u>Percent of Total number of Farms</u>
Non-fragmented	10
2-3 fragments	21
4-5 fragments	17
6-9 fragments	23
10 or more fragments	29

<u>Fragmentation of Different Sizes of Farms</u>	<u>Fragmented Farms as percentage of all Farms in the Size Class</u>
Small Farms (less than 2.5 acres)	83
Medium-sized Farms (2.5 to 12.5 acres)	97
Large Farms (12.5 acres and more)	97

Source: A.R. Khan, 1972:42, Table 5.3

chukti, tebhaga, and phuran (see glossary). Behind these local names and tenural arrangements is a pattern of relationships which bears testimony to the persistence of a pre-capitalist semi-feudal agrarian relations, that operates as a major constraint on the tenants' incentive and ability to modernize farming practices or to increase the level of output. How widely then the 'crop-sharing' is practised in Bangladesh?

According to the Agricultural Census of 1960, the area rented from others amounted to 18 per cent of the total cultivated area. This figure, however, relates only to open tenancy. Along with such open tenancy there is a form of "disguised" or "underground" tenancy (Joshi, 1972:70) which has undoubtedly increased over the years. I have stated earlier that due to the complexity in land relations the same person could be both landowner in relation to one and a tenant or sharecropper to another. Thus, apart from open tenancy, it is quite plausible that "disguised" tenancy may account for a much higher proportion of the total cultivated area. The scope for tenancy going underground was provided by the fact that the definition of the cultivator adopted in the Act of 1950 "turned the bargadars (sharecroppers) into an agricultural laborer so far as the law was concerned" (Andrus and Mohammad, 1958:29). According to Joshi, "open and concealed tenancy together may range anywhere between 30 to 40 per cent of the total cultivated area" (Joshi, 1972:71).

A recent empirical survey conducted by M. Raquibuz Zaman in two areas of Bangladesh showed that "sharecropping involves 25 to 50 per cent of Bangladesh farmers" (Raquibuz Zaman, 1973:149). His findings also suggested that, the sharecroppers neither have any occupancy rights on the land they rent, nor do they have access to the existing institutionalized sources of credit (Raquibuz Zaman, 1973: 149,157). The sharecroppers in Bangladesh do not have the means to execute any output-raising investment. Even if they have the means, in the absence of occupancy rights and practically no access to institutional credit facilities, they lose the incentive to use improved farming practices or to modernize agriculture.

It appears from the above discussion that while the system of sharecropping is prevalent over a significant proportion of land area in Bangladesh, it has a great deal of disincentive and disequalizing effect. The sharecropper bears all costs of production and undertakes all risk and responsibility, whereas the largely absentee owners of sharecropped land, bereft of any risk and responsibility of production, do not make any investment in improving farming practices, but appropriate surplus product in the form of produce rent. The most common crop-sharing arrangement is 50-50 (locally called adha-adhi) division of the produce (Bose, 1972a:80), as can be seen in Table XVII and Table XVIII. When the crop-sharing arrangement is on a fifty-fifty basis, the landowner pays the

TABLE XVII
KIND SHARE) PAYMENT FOR THE USE OF LAND TAKEN IN FROM OTHERS

Less than 50 Percent		50 Percent		More than 50 Percent	
No. of Households ('000)	Percent of Total	No. of Households ('000)	Percent of Total	No. of Households ('000)	Percent of Total
33.4	1.26	2,478.9	93.27	145.5	5.47
60.7	1.54	3,566.6	90.42	317.0	8.04
1.1	0.04	219.5	8.26	17.7	0.67
1.4	0.04	411.5	10.43	35.4	0.90

Note: Components may not add to totals due to rounding. Data include both tenant and owner-cum-tenant households.

Source: Summary Report of the 1977 Land Occupancy Survey of rural Bangladesh, quoted in Statistical Yearbook of Bangladesh, 1979:146, Table 4.6.

TABLE XVIII
SOURCES OF AGRICULTURAL INPUTS AS REPORTED BY TENANTS, 1977

Inputs	Provided by landowner		Provided by tenant	
	No. of Households ('000)	Percent of Total	No. of Households ('000)	Percent of Total
Seeds	18.8	0.59	3,159.3	99.41
Fertilizers	11.4	0.36	3,166.7	99.64
Pesticides	7.0	0.22	3,171.1	99.78
Irrigation Facilities	1.1	0.03	3,177.1	99.97

Note: Data are for both tenant and owner-cum-tenant households.

Source: Summary Report of the 1977 Land Occupancy Survey of rural Bangladesh, quoted in Statistical Yearbook of Bangladesh, 1979:146, Table 4.8.

land tax only (which he is not to pay after the exemption of land revenue up to 8.3 acres of land), but where the landowner pays for agricultural inputs (which is very insignificant, as shown in Table XVIII), his share goes above 50 per cent (see Table XVII).

The sharecropping system has thus a strong built-in deterrent to agricultural modernization. In Bangladesh, the growth of agricultural output is mainly concentrated on the 10 per cent of the large farms. But this can neither generate adequate increases in productive employment and incomes of the landless and small farmers who constitute the majority of the agricultural population, nor can this achieve the desired targets of overall agricultural growth. This is particularly due to the fact that, large owners rent out their land mostly on a sharecropping basis and find moneylending and petty landlordism more attractive, rather than resort to capitalist farming based on new technology.

Moreover, larger ownership unit is not associated with larger entrepreneurship. In rural Bangladesh, larger ownership provides a family with an altogether different status which is non-entrepreneurial and for whom manual work or field supervision is an undignified job (A.R. Khan, 1972:52-53). The larger farmer, therefore, seeks an easy income without risk, investment and manual work. The poor farmer, on the other hand, has no other alternative but to work very hard on the share-cropped land to meet his needs and to pay

high rent to the landowner. Badruddin Omar, an eminent Bengalee scholar, has called sharecropping in Bangladesh "the worst remnant of feudalism". To him, sharecropping represents "the survival of the forces which will not only restrain our economic growth but also subvert all attempts to introduce co-operatives, collective farming, improved methods of agriculture, etc." (Badruddin Omar, 1972:8, quoted in Morrison, 1972:253). Morrison also views sharecropping as an indicator of "exploitation and inequality in the ownership of land" (Morrison, 1972:253). His study illustrates the relationship between agricultural productivity and land tenure system³ in different regions of Bangladesh.

As pointed out earlier, the landless laborers and sharecroppers constitute a large proportion of the total agricultural population in Bangladesh. The two are so uniquely related that it is hard to distinguish one from the other. Table XIX shows that landlessness has been increasing in absolute numbers, as a proportion of the farm labor force and as a proportion of rural households. The increase has been

³Morrison concludes his study by making the following comments: "The most successful farming in Bangladesh is related to small farms operated by owner cultivators, living in hamlets close to their fields...The people of Bangladesh might call for land distribution, reduction of share-cropping and the number of landless labor, and the development of decentralized facilities which will sustain the hamlets which are characteristic of these nine productive thanas. In my opinion, the more equitable distribution of land and resources will help promote a degree of functioning democracy and reduce the political inequalities and the likelihood of recurring violence" (Morrison, 1972:259).

TABLE XIX
LANDLESSNESS IN RURAL BANGLADESH, 1951 TO 1977

<u>Year</u>	<u>Landless laborers as a percentage of total farming labor force</u>	<u>Number of landless agricultural laborers in millions</u>	<u>Percentage of rural households which are completely landless</u>
1951	14.3	1.51	-
1961	17.5	2.47	-
1963/64	17.8	2.71	-
1964/65	17.5	2.75	-
1966	-	-	6.97
1967/68	19.8	3.40	-
1977	26.1	4.54	11.07

Source: A.R. Khan, 1979:149, Table 4.15.

rapid in the last decade. To-day, half the rural population is landless or near-landless. The recent Land Occupancy Survey (LOS) suggests a range between 40 and 60 per cent of all rural households as landless or near-landless, as shown in Table XX.

A noteworthy feature of landless laborers is their mixed and floating status; they oscillate between pure laborer status and cultivator status (Joshi, 1972:75). For this reason it is difficult to differentiate between landless laborers and sharecroppers. Of the 37 thanas (police stations) in 19 agro-geographical regions of Bangladesh (see Map 2 and Key to Accompany Map 2) recently studied by Morrison, he found a high positive correlation between landlessness and the practice of sharecropping. Morrison comments:

As the proportion of landless laborers rises so does the proportion of sharecroppers. The sub-divisions where sharecropping and landless labor are highest may thus be the most backward agriculturally and the most socially conservative parts of the countryside...(Morrison, 1972:253).

According to Morrison, nine of the eleven thanas of high agricultural productivity lie within the fourteen sub-divisions (see glossary) marked by a low percentage of agricultural labor and sharecropping (see Map 3 and Appendix Table 12). This suggests that landlessness and sharecropping practice poses great hindrance to bringing about desired change in Bangladesh's agricultural sector, particularly to increase rice production.

TABLE XX
LANDLESSNESS IN RURAL BANGLADESH, 1977

<u>Category</u>	<u>No. of Households</u>	<u>Percent of Total</u>	<u>No. of Persons</u>	<u>Percent of Total</u>
Landless 1	1,311,570	11.07	5,884,927	8.13
Landless 2	1,476,503	12.46	1,188,644	1.72
Landless 3	3,885,733	32.79	18,703,472	27.10
Landless 4	1,811,276	15.29	9,538,436	13.82

Notes: A landless 1 household is a rural household that claims ownership of no land either homestead land or other land.

Landless 2 households are those who have no land or only have homestead land.

Landless 3 households are those who have no arable land but only have homestead land.

Landless 4 households are those who have less than one-half an acre of arable land, other than homestead land.

Source: Summary Report of the 1977 Land Occupancy Survey of rural Bangladesh, quoted in Statistical Yearbook of Bangladesh, 1979:145, Table 4.4.

AGRICULTURAL CREDIT

In Bangladesh, the new agricultural technology based on high yielding varieties (HYV), fertilizers and irrigation facilities has so far made only very modest beginning, although the initiative was taken in the mid-1960s through the 'Comilla Co-operatives'. The Comilla Co-operative approach of rural development grew out of an examination of past failures in rural development efforts such as the V-AID, Union Multipurpose Co-operative Societies (UMPCS), etc., which failed due to weak organisational structure, lack of proper co-ordination and internal discipline. The Comilla Co-operatives started in Comilla Kotwali Thana in the early 1960s as an experimental project of the Pakistan Academy for Rural Development (PARA) later renamed Bangladesh Academy for Rural Development (BARD), were designed to correct the weaknesses of past organizational attempts. But many recent studies, Blair (1974,1978); Bose (1974a); Rahim and Islam (1974); Abdullah et al. (1976); A.R. Khan (1979) and many others have shown that the Comilla Co-operatives, which was later replicated throughout the country under the Integrated Rural Development Program (IRDP), has failed to protect the interest of the small and landless farmers.

The much publicized Comilla approach had considerable success in the early years in reaching small farmers and in increasing rice productivity, because at the beginning the

large farmers refused to join the new co-operatives, being more interested in moneylending where the returns are quicker than in the slow process of increasing yield. In the subsequent years, however, the situation changed. According to Blair (1978:65):

For a time in the mid-1960s, the Comilla Program seemed to represent a viable answer to the quest for a rural development program that would truly benefit small farmers. In the ensuing years, the program came to be dominated by the bigger farmers, largely because of the realities of class structure at the macro and micro levels. There were also bureaucratic factors involved that had biased the benefits of rural development programs toward rural elites.

Blair's observation is truly instructive for the understanding of the dynamics of the class structure of Bangladesh at both macro and micro levels that skew the rural development benefits toward local elites. This also explains why the Comilla Program has never included landless laborers who had no land to become co-operative members.⁴ The Comilla type co-operatives generally exclude the landless laborers from its

⁴The achievement and failure of the Comilla co-operatives and similar programs such as, Rural Works Program and Thana Irrigation Program should be viewed in the light of their distributive effects and major beneficiaries. The programs achieved some success at a very high cost and heavy subsidies but the benefits were (and still are) usurped by the dominant groups. Under Comilla Co-operatives membership is restricted to farmers owning at least half an acre of land. A major weakness of the Comilla approach is that it does little or nothing for the small and landless farmers (Bose, 1974a:25-28).

membership. Even the small farmers cannot exert any control over the management of the co-operatives. In most cases the large and medium farmers become the members of the managing committee. The distribution of power and authority within the co-operatives is highly influenced by the traditional rural power structure (Rahim and Islam, 1974:172). It was these middle and large farmers, a 'kulak class' one might say, that had gradually gained control over the co-operative societies, who were directing loans to themselves and were the big defaulters (A.A. Khan, 1971:25; P.K. Chowdhury, 1976: 8). The same was also true of traditional co-operatives.

There exists a great need for credit among the farmers of Bangladesh. But the current state of affairs with regard to its availability and use shows a rather dismal picture. Table XXI shows the extremely low percentage of institutional sources of credit and the predominance of non-institutional sources. A recent study conducted by Asaduzzaman and M. Hossain (1975:23-25) reveals that at present, only 15 per cent of the total agricultural credit is obtained from institutional sources, the remaining 85 per cent is supplied by the village large farmer-cum-trader-moneylender who charge a high rate of interest which is often 200 per cent higher than that charged in the institutional sources. As pointed out earlier, the existing institutional sources of credit serve the large and middle farmers most. The large and middle farmers having their own lands have greater access to

TABLE XXI

BANGLADESH: RURAL CREDIT SITUATION, 1966

Percentage of families having some debt	53.7%
Average debt per indebted household	Rs. 275.00
Percentage of families borrowing last year	45.9%
Average loan by borrowing families last year	Rs. 201.00
Sources of loan:	
Institutional	13.86%
(Of which Taccavi	0.77%
ADB*	5.36%
Co-operative	7.73%)
Rural rich	52.06%
Friends and relatives	25.59%
Others	8.49%
Use of loan:	
Capital expenditure on farm	24.03%
Current expenditure on farm	18.73%
Non farm expenditure	9.21%
Family expenditure	48.03%
Annual requirement of loan per loan-requiring family	Rs. 309.00
Percentage of family requiring loan	80.7%

*ADB stands for Agricultural Development Bank.

Source: A.R. Khan, 1972:54, Table 5.10.

those institutions. The small and tenant farmers cannot compete with them because they are less credit-worthy than the large and middle farmers (Rahim and Islam, 1974:173).

The farm structure of Bangladesh is such that efficient utilization of pumps and tube-wells for irrigation purposes requires the formation of groups by farmers.⁵ But wherever these farmers' groups were formed for making irrigation cultivation, they were dominated by the large and middle farmers and they have been the real beneficiaries. The same is also true with regard to the distribution of agricultural credit and other inputs (Muqtada, 1975:426; Alamgir, 1975:264). Hence the seed-fertilizer and irrigation technology which at present constitute the major instrument for accelerating the pace of agricultural modernization in Bangladesh, promises more benefits to the large and middle farmers than to the small and landless laborers. "...That they were able to do this was a function of their position in the rural economy as surplus farmers, as moneylenders, and as patrons in the patron-client system" (Blair, 1978:69).

⁵The existing irrigation schemes in Bangladesh include the use of low-lift pumps, deep and shallow tube-wells and canals, where two cusec pumps are used with an average command area of about 100 acres, which requires the formation of groups by a number of farmers.

RURAL CLASS STRUCTURE

The preceding analysis gives some expression to the structure of the village society, its class structure, property relations and the relationship between the macro and micro level power elite groups. Unfortunately, no scientific work has been carried out to identify classes in rural Bangladesh, except a few stray references in some of the village studies and economic writings. However, in the context of our present analysis, we will attempt to explore the class structure of Bangladesh at the village level on the basis of its economic structure and property relations, e.g., tenural status, ownership of productive assets particularly land, and debtor-creditor relationships. In this context we do not want to minimize the importance of the dominant lineages (Syeds, Shaikhs, etc., each claiming direct or putative descent from the Prophet Mohammed himself and his tribe, the Quresh of Meca respectively) designated by the term "Ashraf" (high-born) and other social and occupational groups designated by the term "Atraf", meaning low-born. Added to this is a distinction based on the basis of birth, ancestry or lineage (someone claiming a lineage from a vanishing zamindar family having higher social prestige than one from an ordinary family), kinship ties and factional

groups⁶ which tend to cut across various other types of social groupings including one based on ownership of productive assets. The most significant aspect of the problem is the fact that these traditional social stratification systems serve as forces for the reinforcement of the economic class structure in rural Bangladesh. Although in the present analysis, we have taken landownership, property and production-relations as yardsticks for analysing rural class structure, yet it should not be forgotten that the social distinctions based on traditional rural social organization and lineage is no less important in so far as Bangladesh society is concerned.

The class structure of rural Bangladesh can be explained in terms of (a) occupational differentiation and differences in landownership distribution; and (b) production or property relations under the patron-client relationships. In terms of occupational differentiation, the simple classification is between farmers and non-farmers. In the non-farmer category various occupational groups such as village artisans, petty traders, barbers, village doctors and school teachers, etc. can easily be identified. But in Bangladesh situation, these

⁶In rural Bangladesh, although kinship relations play an important role in most factions, group loyalties are also determined by socio-political, religious, and economic standing of the faction leaders. For a discussion of the rural social organization of Bangladesh and the role of kinship ties and factionalism, particularly their implications for development programs, see Bertocci (1970, 1974); Zaidi (1970), and A. Islam (1974).

non-farmer categories are not totally divorced from agricultural activities. In most cases, among the non-farmer groups such as, the small shopkeepers and school teachers, farming is the primary occupation, while shopkeeping and teaching are a secondary one. This duality in occupational roles is a clear manifestation of the primary role that agriculture plays in the rural economy. Given this duality of occupational roles and the primacy of agriculture, the class structure of rural Bangladesh may be explained in terms of tenural status, landownership pattern and production relations in agriculture.

We have earlier indicated that, in rural Bangladesh, the political, economic, and social domination in most instances stems from the ownership of land and debtor-creditor relationships. Following these criteria, we may now classify farmers into "small", "medium", and "large" or "surplus" farmers. A slightly more elaborate scheme would identify a class of sharecroppers and landless laborers. In matters of access to various productive resources and socio-economic and political patronage in the rural society, the rank ordering of the dominant groups from top to bottom will, therefore, be somewhat like this: large → medium → small farmers, below whom there is a class of landless agricultural laborers. The rural class structure of Bangladesh may thus be understood in terms of these classes and their control or lack of control over the means of production including their access or lack of

access to the sources of economic and political power.

We have earlier provided evidence explaining why rural and agricultural development programs so far adopted in Bangladesh promises more benefits to a relatively few at the top of the economic structure. We have explained this in terms of the class structure at the micro (local) level and their relationship to the macro (national) level class structure and vice versa. This explains why land reform and agricultural development strategies in both pre- and post-liberation Bangladesh strengthened an expanding rich peasant category which linked them with the national power structure. A large farmer bias is still evident at the macro level. This situation continues with a bureaucratic system that itself skews the benefits of rural development programs to rural elites. It is the large or surplus farmers who have relatives in government, for few sons of marginal farmers and landless laborers obtain adequate education to qualify for government positions (Blair, 1978:72-73)! Figure 2 shows the linkages between macro and micro level class structure (shown in the figure as A, B, and C), being the bias of rural development benefits toward the larger farmers through a bureaucratic system which is a reflection of the class structure at the macro level.

Figure 2: Linkage between macro and micro level class structure in Bangladesh

Source: Blair, 1978:76.

The country's political leadership structure also shows evidence of a linkage system between the larger farmer and national political activity. The Awami League (the only political party which governed the country till military take over in August, 1975) was founded upon an alliance between urban gentry and rural 'Kulak' interests (Jahangir, 1977b: 2065; Blair, 1978:69-70). The Members of Parliament elected in both 1970 and 1973 elections (overwhelmingly Awami Leaguers both times) appeared to be the wealthier landholding class (Jahan, 1976:355-66) and pursued policies beneficial to that class. The 1973 elections for local bodies (Union Councils) also showed the return of the same kind of large and influential farmers that had been Basic Democrats in the old local government structure of the Ayub Khan Period (Blair,

1978:70). This explains why the national political leadership remained and continues to remain basically urban based, but the link with the rural class structure continued through local party leaders (MPs) and their agents in the local bodies who belong to the large and middle farmer groups. The same pattern of patronage distribution is continuing till to-day under the military-bureaucratic regime. There has been virutally no change. All these together, coupled with an inflationary pressure and rapid growth of population, tended to reinforce the polarization and pauperization process in the rural areas during the post-independence period. The long-drawn issue of increasing productivity and promoting equity, therefore, remains unfulfilled.

CHAPTER VI

CONCLUSION

Low agricultural productivity, acute poverty, rapid population growth, and increasing landlessness are some of the chronic problems in the developing countries of South Asia, but these problems are more severe in Bangladesh. Rice cultivation surpasses all other crops in Bangladesh. Tens of millions of people in this country depend on rice as their main staple food, but its yield per acre is one of the lowest in the world. What are the reasons behind this low yield per acre and how can it be increased?

This thesis has attempted to investigate the phenomenon of low rice productivity and the impediments to agricultural modernization in a predominantly rural and agricultural country like Bangladesh by focusing on a number of closely related socio-anthropological factors centering on agrarian structure as influenced by socio-structural and environmental conditions and their mutual relationships in historical perspective. We have earlier provided a broad outline of the historical trends underlying the present agrarian structure of Bangladesh and the specific set of problems and constraints with which the planners and policy-makers confront today in modernizing the country's traditional agriculture.

From an historical perspective, Bangladesh has inherited a backward and defective agrarian structure in the Indian subcontinent. It has been observed earlier that agricultural

operations, especially rice production, in Bangladesh have long suffered from structural defects and have frequently been impeded by a combination of technological and environmental constraints and complicated by the widespread practice of Patron-client relationship. The major structural defects as exist today are: inequality in the ownership-distribution of land, insecure tenancy, small and fragmented holdings, high population pressure resulting in adverse land-man ratio, a high degree of landlessness, a low level of technology and cultivation practices, defective credit and marketing facilities, and the failure of tenure reforms to create favourable institutional conditions for increased output. In addition, the agricultural economy is characterized by the co-existence of a traditional, subsistence but hierarchical and stratified rural social structure on the one hand and money-market relations having a rural-urban continuum on the other.

In Bangladesh, although in her long history she has experienced foreign domination and colonial rule lasting for over two hundred years, there has been practically no change in her age-old techniques of production. The traditional methods of production coupled with the socio-economic and political effects of colonial rule and the traditional social structure have produced a distinctive type of land relationship and a class structure that has acted as a brake on her

agricultural modernization.

In the pre-1947 period, the predominant tenurial form was the Zamindari system, under which land was owned by non-cultivating absentee landlords. The landlords found it more profitable to take advantage of the high demand for land than to make productive investment. Between the landlord and the actual cultivator there existed a number of intermediaries who showed very little or no interest in improving the methods of cultivation and in making productive investments in agriculture. The Zamindari system was legally abolished in 1950, but a new class of non-cultivating landowners and intermediate groups replaced the previous landlords. During the 1950s, 1960s, and the 1970s various land reform laws were enacted to eliminate the intermediate interests in land. But, as we have seen, the implementation of these reform laws were slow and half-hearted. Tenancy in the worst form of share-cropping implying kind rent (paying 50 to 60 per cent of the gross produce to the landowner) is prevalent. The tenant does not enjoy security of tenure but stands in a semi-feudal production relationship to the landowner which discourages him from making capital investment in rented land and increasing productivity. This situation is further worsened by the asymmetrical relationship between the landowner and the tenant, by the increasing number of the landless, and by the mounting pressure of population on the limited land area which along with

the practice of inheritance laws makes land more fragmented and subdivided.

Working under such conditions, the agrarian economy is subjected to control and dominance by a rich farmer-cum-trader-moneylender caucus, who usurp most of the rural development benefits in their favor. They occupy a dominant position in the rural power structure and obtain high return from right of ownership without making any productive investment in land or incurring any loss of the risks of natural hazards or market fluctuations in prices of outputs and inputs. It is the poor and impoverished small and tenant farmer who bears all the risk and responsibility of production and is subjected to a pre-capitalist semi-feudal type of exploitative production relations.

Thus, although landlordism was abolished by legal enactment and landlords of the old ruthless feudal type are almost absent in the contemporary Bangladesh society, this does not mean that exploitation and mass impoverishment has stopped. It is there. Many recent studies have shown that land reform in both pre- and post-independent Bangladesh, far from creating a system of egalitarian peasant farming, ensured growth with mass destitution. The inequality in the ownership-distribution of land and other productive assets and the persistence of extensive and powerful survivals of semi-feudal tenancies in varied forms (tenants operate land

either on cash rent or on a sharecropping basis) are the predominant modes of exploitation in the sphere of production. A distinctive feature of this agrarian relation is that under it the landowner and the money-lender is one and the same person. Since the small and tenant farmers and the landless laborers have limited access to the existing institutional sources of credit, they depend heavily on the rich or surplus farmers for such credit, who often charge a rate of interest which is 200 per cent higher than that of institutional sources.

We have earlier provided evidence of the extremely low percentage of institutional sources of credit and the predominance of non-institutional sources. Our analyses also have shown a dismal picture with regard to the availability of agricultural inputs and the distribution of benefits under the existing institutional framework for rural development, to the extent that the large and middle farmers because of their greater accessibility to these institutions have been the real beneficiaries. The various aspects of the Comilla approach, such as the Thana Irrigation Program (TIP), the Rural Works Program (RWP), and the Integrated Rural Development Program (IRDP), which received a great deal of attention since the early sixties and which have been duplicated throughout the country since then, achieved some success in increasing agricultural production. But when considered in the context of the promotion of equity and the distribution of benefits

either in inputs, income, or in political power, it has been revealed by many recent studies (Dumont, 1973; Blair, 1974, 1978; Bose, 1974a; Rahim and Islam, 1974; and A.R. Khan, 1979) that the Comilla type co-operatives have failed to protect the interests of the small farmers and landless agricultural laborers; it is making "the rich richer, and the poor poorer". The power and authority within the co-operatives is highly influenced by the traditional rural power structure. The same was also true of the old co-operatives.

Furthermore, since the small and tenant farmers have little or no control over the market and price situation, they are doubly penalized by the prevailing marketing and purchasing practices. They sell off most of their produce immediately after the harvest at low prices, partly due to the constant pressure from the creditors and partly to meet the cost of their immediate family needs, and buy their supplies at a time when the market prices are high. This puts them under perpetual indebtedness to the dominant rural interest caucus.

This unhappy turn of events may be explained in the context of the realities of the class structure at both local and national levels. In the preceding chapter, we have shown the linkages between the rural and national level class structure being the bias of rural development benefits toward rural elites. One reason for the bias in the distribution of benefits toward the rural rich was that the regimes in

both pre- and post-liberation Bangladesh heavily depended on the rural 'kulak' interests for their political support. The same pattern of patronage distribution continues today. This explains why land reform in Bangladesh strengthened an expanding rich peasant category and reinforced economic stratification, leading to further polarization of classes.

Admittedly, there are some significant gaps in our knowledge about the above problems which require intensive study and fact-finding (empirical) research in rural Bangladesh. However, the arguments made in the preceding discussion signify on balance that the deleterious effects of the prevailing agrarian structure and production relations in agriculture act as the powerful stumbling-blocks in the path of agricultural modernization in Bangladesh.

STRATEGY FOR AGRICULTURAL MODERNIZATION: POLICY IMPLICATIONS

Experience gained in different countries suggests that the socio-economic development of a predominantly rural and agricultural country like Bangladesh requires the creation of a productive agriculture, which in turn implies more or less far-reaching changes or reorganization in the existing agrarian structure, particularly in the land ownership-tenancy structure, credit, marketing, technology and rural programs. This is imperative if 'development' is understood to mean elimination of mass poverty and promotion of equity and social justice besides increasing total output and

productivity in agriculture. That the present government of Bangladesh is aware of the above problems and is seriously considering a basic reorganization of the country's agrarian structure in the near futures finds clear expression in the First Five Year Plan based on the following considerations:

It is well known that serious class differences exist in rural Bangladesh. The rural power structure is authoritarian, dominated by vested interests. If these groups continue to dominate and make decisions regarding the choice of new technology and institutions, the interests of the lower stratum and the majority of the rural society will not be safeguarded, class differences may well be intensified, and a bitter class struggle will become inevitable...(First Five Year Plan of Bangladesh, 1973-78, p. 156).

It is against this background that an effective land policy, i.e., policies designed to reorganize Bangladesh's agrarian structure, and an appropriate organizational framework is to be developed so that a speedy implementation of land redistribution and agrarian reform program are ensured. The speed and nature of these reforms shall have to be consistent with the existing socio-political realities, and the administrative capacities of the present land administration, rural development and co-operative structure in Bangladesh. Our earlier analysis suggests that the country's existing land administration structure is grossly inadequate to meet the heavy pressure of works and the technicalities involved in a drastic land reform program. Moreover, given the existing socio-political environment of Bangladesh, it does not seem

feasible to adopt a drastic land reform right at this moment aiming at the socialization of the means of production. Radical land reform may be a long-term objective in the case of Bangladesh.

As a short term measure, the following policy options may be undertaken considering their feasibility and desirability:.

1. To legitimize and to develop as many owner-operated farms as feasible. This would require a rigorous definition of "bonafide cultivator" (so that non-cultivating interests or gentleman farmers having a residence and an extra source of income in the urban area are truly excluded), which has been lacking since 1859.
2. To protect the interests of tenants and sharecroppers by giving them security of tenure and protecting them against arbitrary eviction.
3. Restricting the landowner's share from the existing crop-sharing arrangement of 50 per cent of the produce to one-third (when the landowner does not provide any input other than land).
4. Putting a lower ceiling on landholdings, e.g., 7.5 acres from the existing ceiling of 33.3 acres. A recent estimate by A.R. Khan (1972:137-38) reveals that a ceiling of 7.5 acres would release approximately 2.63 million acres of surplus land, which means that this would have less social repercussions than a drastic structural change. A ceiling higher than 7.5 acres would have nominal effect and would hardly create a big impact by way of redistribution.
5. As to who should get the available surplus land is a question to be settled with utmost care and restraint. The following order of priority has been suggested by M.A. Zaman (1975:108):
 - (a) tenants owning no land at all;
 - (b) sharecroppers owning no land;
 - (c) landless agricultural laborers;
 - (d) families with a homestead but no farm land;
 - (e) families with less than subsistence holdings.

6. Along with a lower ceiling on landholding - a fact which Bangladesh's First Five Year Plan (p. 191) has also suggested, attempts should be made to strengthen the economic position and bargaining power of the poorer farmers and landless laborers by creating alternative employment opportunities and pursuing a policy of agricultural price support and price stabilization. The minimum and maximum prices of agricultural produce should be fixed and announced before the sowing season.
7. The rural co-operatives should include both the small farmers and landless laborers and they should be accorded a voice in the management of the co-operatives so that the distribution of benefits within the co-operatives is equally shared.
8. There is now a growing awareness that the objective of increasing agricultural productivity requires the introduction of new technology which implies a high demand for rural services, such as credit, marketing, irrigation water, drainage and flood control, improved seeds, fertilizers, and plant protection measures. Unless the small farmers and landless laborers have easy access to these rural services, the purpose and promise of even any short-term effort at tenancy reform will be defeated.
9. Agriculture in Bangladesh is already very labour-intensive. It has been emphasized in many recent studies (A.R. Khan, 1972:132; Mahbub Hossain, 1973: 15; and S.R. Bose, 1974b:153) that a small farmer-based-agricultural-modernization-strategy is necessary for Bangladesh not only for reducing rural income inequalities but also for increasing employment and output per acre. It has been reiterated in the above studies that small farmers using family labor (which is abundant in Bangladesh) cultivate their land more intensively than the large farmers. This suggests that a redistribution of land accompanied by reforms in other agrarian institutions, is an important prerequisite for agricultural modernization in Bangladesh.
10. Finally, since Bangladesh is a capital-scarce and labor-surplus country, extensive mechanization in the form of tractor cultivation and big farm machineries would be inappropriate at the present stage. In other words, a labor-intensive approach to rural and agricultural development is to be pursued, until the social costs of labor displacement (since mechanization is a labor-saving device) have been evaluated.

An improved bullock-drawn plough and the diffusion of new seed-fertilizer-irrigation technology would be a more economic answer at this stage.

Of the various policies outlined above, which one in isolation or in combination would be feasible will depend on the political and administrative conditions of Bangladesh. The political feasibility of the above policies should be understood in the context of the realities of the existing class structure and the class basis of the state. It is needless to mention that land reform and reforms in other agrarian institutions is first and foremost a political decision. The future of agricultural modernization in Bangladesh is closely linked with this and with the emerging character and type of national and local level political leadership.

APPENDIX TABLE 1

ACREAGE AND PRODUCTION OF RICE CROPS IN BANGLADESH 1947-48 TO 1971-72

	Area (in acres)			Production (in tons)			Yield per acre (lb)					
	Aus	Aman	Boro	Total	Aus	Aman	Boro	Total	Aus	Aman	Boro	Total
1947-48	4.50	13.35	0.76	19.01	1.43	4.96	0.32	6.74	655	837	940	794
1948-49	5.84	14.28	0.82	21.15	2.06	5.89	0.40	8.48	789	939	874	898
1949-50	6.30	14.88	1.01	21.80	2.50	6.57	0.45	9.52	888	1010	996	974
1950-51	6.87	14.06	1.01	20.98	2.33	6.45	0.48	9.46	886	1158	1078	1012
1951-52	6.18	14.22	1.07	21.47	2.20	6.03	0.48	8.73	787	952	1007	910
1952-53	6.58	14.40	1.07	22.08	2.66	7.28	0.51	10.48	904	1118	1067	1052
1953-54	6.64	14.40	1.06	22.60	2.50	7.26	0.57	10.34	843	1077	1221	1015
1954-55	7.32	14.87	1.14	23.13	2.92	6.80	0.62	10.33	893	1038	1218	1001
1955-56	6.96	14.06	1.38	22.41	2.87	5.92	0.83	9.42	851	943	1576	948
1956-57	8.22	14.48	1.53	24.23	3.07	6.81	1.11	10.99	834	1039	1627	1007
1957-58	7.46	14.40	2.01	23.87	2.68	6.37	1.80	11.16	785	1068	1791	1039
1958-59	8.46	14.84	2.16	25.48	2.88	6.85	1.91	11.81	784	1048	1952	1038
1959-60	7.86	14.18	2.42	24.48	2.86	6.81	2.19	10.96	813	934	2027	1003
1960-61	7.42	13.00	2.40	22.82	2.34	6.86	1.78	9.81	706	980	1661	971
1961-62	(7.70)	(14.81)	(2.80)	(23.11)	(2.56)	(7.60)	(2.84)	(12.72)	(744)	(1173)	(2206)	(1233)
1962-63	(7.70)	(14.81)	(2.80)	(23.11)	(2.20)	(5.20)	(2.00)	(9.50)	(840)	(818)	(1901)	(921)
1963-74					(2.50)				(727)			

Source: A. Robinson, 1973:7, Table 2.

APPENDIX TABLE 2

BANGLADESH: FOODGRAIN SUPPLIES AND AVAILABILITY 1948-49 TO 1972-73

	Production ^a of rice (in tons)	Availability of rice from production ^b (in tons)	Imports of rice (in tons)	Availability of wheat from production ^c (in tons)	Imports of wheat (in tons)	Total availability of foodgrains (in tons)	Population	Availability per head per year (lb)	Percentage of total derived from imports
1948/49	8.74	8.18	0.40	0.02	0.10	8.71	41.9	358	7.4
1959/60	8.48	7.78	0.48	0.03	0.15	8.43	53.9	351	7.2
1960/61	9.63	8.75	0.48	0.03	0.23	9.48	58.4	382	7.3
1961/62	9.47	8.70	0.21	0.04	0.20	8.14	57.3	351	4.4
1962/63	8.73	8.02	0.54	0.04	0.89	8.60	58.1	360	15.1
1963/64	10.48	8.81	0.36	0.03	0.66	10.04	60.9	321	9.5
1964/65	10.34	8.50	0.10	0.03	0.25	9.88	62.8	322	3.6
1965/66	10.34	8.50	0.38	0.03	0.54	10.45	64.6	362	8.8
1966/67	9.42	8.46	0.43	0.06	0.67	9.81	66.5	331	11.2
1967/68	10.95	10.10	0.31	0.06	0.71	11.76	68.4	346	9.1
1968/69	11.17	10.26	0.24	0.06	0.83	11.41	70.4	363	9.4
1969/70	11.82	10.88	0.60	0.10	1.06	12.44	72.4	385	12.4
1970/71	10.97	10.08	0.32	0.10	0.90	11.46	74.5	345	11.2
1971/72	8.81	9.02	0.66	0.10	1.07	10.85	(73.5) ^b	(330) ^b	15.8
1972/73	(8.26)	(8.50)	(2.90) ^c	(0.10)	^e	(11.50)	(78.0)	(342)	
			(1.90) ^d			(10.50)	(75.0)	(314)	

^a Production less 8.1% for seed and wastage.

^b The figures depend on the allowance made for the reduction of consuming population consequent on some 10m refugees at peak in India. Allowing for normal growth of population, the average population dependent during the year on Bangladesh supplies was probably between 73 and 74m, with an average availability of about 330 lb.

^c To provide a total supply of 11.5m tons, imports of rice and wheat amounting to 2.8m tons are estimated to be needed.

^d Implications if only 1.9m tons of rice and wheat can be acquired.

Source: A. Robinson, 1973:9, Table 3.

APPENDIX TABLE 3

JUTE: ACREAGE, PRODUCTION AND YIELD

<u>Year</u>	<u>Acreage (million acres)</u>	<u>Production</u>		<u>Yield (maunds^b per acre)</u>
		<u>Million bales^a</u>	<u>Million tons</u>	
1947-48	2.05	6.84	1.22	16.2
1948-49	1.87	5.47	0.97	14.2
1949-50	1.56	3.33	0.59	10.4
1950-51	1.25	4.45	1.07	17.1
1951-52	1.77	6.33	1.13	17.3
1952-53	1.90	6.82	1.21	17.4
1953-54	0.76	2.50	0.64	22.7
1954-55	1.24	4.65	0.83	18.2
1955-56	1.63	5.60	1.16	19.3
1956-57	1.23	5.51	0.98	21.8
1957-58	1.56	6.19	1.10	19.3
1958-59	1.52	5.99	1.07	19.1
1959-60	1.37	5.55	0.99	19.6
1960-61	1.51	5.46	0.97	14.3
1961-62	2.06	6.96	1.24	16.4
1962-63	1.72	6.30	1.12	17.8
1963-64	1.70	5.87	1.04	16.8
1964-65	1.66	5.32	0.95	15.6
1965-66	2.09	6.36	1.13	14.8
1966-67	2.16	6.52	1.16	14.4
1967-68	2.35	6.72	1.20	13.9

Source: Dutt et al., 1973:98, Table 5.11.

^a1 bale = 400 lb.

^b1 maund = 82.2 lb.

APPENDIX TABLE 4

DIVERSION OF FOREIGN TRADE EARNINGS
OF EAST PAKISTAN TO WEST PAKISTAN,
1948/49 TO 1969/70

Period	Percentage Share of East Pakistan in Foreign Exports	Percentage Share of East Pakistan in Foreign Imports
Pre-plan 1948/49-1954/55	50.1%	28.0%
1st plan 1955/56-1959/60	61.4%	32.1%
2nd plan 1960/61-1964/65	59.5%	30.6%
3rd plan 1965/66-1969/70	49.8%	32.8%

Source: S.R. Chowdhury, 1972:15

APPENDIX TABLE 5

REAL TRANSFER OF RESOURCES FROM EAST
PAKISTAN TO WEST PAKISTAN
(1959-60 Prices: in millions of Rupees)

	Pre-plan (annual)	First-plan (annual)
1. East Pakistan's net surplus on current account (considering both international and inter- regional trade)	210	94
2. East Pakistan's share of foreign aid and loans	190	480
3. East Pakistan's share of foreign exchange reserves	55	-25
TOTAL	455	549

Source: Mahbub ul Haq, 1963:102.

APPENDIX TABLE 6

RATIO OF TERMS OF TRADE AGRICULTURE RECEIVED TO
TERMS OF TRADE IT MIGHT HAVE RECEIVED IN WORLD
MARKETS: EAST PAKISTAN-WEST PAKISTAN

<u>Period</u>	<u>East</u>	<u>West</u>
Annual 1951-52	0.37	0.52
1952-53	0.36	0.49
<hr/>		
3-year average		
1951-54	0.32	0.45
1952-55	0.28	0.43
1953-56	0.28	0.42
1954-57	0.38	0.46
1955-58	0.45	0.51
1956-59	0.51	0.55
1957-60	0.51	0.56
1958-61	0.55	0.59
1959-62	0.57	0.60
1960-63	0.59	0.64
1961-64	0.59	0.64

Source: S.R. Lewis, 1970:Table 6.9.

APPENDIX TABLE 7

THE RELATIVE STRENGTH OF EAST PAKISTANIS
(BENGALIS) IN THE SUPERIOR CIVIL AND MILITARY
SERVICES (AS ESTIMATED IN 1955)

	Number from	
	<u>East</u>	<u>West</u>
A. CIVIL		
Secretaries	0	19
Joint Secretaries	3	38
Deputy Secretaries	10	123
Under Secretaries	38	510
B. MILITARY		
Lt. Generals	0	3
Major Generals	0	20
Brigadiers	1	34
Colonels	1	49
Lt. Colonels	2	198
Majors	10	590
Navy Officers	7	593
Air Force Officers	40	640

Source: The Dawn, Karachi, January 9, 1956, quoted
in Dutt et al, 1973:14, Table 1.3.

APPENDIX TABLE 8

DEVELOPMENT EXPENDITURE IN EAST AND WEST

	<u>West Pakistan</u>	<u>East Pakistan</u>
Pre-plan 1950/51-1954/55	80%	20%
1st plan 1955/56-1959/60	74%	26%
2nd plan 1960/61-1964/65	68%	32%
3rd plan 1965/66-1969/70	64%	36%

Source: Report of Advisory Panels for the Fourth Five-Year Plan, Vol. 1, Planning Commission, Government of Pakistan, July 1970; Table 1 of Harvard Paper, quoted in S.R. Chowdhury, 1972:12.

APPENDIX TABLE 9
LAND UTILIZATION IN BANGLADESH: 1947-71

(Million Acres)

Year	Total geographical area	Forest area	Area not available for cultivation (uncultivable waste area)	Other uncultivated area (cultivable waste)	Current Fallow	Net Sown Area	Total Cultivated area (6 + 7)	Area Sown more than once	Gross Total cropped area (7 + 9)	Intensity of land use in percent-age	Intensity of cropping in percent-age
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)	(10)	(11)	(12)
1947/48	35.28	2.98	5.35	4.28	2.60	19.42	22.02	5.86	25.29	89.9	130.2
1949/50	35.28	2.98	5.00	4.33	2.23	20.09	22.32	5.56	25.65	83.5	127.6
1950/51	35.28	3.15	4.76	4.50	1.69	20.54	22.33	5.70	26.24	83.4	127.7
1951/52	35.28	3.15	4.77	4.48	1.53	20.69	22.24	6.08	26.77	83.2	129.3
1952/53	35.28	5.46	5.60	1.92	1.77	19.87	21.65	5.36	25.23	91.3	126.9
1953/54	35.28	5.46	5.61	1.96	1.08	20.57	21.65	5.90	26.47	91.3	129.2
1954/55	35.28	5.47	6.00	1.85	1.00	20.94	21.94	8.45	27.39	92.8	130.8
1955/56	35.28	5.47	6.07	1.78	1.86	21.08	21.94	7.11	28.19	93.6	133.7
1956/57	35.28	5.40	6.07	1.76	0.93	21.10	22.03	7.43	28.53	93.8	135.2
1957/58	35.28	5.40	6.29	1.25	0.73	21.60	22.33	7.94	29.54	95.6	136.8
1958/59	35.28	5.28	6.44	1.12	1.31	21.11	22.43	7.92	29.03	96.0	--
1959/60	35.28	5.53	6.23	1.03	0.72	21.74	22.46	9.70	31.44	96.3	144.5

SOURCE: Kalyan Dutt & others, Bangladesh Economy, (Peoples Publishing House), New Delhi, 1973, Table 3.5, pp. 82-83.

Note: 1) The sum of current fallow and net sown (cropped) area gives total cultivated area

2) The intensity of land use is the percentage of total cultivated area plus forest area in the total area available for cultivation.

3) the cropping intensity is the percentage of net sown area in the gross cropped (sown) area.

Figures of the Columns are taken from Twenty years of Pakistan statistics, 1947-1967, Table (3.2), for the years 1947-48 to 1966-67 and for 1970-71, Economic Times, 3 January, 1972.

APPENDIX TABLE 10
IRRIGATED AREA IN 1969-70

<u>Name of Project</u>	<u>Thousand Acres*</u>
Water and Power Development Authority	
Ganges-Kobadak Phase 1	90
Teesta Barrage	6
Northern Tubewells	62
Northern Lift Pumps	10
Dacca-Narayanganj-Demra	9
Agricultural Development Corporation	
Low Lift Pumps (18,000)	720
Tubewells	22
Comilla Co-operatives	8
TOTAL	927
	(4% of cultivated area)

Source: A.R. Khan, 1962:49, Table 5.7

*Excludes tanks, traditional wells and small traditional canals for which estimates are not available.

APPENDIX TABLE 11

LOSS OF CROPS BY NATURAL DISASTERS IN BANGLADESH: 1962-1974

Year	Number of Districts * Affected	Loss of Crops in '000 tons	Area Completely Damaged in '000 acres	Area Partially Damaged in '000 acres	Nature of Calamities
1962	9	1,858	2,814	850	Flood, tidal bore
1963	11	340	268	320	cyclone, flood
1964	12	292	276	915	flood
1965	9	560	184	107	flood, cyclone
1966	8	939	151	751	flood, cyclone
1967	5	944	842	286	flood
1968	8	1,128	1,825	2,864	hurricane, flood
1969	10	350	192	787	flood
1970	17	2,019	4,507	1,988	hurricane, tidal wave
1971	5	1,145	485	601	flood, cyclone
1972	10	329	1,037	764	flood
1973	6	1,510	1,368	1,193	tidal bore
1974	7	943	197	229	flood

SOURCES: (1) Bangladesh Agriculture in Statistics, Ministry of Agriculture, 1975: 152-155

(2) Report on Crops' losses by natural calamities by the Bangladesh Agricultural Development Corporation; 1975:1-30.

*There are twenty districts at present in Bangladesh.
Until 1972, there were 17 districts in total.

Map 2

Agricultural Regions of Bangladesh

(Adapted from Haroun er Rashid: East Pakistan: A Systematic Regional Geography and Development Planning Aspects. Lahore: Sh. Ghulam Ali & Sons (1965), p. 241.)

Circled numbers (③) are sample thanas from each agricultural region. See key.

Source: Morrisong, 1972:248

KEY TO ACCOMPANY MAP 2

1. *Piedmont Alluvial Plains*
 3. Thakurgaon Thana, Dinajpur District
 7. Nilphamari Thana, Rangpur District
2. *Barind Tract*
 13. Naddigram Thana, Bogra District
 17. Tanore Thana, Rajshahi District
3. *Mahananda Flood Plain*
 19. Bholahat Thana, Rajshahi District
 20. Shibganj Thana, Rajshahi District
4. *Brahmaputra Flood Plain*
 23. Gabtali Thana, Bogra District
 28. Sarishabari Thana, Mymensingh District
5. *Bhar Basin*
 32. Atrai Thana, Rajshahi District
 34. Faridpur Thana, Pabna District
6. *Ganges Flood Plain and Levee*
 37. Ishurdi Thana, Pabna District
 39. Kumarkhali Thana, Kushtia District
7. *Moribund Delta*
 40. Alamdanga Thana, Kushtia District
 41. Jibannagar Thana, Kushtia District
8. *Immature Delta*
 43. Kaliganj Thana, Khulna District
 44. Dacope Thana, Khulna District
9. *Mature Delta*
 47. Abhaynagar Thana, Jessore District
 48. Daulatpur Thana, Khulna District
10. *Central Delta Basin*
 50. Mollahat Thana, Khulna District
 - 50a. Terakhada Thana, Khulna District
11. *Active Delta*
 56. Bhola Thana, Bakerganj District
 65. Munshiganj Thana, Dacca District
12. *Old Brahmaputra Flood Plain*
 71. Ishwarganj Thana, Mymensingh District
 73. Pakundia Thana, Mymensingh District

13. *Meghna Flood Plain*
 77. Nabinagar Thana, Comilla District
 79. Homna Thana, Comilla District
14. *Madhupur Tract*
 82. Sripur Thana, Dacca District
 83. Kaliakor Thana, Dacca District
15. *Haor Basin*
 85. Khaliajuri Thana, Mymensingh District
 - 85a. Sulla Thana, Sylhet District
16. *Sylhet High Plain*
 95. Bishwanath Thana, Sylhet District
 96. Rajnagar Thana, Sylhet District
17. *Sylhet Hills*
 97. Chunarughat Thana, Sylhet District
18. *Tippera Surface*
 100. Barura Thana, Comilla District
 101. Kachua Thana, Comilla District
19. *Chittagong Region*
 111. Boalkhali Thana, Chittagong District
 113. Anwara Thana, Chittagong District

Source: Morrison, 1972:249-50

MAP 3

Agricultural Regions of Bangladesh

(Adapted from Haroun er Rashid: East Pakistan: A Systematic Regional Geography and Its Development Planning Aspects. Lahore, Sh. Gulam Ali & Sons (1965), p. 241.)

Sharecroppers (S.C.) and Landless Labour (L.L.)
as per cent of agricultural workers

- I = L.L. 16.34 $\leq$ and S.C. 2.85 $\leq$
- II = L.L. 16.34 $<$ and S.C. 2.85 $>$
- III = L.L. 16.34 $\geq$ and S.C. 2.85 $\geq$
- IV = L.L. 16.34 $\geq$ and S.C. 2.85 $\leq$

Source: Morrison, 1972:255

APPENDIX TABLE 12
PRODUCTION RELATIONS AND PRODUCTIVITY
IN DIFFERENT REGIONS OF BANGLADESH

Column numbers and headings:

1. Gross Cultivated Area as % of Net Cultivated Area.
2. Jute Crop as % of Net Cultivated Area.
3. Sharecroppers as % of Total Employed in Agriculture.
4. Landless Labour as % of Total Employed in Agriculture.
5. Sum of % of Sharecroppers and Landless Labour.
6. Number of Place Names Per Square Mile.
7. Number of Persons Per Place Name.

Agricultural Region	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
3	130	8	10.88	10.13	21.01	.771	837
7	135	17	7.63	14.20	21.83	.754	1408
13	103	1/2	2.85	15.64	18.49	2.28	248
17	107	1/4	3.42	21.66	25.02	1.86	277
19	105	-	11.34	25.54	36.88	2.35	633
20	120	3	11.34	25.54	36.88	.990	1012
23	153	20	2.85	15.64	18.49	1.30	1119
28	157	17	2.31	15.88	18.19	1.28	1035
32	105	5	9.00	20.38	29.38	1.54	493
34	135	5	3.39	23.97	27.36	1.02	857
37	160	4	3.39	23.97	27.36	1.21	797
39	130	8	2.85	23.68	26.53	1.25	763
40	143	4	4.27	16.23	20.50	1.23	604
41	145	2	4.27	16.23	20.50	1.03	590
43	105	4	4.38	25.79	30.17	1.90	526
44	104	1/4	6.76	19.29	26.05	.269	704
47	122	2	1.62	25.45	27.07	.968	991
48	120	1	6.76	19.29	26.05	1.38	1990
50	109	7	3.40	21.52	24.92	1.12	894
50.a	-	-	6.76	19.29	26.05	.918	954
56	145	2	4.87	39.18	44.05	.146	1509
65	160	27	2.11	19.40	21.51	1.12	1735
71	175	20	1.86	16.33	18.19	2.59	529
73	177	18	-	16.34	16.34	1.39	1224
77	156	25	1.62	13.59	15.21	1.53	1097
79	155	20	-	8.74	8.74	1.39	1434
82	135	7	2.22	13.17	15.39	.44	1590
83	150	8	2.22	13.17	15.39	1.65	475
85	101	1/2	2.23	16.54	18.77	.58	662
85.a	-	-	1.90	15.34	17.24	.69	677
95	130	-	2.42	13.44	15.86	5.38	207
96	115	3	1.28	11.15	12.43	2.40	309
97	130	-	1.10	11.30	12.40	2.06	324
100	169	5	1.04	8.33	9.37	2.48	635
101	163	15	1.22	9.11	10.33	2.63	608
111	140	-	5.22	17.52	22.74	.54	3646
113	177	-	5.22	17.52	22.74	1.25	1325

Source: Morrison, 1972:263.

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