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Differentiation of the Peasantry: A Critical Analysis in respect of West Bengal

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Structured Abstract:

Purpose: The present paper would like to discuss about differentiation of the peasantry in the agrarian economy of West Bengal and has examined the important factors of differentiation of the peasantry in the agrarian economy. This paper investigates the controlling power of limited people on various economic variables

Design / Methodology / Approach: The paper is based on the primary field survey data classifying by two criteria. The author estimated the value of Gini-coefficient (GC, henceforth) for measurement of inequality of economic variables.

Findings: The findings are, the acreage criterion be unsuccessful to discriminate between different types of holdings which differ in the crucial respect of labour use, and hence the extent to which they remain 'peasant' households. This paper reflects the existence of inequality distribution of means of production in West Bengal.

Originality / Value: The present paper reveals that the development in agriculture has been arrested by high degree of exploitation of peasant class in West Bengal. The favorable environment for development in agriculture is low degree of exploitation of peasant class on factors of production.

Keywords: Class Differentiation, Agrarian Economy, Exploitation, Structure, Different Markets, Degree of Inequality.

Type: Research Paper.

Introduction

Class differentiation has superb meaning in different countries of the World. According to many scholars, it has started in different point of time in the society. For instance, the existence of peasantry differentiation in England begins approximately in the 6th century AD. In literature, there is no mention about the particular point of time for creating the class differentiation of the peasantry. It is mentioned in many literatures that the inequality of assets-holding by peasant creates '*class differentiation'* of the peasantry.

The Existing Relevant Literatures

We have discussed in this section the relevant scholars' opinion regarding the definition / explanation of class differentiation.

Rodney Hilton (1974, pp 207) analysed the causes of division of peasantry in feudal Europe. There was class conflict between peasants and ruling groups over the disposal of the surplus (disputes about rents and services) and over the sanctions used to enforce its appropriation (serfdom, private jurisdiction).

Kosminsky (1956) pointed out that the formation of an upper layer among the free peasantry might be partially connected with processes taking place even in pre-feudal society, with the advance of early property differentiation and might represent certain elements of incompleteness in the feudalization of English society' (1956, pp 225-6). Significant aspects of this may be seen in Rosamond Faith's book *The English Peasantry and the Growth of Lordship* (1997). She noted: 'Differentiation begins to appear in the sixth century' (1997, pp 5)

In the middle of the 19th century in England, Marx wrote in 'The Poverty of Philosophy':

Economic conditions had first transformed the mass of the people of the country into workers. The domination of capital has created for this mass a common situation, common interests. The mass is thus already a class as against capital, but not yet for itself. In the struggle, of which we have pointed only a few phases, this mass becomes united, and constitutes itself as a class for itself. The interests it defends become class interests. But the struggle of the class against class is a political struggle' [MECW 6:211] [emphasis added].

According to Shanin (1989), there were five categories of differentiation: socioeconomic differentiation, pauperization, farmerization, collectivization and peasantization. In his paper, he looked at one of the genetic pattern of peasant-related change - differentiation. The differentiation was taking place as capitalist economies developed by Marxian theory of peasantry. According to him, the peasantry is bifurcated into two broad classes –bourgeoisie and proletariat. The reasons were very simple. The peasantry has less consumption, more workload, less wage due to labour flexibility, immobility of land and state support (Banaji, 1976b). Chayanov (1925) put forwards an alternative view to Marxist theory in respect of persistence of peasants. According to him, the peasantry did not differentiate, but experienced a cycle of mobility along the family cycle.

In literature, there are many contemporary debates among Marxist and Non-Marxist on the question of differentiation of the peasantry in India. Marxian supporters like Patnaik (1987),

Byres (1981), Griffin (1974), Pearse (1980), etc. discussed the changes in agrarian social structure after independence in India. According to them, peasant class differentiation or polarization occurred by Leninist model in Indian country side. On the other hand, some Marxian scholars such as Banaji (1977), Athreya et al. (1990) and Alavi (1987) etc supported the view of Kautsky's on agrarian question and examined that the growth of capitalism in Indian agriculture had not led to depeasantisation. Their argument is very lucid. They nicely articulate how small holder production is functional to capital because it leads to reduce cost of production via the self exploitation of family labour. John Harriss (1982; 1987) observed a detailed study on the relationship between capitalism and small scale peasant production in North Arcot district of Tamil Nadu. He refuted this functional relationship and suggested that exchange relations could stop the full development due to profitability of usury and speculative trading locking up the large amount of money and diverting it from productive uses.

There are some differences in arguments between Marxists and Neo-Populist on the question of differentiation among the peasantry in India. Marxists emphasized the economic factors to understand the process of change among the peasantry but the Neo-Populists gave primary importance to the demographic factors. Although the broad theoretical perspectives and research methods of early Marxists and Neo-Populists were by themselves influential, the contemporary debates on the question of differentiation of peasantry in India have added several new issues and tried to expand the insights made in the classical works of Lenin, Kautsky and Chayanov (1966).

Utsa Patnaik (1976) tried to empirically judge the concept of peasant class differentiation in India by following the theories and methodology adopted by Lenin and Mao-Tse-Tung in their respective countries i.e., Russia and China respectively. She tried to judge the class differentiation of the peasantry in the state of Haryana in India. She published her view in 1976. Patnaik's classification schema identified the agrarian classes on the basis of 'labour exploitation criterion' which was developed by her. The labour exploitation criterion (E criterion) classified households in terms of labour exploitation ratio defined as total use of outside labour divided by family labour days. According to Patnaik criterion, there were six categories of economic classes. Again, these classes reduced to three broad categories, namely, exploited classes (landless and poor peasant), self-employment classes (small peasant and middle peasant) and labour hiring or exploiting classes (rich peasant and landlord).

Rudra (1978) observed that there existed in Indian agriculture today only two classes – (i) a class of big landowners which could include capitalist farmers and feudal landowners both operating in coexistence with no contradiction thus refuting the classical distinction of rich peasants and landlords. Rudra referred to this class as ruling class in Indian agriculture (ii) A class of agricultural labourers-which included landless labourers, landed labourers and poor tenants

Roemer's (1982) classification schema identified five agrarian classes on the basis of how individuals relate to the hiring and selling of labour power and self employment. He gave a model to judge empirically the class differentiation. He demonstrated how classes converge endogenously from unequal endowment of means of production in market-based economies under the crucial assumption of individuals minimizing labour time spent to produce subsistence requirement.

M. H. Khan (1983), using the proposition of Roemer's model, identified five distinct classes in the context of rural Pakistan. It was an improvement over Roemer in the sense that he considered both land and labour for the peasant classification. Khan's application of the Roemer's model revealed, that in rural Pakistan the peasantry was highly differentiated and thus confirmed the Leninist view.

Bhaduri (1973) in his seminal paper 'Agricultural Backwardness under semi-Feudalism' constructed a story that the usurious extraction of surplus was the chief source of exploitation. The introduction of new technology in agriculture would raise the productivity of the tenants so that they would no more be in need for consumption loan resulting in the drying up of the usury income of the landlord. The landlord would calculate that his present gain from usury surpassed the probable productivity gain from new technology and therefore he consciously resisted capitalist agriculture. Therefore, the semi-feudalism persisted and the tenant became wretched as he was being trapped in perpetual indebtedness of consumption loan.

P. K. Bardhan (1984) adopted the Roemer's schema and applied to his data collected on West Bengal in the period 1972-73, according to him the peasant class differentiation in agrarian economy would be like Capitalist Landlord, Rich Farmer, Family Farmer, Poor Peasant and Landless Labourer. Ranajit Guha (1988) also bifurcated the total rural population — elite and subaltern. Since class was replaced by 'community', peasant differentiation arising from unequal possession of assets was thereby overlooked.

Bhattacharyya (2007) pointed out in his *Class and the Politics of Participatory Rural Transformation in West Bengal* that the issue of class-in-itself, class-for-itself, class consciousness and class struggle, class defined on objective conditions regarding the position of households in the system of production relations. It was also the necessary condition of class-in-itself. It may be realized that the class differentiation is not possible without the production system.

In brief, some of them express their common opinion that they refuse to consider the controlling power of the means of production as the basic tools for peasant class differentiation in agrarian economy. Some of them have the same opinion; i.e., ownership of means of production is the main factor of class differentiation in agrarian economy especially in West Bengal after green revolution. Therefore, the most relevant discussion on peasant class differentiation is required in West Bengal for the period post reform era. The author likes to take opportunity to investigate broadly the field of peasant class differentiation and development policies in agriculture in West Bengal.

This paper has been organized as follows. Section 1 analyses introduction. Section 2 discusses objective and methodology. Section 3 deals with peasant class differentiation. Finally, Section 4 focuses on the summary and conclusions.

Objective and Methodology

1. **Objective:** The present paper would like to discuss differentiation of the peasantry in the agrarian economy of West Bengal and has examined the important factors of differentiation of the peasantry in the agrarian economy. This paper investigates the controlling power of limited people on various economic variables such as non-land assets, own land, operated-land, output, product marketed, irrigation, institutional and non-institutional credit etc.
2. **Methodology:** The author incorporated in this section two parts of methodology. The first part is class classified criteria and another one is inequality measurement of distribution for economic variables among the different classes.

Exploitation Criteria & Standard Acreage Criteria

The method, undertaken throughout the paper, is based on primary field survey data classified by Patnaik's labour-exploitation criterion or E-criterion[1] and Standard Acreage criterion (SAC, henceforth)[2]. According to E-criterion, there are six classes of households.

The landless plus poor peasants are both called exploited class. Similarly small peasant plus middle peasant treated as self-employed class and finally rich peasant plus landlord named as exploiting class (see Appendix for details). We have observed the distribution of the overall agrarian assets structure in rural economy by analyzing the secondary data in this article. The SAC has failed to explore actual strength of households in the rural economy like West Bengal, where people are not permitted to hold land in excess of the ceiling limit owing to a limited land reform. In this manner, the E- criterion is required for finding the actual strengthen of households. Patnaik's (1976, 1987) criteria attempts to give an empirical approximation to the analytical concept of the class status of the households.

Gini-coefficient or Inequality Measurement

It is well-known to measure for inequality of wealth distribution, is known as Gini-coefficient (GC henceforth). The Gini coefficient is a measure of inequality of a distribution. It is defined as a ratio with values between 0 and 1. It is also commonly used for the measurement of discriminatory power of rating systems in the credit risk management. The author estimated the Gini-coefficient value by the following formula:

Pi	Wi	Xi	Y_i	$X_i\ Y_{i+1}$	$Y_i\ X_{i+1}$
P1	**W1**	x_1	y_1	$x_1 * y_2$	$y_1 * x_2$
P2	**W2**	x_2	y_2	$x_2 * y_3$	$y_2 * x_3$
.	.	.	.	.	.
.	.	.	.	.	.
.	.	.	.	.	.
Pn	**Wn**	x_n	y_n	$x_{n-1} * y_n$	$y_{n-1} * x_n$
$\sum pi = 100$	$\sum wi = 100$			$\sum x_i * y_{i+1} = T_1$	$\sum y_i * x_{i+1} = T2$

Where $_{P1\ P2.....Pn}$ and $_{W1\ W2\ ....Wn}$ are the percentage share of people and percentage share of wealth respectively. xi and yi denote the cumulative share of people and cumulative share of wealth respectively.

$$GC = (\sum xiyi+1 - \sum yixi+1) \Big/ 10000 \; or \; (T1 - T2) \Big/ 10000$$

The Study Area

The Murshidabad district is purposively selected by the author over other districts of West Bengal in 2004-05. The people of this district are dependent on agriculture. Rice is the

principal food crop and jute is the prime cash crop of the district. Therefore, we can comfortably analyze the impact of agricultural variables as the other factors like impact of industrialization cannot be mixed up. Secondly, it is a relatively backward district of West Bengal.

Two sample blocks have been selected on the basis of developmental variables[3]**.** One block is Jalangi which is the most advanced region and other block is Berhampore which seems to be the most backward region among 26 blocks in the Murshdabad district. Ten sample villages have been purposively chosen from two blocks in Murshidabad district. Udyanagar Diar -15 number of households selected from 343 households; Ramnarayan Para-10 number of households surveyed from 142 households; Godagari - 25 number of households choose from 694 households; Dayarampur- 20 number of households investigated from 480 households and Nar Singhapur - 30 number of households examined from 554 households are five villages which are located in the advanced block. On the other hand, Chaltiab - 30 number of households selected from 2235 households; Pashim Narayanpur- 15 number of households surveyed households; Char Narayanpur - 1 number of households decided from 3 households; Char Begur- 12 number of households preferred from 114 households and Haridas Mati- 42 number of households selected from 931 households are five villages belong to the backward block. Finally, total two hundred (200) households' from five thousand six hundred two households (5602) have been conducted by the author from ten sample villages of two blocks of Murshidabad district on the basis of statistical method of SRSWOR. One hundred (100) households are surveyed separately in each block. The rationale behind conducting field survey is that not enough secondary sources of data are available. The field survey data gives us an idea of the differentiated demand for factor of agriculture influenced by the class structure of the rural economy. The secondary sources do not furnish any class wise distribution of data.

Cross-Classification of Households

The cross-classification of households (and also net labour days hired in or out) by these two criteria revealed that diametrically opposite types of holdings included in every acreage group; that is to say, households which exploit the labour-power of others as well as households which are themselves exploited. In other words, acreage criteria as an index fails to categorize between different types of holdings which differ in the crucial respect of labour use, and hence the extent to which they remain 'peasant' households. The labour exploitation

index is more appropriate rather than SAC for this study due to decline of the ratio of size of land and population; it is a result of land reform. In other words, Left Front Government came to power in 1977 and gave foremost priority to the new state policy called land reform in West Bengal.

Table 1 shows the different categories sample households according to two criteria – i. Exploitation criterion and ii. Standard Acreage criterion / NSSO criterion. In the combined region, it is shown that the percentage of landless households is 12 % in the proper sense of term, owing neither any own land, nor operating land. Secondly, the modal farm size is below 2.5 acres, there is very high concentration (70.5%) of a farm in the acreage group 0.01-2.5 acres. This means that a large number of landless households changed their status to ownership of land by receiving the vested ceiling-surplus land during the Left Front period after 1977. The majority of the households in this acreage group are poor peasants.

The second column of table 3 reveals that 43 % number of households are called exploited class (landless, 12% plus poor peasant, 31%), followed (34.5%) by self-employed (small, 19% plus middle, 15%) class, they do not need to sell their labour power to any great amount to the wealthy households, in fact that middle peasants are by definition small net employer of others and finally 22.5% number of households are belonging in the exploiting class (rich 17 % plus landlords 5.5%), they do not use their family labour power in farms in spite of the relatively small size of their farms, so called exploiter classes.

In brief, the SAC has failed to determine the actual strength of class status of households. For example, according to this criterion 70.5% households are marginal farmer, but they are not all marginal farmers as per Patnaik criterion in the combined region. There are several economic classes in this acreage group 0.01 to 2.5 acres. Secondly, there is exceptionally highly concentration of farms in this group.

Differentiated Agrarian Economy and the Peasantry

Analysis of Secondary Data-

The focus of the analysis in this section is differentiating the agrarian economy and peasantry. This is the most commonly used measure of inequality. The coefficient varies between 0, which reflects complete equality and 1, which indicates complete inequality. In table 2, we have considered here six economic variables for finding the overall scenario for distribution of these variables in West Bengal and India. The author estimates value of Gini-

coefficient of economic variables (assets) on the basis of variousrounds[4] of National Sample Survey Organization (NSSO, henceforth).

In a market economic regime, it is very much determined by the ownership of the basic means of production that includes land, non-land assets and irrigation facilities. A detailed analysis of the means of production as found from NSSO data is outside the purview of the present study. However, we have worked out the Gini Coefficients of the respective variables from since 1972 various rounds of NSSO surveys and compared them with the Gini coefficients of distribution of credit in table 2. Our main conclusion is that for non-land asset, ownership and the operated land and irrigation, the inequality increased over time for all India that had been reflected by the increasing values of the GC in successive years 1972, 1982, 1992 and 2002-03. However, for West Bengal the outcome is a mixed one. Since 1972 in every period West Bengal exhibited lower degree of inequality in comparison to the all India level. This is partly due to the fact that West Bengal experienced remarkable peasant struggle after independence particularly in the late sixties and early seventies. In the latter period a major reallocation of land and to some extent other means of production took place under the United Front Government in the state. Over three decades, the concentration of both owned and operated land reveals a decline. While operated land manifested a steep and secular decline since 1972, the GC for owned land actually increased during 1972-82 followed a decline in the next decade. In 1992 we found the value of GC for operated land (0.434) was much smaller than the ownership land (0.503), though in 2002-03 that inequality reduced. The most significant aspect is that during 2002-03 the inequality of most of the variables increased for India as well as West Bengal. This seems to be the direct result of economic reform (Patnaik 2007).

The greater responsiveness of change in GC for operated land was due to the fact that in West Bengal major thrust of change came as tenancy reform. The most interesting aspect is that during the eighties the GC for non-land asset and irrigation increased in West Bengal. During nineties the land asset also increased simultaneously. The magnitude of increase in West Bengal during eighties was only marginal particularly in the case of irrigation, whereas at the all India level the same increase was much greater. But the increase in inequality during nineties was substantial. In West Bengal despite the reduction of inequality in the distribution of land during eighties due to a successful implementation of a limited agrarian reform, the inequality in distribution of other means of production as non-land asset and irrigation actually increased. Looking only the data of eighties we can say this was an expected

outcome in a market economic regime, that in itself cannot stop the differentiation of the peasantry, but makes differentiation more broad based. The data on nineties laid bare the impact of operation of market in a full scale under economic reform. In other words in a market economic regime even after the implementation of a limited land reform, differentiation was still going on based on ownership of means of production other than land. As a matter of fact land reform in West Bengal also continued during nineties, side by side the economic reform (Ramchandran 2008, Ghosh 2008, Bhattacharyya and Bhattacharyya 2007)**.** The perpetual continuity of land reform could not however stop the increased inequality in land during the nineties. This has indicated the fact that the land can no more act as a proxy for economic strength of households in a (land reformed) small farm economy of West Bengal. In other words the upper strata of the peasantry start to hold less of land (at least below the ceiling limit) but more of other means of production particularly different kinds of non-land asset**.**

The most interesting aspect was that the inequality in the distribution of outstanding credit actually increased during 1982 to 1992 in West Bengal, where at the all India level the same inequality reduced so that in 1992 we have almost equal value of GC in West Bengal and all India. During 1992-2002-03 the inequality in the distribution of institutional credit declined for all India and West Bengal. This is an expected outcome as the distribution of credit is predetermined by the distribution of the asset. The value of GC of borrowings for West Bengal and India remained almost unchanged during 1982 and 1992.

Analysis of Primary Data-

In this section we deal with the primary data for analyzing the nature of various economic variables / different markets in respect of concentration among classes or groups. The table 3 shows that there is a high concentration among the different markets in the agrarian economy. The labour hiring class (only 22.5 % households) has governed on different markets such as assets, 44 % (rich peasant, 36.59 % plus landlord 7.24 %), land (49 %), input (44 %), output (50 %), product marketed (60 %t) and credit market (46 %). On the other hand, exploited classes (33 % households) holds only 24 % in assets, 15 % in owned land, and 7 % in product marketed etc, the landless labourers and poor peasant together can be referred to as exploited as they are basically dependent on the earnings of others, from the sell of their labour service to others. We find that the value of GC in different variables are 0.286 for assets, 0.410 for owned land, 0.349 for input, 0.427 for output, and 0.543 for product

marketed in the combined region. This means that each market has highly differentiated structure in agrarian economy.

Looking into size group wise distribution, we have found that the top two acreage groups' only 17.5 % households' control 44 % in assets, 48 % in owned land, 49 % in operated land and 64 % in product marketed in the combined region. Looking into the value of GC we found 0.299 for assets, 0.367 for owned land and 0.513 for product marketed etc. it represents again a highly concentration in different markets.

Looking into regional distribution of different markets such as asset, product marketed, etc. We have found that each value of GC for different markets in the advanced region is more than that in the backward region. For example, values of GC for product marketed is 0.415 in AR and 0.285 in BR.

This means that each market in AR has high concentration than BR. The similar tendency is reflected by the size groups' categories.

Summary and Conclusions

The cross-classification of households (and also net labour days hired in or out) by these two criteria reveals that diametrically opposite types of holdings get included in every acreage group - that is to say, households which exploit the labour-power of others as well as households which are themselves exploited. In other words, acreage as an index fails to discriminate between different types of holdings which differ in the crucial respect of labour use, and hence the extent to which they remain 'peasant' households.

The author finds from secondary data that the Gini–coefficient (GC) value for household assets like land, non-land and input / output changing patterns – irrigation, credit, etc. specifies the degree of economic strength. The degree of inequalities of these variables in West Bengal is less than that in the rest of India. This means that the inequality increases over time for entire India that has been reflected by the increasing values of the GC in successive years 1972, 1982, 1992 and 2002.

This study shows acute process of differentiation prevailed among survey households in all markets – land, asset, input; output product marketed and credit market. The household structure shows a direct relation between economic class and family size (member per holding) except landless class. The participation rate is defined as worker to member ratio, multiplied by 100. It shows inverse relationship with well being class status. It is true for

advanced and backward regions. As economic position of the household improves, it becomes possible for even adult members of working age to withdraw from work and enjoy leisure, which is reflected in lower participation rates for ascending economic classes.

Our survey data reveals direct relationship between the farm size and productivity. It might be result of tenancy reform under Left Font Government in West Bengal. The smallholders and middle peasant are more benefited by transferring resources (vested land). Whereas, the populist claim, argued by Chayanov and Amartya Sen among others, that peasant family labour farms are more 'efficient' in the sense of generating higher yields when compared with those units cultivated by agrarian capitalists using hired workers. Our finding refutes their proposition.

Finally, our sample villages' data implies the GC value of variables ranges from 0.087 for non-institutional credit to 0.543 for product marketed in the combined region. In other words, the existence of inequality distribution (highly concentrated) of means of production prevails in West Bengal.

Notes:

1. **E-criteria:** The labour-exploitation index seeks to give an empirical approximation to the analytical concept of the class status of the household. The class-status is essentially determined by the extent of the use of outside labour or to the extent the family works for others, relative to the extent of self-employment. It is identical, under certain simplifying assumptions with the surplus labour appropriated or parted with, relative to surplus labour with self-employment.

   E = X/Y = {(Hi-Ho) + (Lo-Li)}/Y

   Where, **X** = (net labour days hired in) + (net labour days appropriated through rent);

   Hi = Labour-days hired on the operational holding of the household

   Ho = Family labour days hired out to others

   Lo = Labour days similarly worked on land leased out by the household and

   Li = Labour days worked on leased in land (whether by family or hired labour)

   Y = Labour days worked by household workers on the operational holding.

'The index is a ratio, or a pure number, which can have positive or negative values depending on whether the household is a net employer of outside labour or is itself on balance working for others (as labourer or tenant). The range of values of E is from plus infinity to minus infinity, for at the two poles of the rural class structure, there will be diametrically opposite types of

households for whom F will be zero or near zero: first, the big landlords have such a large resource endowment that they perform no manual labour themselves, but rely entirely on employing others' labour; and the landless labourers, with zero resource endowment, hence zero self-employment, who are entirely dependent on working for others'(Patnaik, 1987; p.305).

2. **NSSO (National Sample Survey Organization)** has classified five broad size classes in the direction given by the Agricultural Census of India. These classes are:

marginal holdings	- those of size less than 2.5 acres
small holdings	- those of size 2.5 to 5 acres
semi-medium holding	- those of size 5 to 10 acres
medium holdings	- those of size 10 to 25 acres
large holdings	- those of size larger than 25 acres

3. The development variables which are taken from District Census Handbook, Directorate of Census operations, West Bengal, Census of India 1991. Two blocks of Murshidabad are selected on the basis of these variables which are listed below-
   i. Percentage of irrigated area to total cultivated area.
   ii. Percentage of villages having one or more educational institutions.
   iii. Percentage of rural population served by medical amenities.
   iv. Percentage of rural population served by Pacca road.
   v. Percentage of rural population served by power supply.
   vi. Percentage of cultivated area to total area.
   vii. Percentage of rural population served by market / hat.
   viii. Percentage of rural population served by drinking water
   ix. Percentage of rural population served by post and telegraph
   x. Percentage of rural population served by communications

4. **NSSO:** Round No. i. 26th; ii.37th; iii. 48th and iv. 59th rounds.

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The relevant tables of empirical and secondary result of this study:

Table 1: The Distribution of Cross Classification of Number of Households from Murshidabad District, 2004-05, (in absolute term)

Group	Landless	Poor Peasant	Small Peasant	Middle Peasant	Rich Peasant	Landlord	Total	% of Household No.
All region								
0.00	24	0	0	0	0	0	24	12.0
0.01to 2.5	0	60	35	23	19	4	141	70.5
2.5 to 5	0	2	3	6	12	6	29	14.5
5 to 10	0	0	0	2	3	1	6	3.0
Total	**24**	**62**	**38**	**31**	**34**	**11**	**200**	**100**
Advanced region								
0.00	12	0	0	0	0	0	12	12.0
0.01to 2.5	0	17	10	17	14	4	62	62.0
2.5 to 5	0	1	3	2	9	6	21	21.0
5 to 10	0	0	0	1	3	1	5	5.0
Total	**12**	**18**	**13**	**20**	**26**	**11**	**100**	**100**
Backward region								
0.00	12	0	0	0	0	0	12	12.0
0.01to 2.5	0	43	25	6	5	0	79	79.0
2.5 to 5	0	1	0	4	3	0	8	8.0
5 to 10	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	1.0
Total	**12**	**44**	**25**	**11**	**8**	**0**	**100**	**100**

Source: Field Survey

Table 2: Value of Gini-Coefficient for Variables Representing Productive Capacity in 2002-03: West Bengal and India

	West Bengal						India					
Year	Asset (Non-land)	Owned Land	Operated Land	Irrigation	Outstanding credit	Borrowing	Asset (Non-land)	Owned Land	Operated Land	Irrigation	Outstanding credit	Borrowing
1972	0.660**	0.572	0.608	0.452	N.A	N.A	0.585	0.665	0.671	0.501	0.387	N.A
1982	0.547	0.593	0.501	0.469	0.361	0.353	0.585	0.665	0.588	0.508	0.406	0.396
1992	0.570	0.503	0.434	0.472	0.403	0.352	0.621	0.652	0.588	0.543	0.398	0.392
2002	0.438	0.517	0.525	0.540	0.377	N.A	0.561	0.636	0.694	0.659	N.A	N.A
** Value for all Rural Households					* Cultivator Households where otherwise not mentined							

Source: NSSO Various rounds

Table 3: The Value of Gini-coefficient of Different Economic Variables, by Economic Classes, by Acreage Groups, Mushidabad, 2004-05.

All region Economic Class	% of Household No.	Pertici pation Rate	%of HI toTotal	%of Ho toTotal	Total Assets	Owned Area	Opertd Area	Irrigated Area	Input	Output	Product Marketed	Inst. Credit	Non-inst. Credit
All region					(0.286)	(0.410)	(0.371)	(0.367)	(0.349)	(0.427)	(0.543)	(0.317)	(0.087)
Landless	12.00	54.24	0.00	100	4.20	0.55	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	4.41	12.33
Poor Peasant	31.00	45.61	11.56	75.04	20.16	14.12	16.86	17.20	19.05	13.90	7.34	19.62	39.16
Small peasant	19.00	43.68	27.84	16.13	12.85	14.25	15.42	15.69	15.77	14.61	11.04	10.34	19.41
Middle Peasant	15.50	41.61	40.21	7.96	18.97	22.02	23.67	23.31	21.16	21.30	21.24	19.60	8.07
Rich Peasant	17.00	31.84	65.18	3.51	36.59	35.30	31.33	30.86	32.48	33.71	37.23	32.60	19.12
Landlord	5.50	27.87	100	0.00	7.24	13.76	12.71	12.94	11.54	16.48	23.15	13.44	1.91
Total	100.00	42.06	53.08	57.44	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
Advanced region					(0.290)	(0.360)	(0.326)	(0.326)	(0.347)	(0.376)	(0.415)	(0.341)	(0.094)
Landless	12.00	61.11	0.00	100.00	2.46	0.28	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.22	2.85
Poor Peasant	18.00	45.00	6.41	77.37	6.30	5.99	7.94	7.91	6.70	5.37	3.50	10.99	21.41
Small peasant	13.00	42.86	41.30	14.07	8.26	7.64	10.04	10.05	8.95	8.86	8.42	1.30	12.41
Middle Peasant	20.00	41.90	38.44	3.18	21.67	22.68	22.01	22.01	21.71	21.56	21.28	22.74	15.62
Rich Peasant	26.00	31.30	71.94	3.16	50.19	43.21	40.01	40.02	43.44	41.33	40.41	43.91	42.59
Landlord	11.00	27.87	100.00	0.00	11.13	20.19	20.00	20.01	19.20	22.89	26.39	19.84	5.11
Total	100.00	40.04	64.43	55.70	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
Backward region					(0.073)	(0.314)	(0.331)	(0.304)	(0.271)	(0.276)	(0.285)	(0.066)	(0.158)
Landless	12.00	48.44	0.00	100.00	7.44	1.11	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	11.10	18.00
Poor Peasant	44.00	45.83	17.05	71.52	45.92	31.51	32.43	34.19	37.64	35.85	34.81	37.75	49.76
Small peasant	25.00	44.07	7.73	17.99	21.37	28.40	24.80	26.02	26.02	29.39	29.79	29.35	23.60
Middle Peasant	11.00	41.07	42.35	13.51	13.96	20.60	26.56	25.69	20.35	20.62	20.89	12.99	3.55
Rich Peasant	8.00	33.33	52.57	3.89	11.31	18.38	16.20	14.09	15.99	14.14	14.50	8.82	5.08
Landlord	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Total	100.00	44.02	26.05	59.28	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
All region					(0.299)	(0.367)	(0.388)	(0.374)	(0.341)	(0.389)	(0.513)	(0.149)	(0.014)
0.00	12.00	54.24	0.00	100.00	4.19	0.55	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	4.41	9.40
.01-2.5	70.50	42.09	37.43	54.03	52.03	51.95	50.85	51.79	55.68	50.43	36.33	68.01	76.95
2.50-5.00	14.50	34.97	65.52	16.17	34.67	34.44	34.92	34.51	33.27	36.76	48.05	24.07	12.54
5to10	3.00	36.84	56.53	0.00	9.11	13.06	14.23	13.71	11.05	12.81	15.62	3.52	1.12
Total	100.00	42.06	53.08	57.44	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00
Advanced region					(0.370)	(0.383)	(0.415)	(0.415)	(0.402)	(0.412)	(0.484)	(0.180)	(0.062)
0.00	12.00	61.11	0.00	100.00	2.44	0.28	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.22	2.46
.01-2.5	62.00	40.00	48.53	52.83	37.94	41.92	39.20	39.18	39.69	38.67	30.20	60.51	71.84
2.50-5.00	21.00	31.90	74.65	0.00	46.91	40.18	41.59	41.60	44.25	44.62	52.64	33.99	23.11
5to10	5.00	36.17	71.70	0.00	12.71	17.62	19.21	19.22	16.07	16.70	17.16	4.27	2.59
Total	100.00	40.04	64.43	55.70	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00
Backward region					(0.089)	(0.245)	(.(286)	(0.252)	(0.252)	(0.201)	(0.206)	(0.025)	(0.037)
0.00	12.00	48.44	0.00	100.00	7.44	1.11	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	11.10	13.55
.01-2.5	79.00	43.57	21.08	55.13	78.23	73.41	71.19	74.85	79.75	80.63	80.22	83.77	80.00
2.5-5	8.00	42.55	45.93	27.90	11.92	22.17	23.28	21.52	16.75	16.54	15.21	3.21	6.22
5 to10	1.00	40.00	23.81	0.00	2.41	3.32	5.53	3.63	3.50	2.82	4.57	1.92	0.23
Total	100.00	44.02	26.05	59.28	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00

Source: Field Survey

APPENDIX:

Appendix A 1: E-Criteria

The Marxist concept of the process of class differentiation is that, under a regime of commodity production, the rich peasant class increasingly employs the labour of others and thereby appropriates surplus. A poor peasant on the other hand is increasingly obliged to work for others and is thereby increasingly subjected to exploitation. The self-employed are in a vulnerable position. While a few of them might be able to transform themselves into rich peasant, the majority of them are always under the constant threat of being pushed down into the ranks of the semi-proletariat. At one of the two poles of the rural class structure, and more or less distinct from the peasantry, stands the landlord, defined by `possession of substantial means of production and non-involvement in any manual labour, living entirely by appropriating surplus labour of others'. The landless labourer has no self-employment, for he poses no means of production at all and is obliged to live entirely by selling his labour. Classes within the cultivating peasantry are identified by looking at the degree of working for others or of employing others' labour, relative to self employment. For this purpose certain limits are set upon the values of the E-ratio which are given in the following Table. All subsequent use of class categories in this study refers to the definitions given in the Table-1.1 which is taken from Patnaik (1976, 1987).

Table A.1: The following limits are specified to the value of E in order to classify households into a set of mutually exclusive and all-exhaustive categories (sub-categories not specified here are not ruled out)

Economic Classes	Defining Characteristic	Value of $E = X/F$	Reason	
1. Landless labourers	No self-employment; working entirely for others	$(E \to -\infty)$	$F = 0$, $X < 0$ And large	Primarily Exploited By Others
2. Poor peasant (Poor tenant and labourer with land)	Working for others to a greater extent than self-employment	$(E \leq -1)$	$F > 0$, $X < 0$, $\lvert X \rvert \geq F$	
3. Small peasant	Zero employment of others or working for others ; and working for others to smaller extent than self-employment	$(0 \geq E > -1)$	$F > 0$, $X \leq 0$, $\lvert X \rvert < F$	Primarily Self – Employed
4. Middle peasant	Smaller employment of others' labour than self-employment	$(1 > E > 0)$	$F > 0$, $X > 0$, $X < F$	
5. Rich peasant	At least as large an employment of others' labour as self-employment	$(E \geq 1)$	$F > 0$, $X > 0$, $X \geq F$	Primaril Exploiting Labour of Others
6. Landlord	No manual labour in self-employment , large employment of others' labour	$(E \to \infty)$	$F = 0$, $X > 0$, and large	

Source: Utsa Patnaik (1987), Peasant Class Differentiation: A Study in Method with Reference to Haryana, Delhi, Oxford University Press.