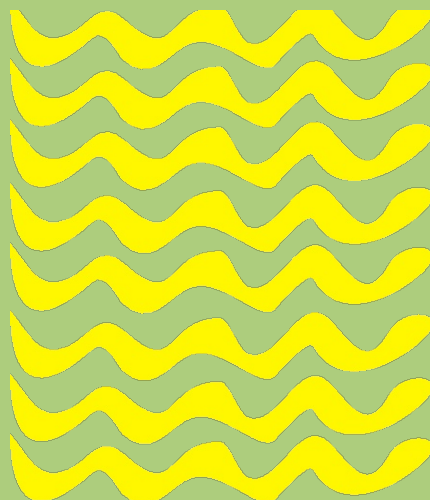


ANNUAL REPORT  
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# ABOUT FAS



The Foundation for Agrarian Studies is a charitable trust based in India and established in 2003. Its major objectives are to facilitate and sponsor multi-disciplinary theoretical and empirical enquiry in the field of agrarian studies in India and elsewhere in less-developed countries. It does so in association with a wide section of people interested in the agrarian question, including persons associated with academic institutions, social and political activists, members of mass organisations working in the countryside, and other professionals and scholars.



## CONTENTS

PROJECTS	3
- PROJECT ON AGRARIAN RELATIONS IN INDIA (PARI)	3
- FAS - UNICEF PARTNERSHIP PROJECT	6
WORKSHOPS AND CONFERENCES	8
- WORKSHOP ON DALIT HOUSEHOLDS IN VILLAGE ECONOMIES	8
- INTERNATIONAL VISITORS	9
PUBLICATIONS	10
JOURNAL	11
PERSONNEL	12



# PROJECTS

## PROJECT ON AGRARIAN RELATIONS IN INDIA

This Project was initiated in 2005 with the following objectives

- to characterise the nature of capitalism and class relations in the countryside,
- to conduct specific studies of the oppression of the Dalit and Scheduled Tribe masses and of women; and
- to report on the state of basic village amenities and the access of the rural masses to the facilities of modern life.

The study is to be conducted over a period of about five years. The villages studied will represent a wide range of different agro-ecological regions in the country. Each year, one or two States will be selected and two to four villages surveyed in different agro-ecological regions.

In the summer of 2010, PARI surveys were conducted in three villages of West Bengal and one village of Rajasthan.

### West Bengal Round

In 2010, the Foundation undertook a detailed survey of three villages of West Bengal as part of its Project on Agrarian Relations in India (PARI). The three villages studied were Panahar in Bankura district, Amarsinghi in Malda district and Kalmandasguri in Koch Bihar district.

#### Panahar, Bankura district

Panahar was first surveyed in 1995-96 (Rawal 1999). The village was surveyed again in 2001 and in 2002 (Rawal 2005). Household-level data from

these surveys are part of the FAS archive. Panahar was surveyed again in June 2010 as part of PARI.

Panahar (Deshra-Koalpara Gram Panchayat, Kotulpur block, Bankura district) falls in the Old Vindhyan Alluvial region of West Bengal. The village is 3 km from Kotulpur on the road that connects Kotulpur to Joyrambati and Arambagh. At the time of the PARI survey in June 2010, a total of 250 households lived in Panahar. Households in Panahar belong to various castes and social groups: these include Goala, Baishnab, Modak, Chasi-Kaibarta, Tanti and Kumbhakar (officially designated Backward Classes); Bagdi, Majhi, Kotal and Teli (all Scheduled Castes); Santhal (Scheduled Tribe); Brahman, Baishnab and Sadgop (Other Castes); and Muslim households.

Agricultural land in Panahar is primarily irrigated by tubewells, and such land is triple-cropped. The major crops are an aman crop of paddy, winter crops of potato, mustard, rapeseed and wheat, and summer crops of boro paddy or sesame. The yields of most crops in Panahar are higher than the average yields of these crops in West Bengal as a whole.

#### Amarsinghi, Malda district

Amarsinghi was surveyed in 1990 as part of a UNU-WIDER sponsored study. In 2005, it was studied again as part of a study on landlessness and indebtedness in rural West Bengal by the Development and Planning Department, Government of West Bengal. In 2005-06, a detailed survey on household incomes was conducted in a sample of households in the village (Bakshi 2010). Amarsinghi was resurveyed in May-June 2010 as part of PARI.

Amarsinghi is situated in Samsi gram panchayat,



Ratua I Block, Malda district in the New Alluvial Plains of West Bengal. The area of the village is 1.24 sq. km (Census of India 2001). The nearest railway station is at Samsi, about 6 km away. In 2005, there were 107 households in Amarsinghi and the total population of the village was 522. The 2010 census-type survey covered 127 households. Fifty-three per cent of the population of Amarsinghi at the 2005 survey consisted of households belonging to the Tanti and Napit castes (which are categorized in West Bengal as Other Backward Classes) and 45.4 per cent were from Dalit households belonging to the Tiyyor caste.

A wide variety of crops were grown in Amarsinghi, the main crops being aman and boro paddy and jute. Potato, mustard, pulses (lentils and gram) were the other crops grown in the village. Different kinds of vegetables were grown in the village although the acreage was small. A few households in the village also grew sugarcane and sold sugarcane juice in nearby Samsi.

Kalmandasguri, Koch Bihar district

Kalmandasguri was surveyed in 1988-89 during a study sponsored by UNU-WIDER. It was studied again in 1995 as part of a study of rural schooling in West Bengal (Ramachandran 1990), and again in 2005 as part of a study of landlessness and indebtedness in rural West Bengal. The data from the 1995 and 2005 surveys are in the FAS archive.

Kalmandasguri village (Bararangras Gram Panchayat, Cooch Behar II block, Cooch Behar district) is in the Terai Teesta Region of West Bengal. Koch Bihar, the nearest town, is 17 Km away. The nearest markets are in Bararangras (3 km) and Pundibari (7 km). The



village does not have electricity and has no all-weather road. No public transport is available from the village; the nearest bus stop is in Baudiardanga where a bus comes about five times a day.

As per the data from the 2005 survey, only about 33 per cent of net sown area in the village was irrigated. There was no major expansion of irrigation facilities in the village between 2005 and 2010. Although a substantial part of the land in the village is double-cropped because of high rainfall, agricultural yields remain low. Major crops in the village are paddy and jute. In addition, vegetables, sugarcane and potato are also cultivated. Fishing is an important occupation among Muslim households in the village. Out-migration from the village for non-agricultural employment is also substantial.

While there are major gaps in the public provisioning of basic infrastructure and services, the 2005 study noted that “between 1995 and 2005, public action in the areas of provision of facilities for schooling, housing, land and basic amenities like drinking water and sanitation has improved conditions of life in Kalmandasguri.” Data from the 2005 survey showed that 45.3 per cent of households had been assigned land under land reforms. About 28 per cent of households in Kalmandasguri lived in houses provided under the Indira Awas Yojana.

At the time of the PARI survey of 2010, 148 households were resident in Kalmandasguri. The major social groups in the village were Muslim, Jogi, and Baishya Kapali (all classified in West Bengal as Other Backward Classes); Rajbanshi, Napit and Muchi (all classified in West Bengal as Scheduled Castes); Oraon, Munda, and Nagasiya (all Scheduled Tribe); and Kayastha (Other Castes).





## Rajasthan Round II

In 2007, 25 F Gulabewala village of Ganganaga district and Dungariya village of Udaipur district were surveyed under PARI. The third selected village was from Sikar district, and data collection in 2007 was hampered by the Gujjar agitation. The selected village was surveyed in 2010.

### Rewasi, Sikar district

Rewasi in Sikar district (the village is also in Sikar block and tehsil) is 31 km from Sikar town, about 6 km from Sewad Badi village on the Sikar-Salasar road. Buses from Sikar to Didwana pass through Rewasi. There is a bus almost every hour between 7 am and 7 pm. The nearest railway station is in Sikar. A pucca road connects the main habitation of the village with

abolition of different forms of statutory landlordism. In contrast, the Rajputs no longer hold the same position of dominance in the village that they once did. There are also Brahman, Meena (Scheduled Tribe) and Meghwal (Dalit) households in Rewasi.

Most households in Rewasi own land, although there is substantial inequality in the extent of ownership of land across social groups and classes. Pearl millet is the most important crop of the kharif season. In the rabi season, land irrigated by tubewells is sown with wheat, mustard, onions and fenugreek. In a village characterised by sandy soils and low rainfall, access to irrigation is critical, though limited. There are about 75 tubewells in the village. These irrigate about 41 per cent of the net sown area in the village. Tubewells are used mainly in the rabi season. The kharif crop is



the Sikar-Salasar road. There are two small general stores (one is also a ration shop, and the other also sells some agricultural inputs). The nearest market is in Sewad Badi. The health sub-centre in the village provides only first-aid facilities; people need to travel to the Primary Health Centre in Phagalwa (9 km) or to the Block/District hospital in Sikar (31 km) for other medical services. There is one primary school, one upper primary school and a high school (privately owned) in the village. Students from Rewasi also study in schools in neighbouring villages.

At the time of our survey, there were 222 households resident in the village. Rewasi is a multi-caste village. Jats are economically and politically the dominant caste. Jat households, once tenants of Rajput jagirdars, obtained ownership rights over land as a result of the

mainly rainfed, even where land holdings are in the command area of tubewells. Unirrigated land is dependent entirely on scanty and uncertain rainfall for cultivation in the kharif season and is not cultivated in the rabi season at all. As a result of a poor and delayed monsoon in 2009, the kharif crop had failed in the village. Yields of the rabi crops were also low.

Animal resources — the people tend cattle, camels and goats -- are an important source of household incomes. The maintenance of animals depends crucially on fodder from field crops and the leaves of the khejuri (*Prosopis cineraria*) tree. Another important aspect of the village economy is the high rate of migration to other cities in India and to countries of the Persian Gulf. Remittances from these migrants are an important source of income for many households.

# FAS-UNICEF PARTNERSHIP PROJECT

In September 2010, FAS entered in to a partnership with UNICEF through a PCA. The core of the partnership programme focuses on Child Wellbeing, Schooling and Living Standards. FAS will provide cross-sectional and micro-level data on the status of children from a variety of agro-ecological settings. The unique FAS-PARI socio-economic data base will be used to examine and discuss various types of deprivation among children, and the factors associated with such deprivations, in 14 villages across six states. Specifically, an attempt will be made to link deprivations among children in respect of schooling and access to basic amenities to household incomes, assets and occupations, and to the specific agro-ecological and socio-economic structure of each



village. Together, the Foundation and UNICEF will use this micro-level analysis to complement information on macro-level trends in child well-being, and will attempt to provide nuance and depth to our understanding of the well-being of rural children.

The two-year project will be implemented in 2010-11 and 2012-13.

## Outputs

Andhra Pradesh was the first State to be studied as part of the Project on Agrarian Relations in India. Census-type surveys were conducted in December 2005 in three villages. The three villages were Ananthavaram, Bukkacherla and Kothapalle. Ananthavaram in Guntur district is a village in the paddy-dominated tracts of south coastal Andhra. Bukkacherla, which is in Raptadu Mandal, Anantapur district, is a village from a dry, drought-prone area. Kothapalle in Karimnagar district is a village representing agriculture where irrigation is from bore-wells and food grain and other crops are grown.

The first Report prepared for UNICEF is titled Child Well Being, Schooling and Living Standards: Report on Three Villages of Andhra Pradesh, and is available on our website, at <http://www.fas.org.in/UserFiles/File/Andhra%20report.pdf>.

Some of the key findings valid for all three villages of Ananthavaram, Bukkacherla and Kothapalle were the following.

With respect to school attendance and child labour: The unacceptable practice of child labour continues.

Universal schooling remains elusive, with a not insignificant proportion of children, especially girls, out of school.

Attendance percentages fall off sharply beyond the age of 14 years, especially among girls.

STs fare most poorly in terms of attendance.

BCs and SCs, who fare better than STs, do not differ much in terms of school attendance.

The top asset group stands apart from all others in terms of school attendance, as do the other Hindu



Castes.

In terms of literacy rates:

Male literacy rates, both 7+ and adult, do not differ much across all three villages. Female literacy rates are much lower, and sex differentials large. STs are most deprived in terms of literacy rates, both 7+ and adult. SCs generally fare distinctly more poorly than BCs.

A comparison of 7+ and adult literacy rates shows a narrowing of differences across social groups.

Top asset quintile and the other Hindu castes stand apart.

Overall, levels of educational deprivation remain high:

There is massive educational deprivation, with STs



and SCs doing especially poorly.

Other Hindu castes do better than the others, but even among them, the educational achievements are modest.

The SCs and BCs are not far apart, especially in relation to the educational deprivation among females

The top asset group does a great deal better than all others, but even its achievements are modest.

With regard to housing amenities that influence child well being: STs and SCs are most poorly off. Other Hindu Castes are least deprived. The same is true of the top asset quintile. All social groups and asset quintiles have poor access to lavatories.



An important lesson that emerges is that improvements in household economic status do not necessarily imply better outcomes for children. Even among households in the top three quintiles - especially in the third and to some extent the fourth - we found childhood deprivations, such as children, especially girls, being engaged in labour as well as not being in school. One implication of this is that policies for children, such as free schooling or scholarships or noon meals, should not be targeted narrowly in terms of income or asset criteria.







# WORKSHOPS AND COLLABORATION

## WORKSHOP ON DALIT HOUSEHOLDS IN VILLAGE ECONOMIES

The Foundation conducts at least one major workshop each year, to discuss and debate issues pertaining to agrarian studies with other academics and activists.

This year we conducted a workshop on Dalit Households in Village Economies, in collaboration with the Indian Statistical Institute, Kolkata. The papers of the workshop will be published in 2012. For press coverage of the Workshop, see <http://www.fas.org.in/pages.asp?menuid=10>

The outline of the book, edited by V. K. Ramachandran and Madhura Swaminathan, is as follows.

### Section 1: Introductory section

Chapter 1: Introduction by V. K. Ramachandran

Chapter 2: Dalits and Economic Discrimination in Village India by S. K. Thorat and Nidhi Saldanha

### Section 2: Struggles for economic rights

Chapter 3: Socioeconomic transformation of Dalit labour households in a Malabar village by R. Ramakumar

Chapter 4: Peasant movement and Dalit rights in East Thanjavur, Tamil Nadu by G. Ramakrishnan

Chapter 5: Distress and Tenancy in the Thanjavur Region: The case of Palakurichi by V. Surjit

Chapter 6: Land Reform and Access to Land among Dalits in West Bengal by Aparajita Bakshi

### Section 3: Village Findings

Chapter 7: Household amenities among Dalit households by Madhura Swaminathan and Shamsheer Singh

Chapter 8: Caste and Income Disparities in Village Economies by Vikas Rawal and Madhura Swaminathan with a Box on Employment by V. K. Ramachandran, Niladri Sekhar Dhar and Navpeet Kaur.

Chapter 9: Occupational Change among Dalits in Two Villages in Coimbatore (Tamil Nadu): 1981 to 1996 by Judith Heyer

Chapter 10: Asset poverty among Dalits in Uttar Pradesh by Partha Saha

Chapter 11: Access to Formal Credit for Dalits by Pallavi Chavan

# INTERNATIONAL VISITORS

Several scholars and activists from peasant and worker organizations in India have visited the Foundation, and interacted with scholars and staff associated with the Foundation. In addition, we received the following visitors.

Professor Y. Usami,  
College of Life and  
Environmental Sciences,  
Osaka Prefecture  
University, Japan, has  
begun some collaborative  
research with FAS.

Professor J. Okabe,  
Faculty of Economics,  
International Graduate  
School of Social Sciences,  
Yokohama National  
University, Japan, is  
engaged in research with  
FAS.

Mr. D. Sakata, Research  
Scholar, International  
Graduate School of Social  
Sciences, Yokohama.  
National University,  
Japan, visited FAS.

Professor Ravi Kanbur,  
Cornell University

Ms. Indira  
Chandrasekhar, Tulika  
Books.

Mr. M. V. Bhaskar, Chief  
Creative Officer, TNQ  
Books and Journal,  
Chennai.

Ms. Mariam Ram,  
TNQ Books and  
Journals, Chennai.

Interns  
Mr. Douglas Olthof,  
Simon Fraser University,  
Canada  
Ms. Ana Chacko,  
University of Sussex,  
United Kingdom



# PUBLICATIONS

The academic papers and reports published by FAS and its collaborators are available on the following websites ([www.fas.org.in](http://www.fas.org.in) and [www.agrarianstudies.org](http://www.agrarianstudies.org)).





In 2011, we launched the first issue of the journal.

The Review of Agrarian Studies is the peer-reviewed journal of the Foundation for Agrarian Studies ([www.agrarianstudies.org](http://www.agrarianstudies.org)). The journal invites articles on agrarian studies – on the forces and relations of production in agriculture and in rural areas, on living standards, and on different aspects of social formations in the countryside. The Review will carry theoretical and empirical articles on social, economic, historical, political and scientific and technological aspects of agriculture and rural societies. The Review also accepts photographic, audio and video material.

The Review will publish online first and aggregate online content into a print edition every six months. Rich media content (photographic, audio and video material, hyperlinks and interactivity) will be made available only online.

The print edition of the Review will be published jointly by the Foundation for Agrarian Studies and Tulika Books, one of India's most important publishers of books in the social sciences.

Volume 1 Issue 1 (January-June 2011)

Contents

Research Articles

Is India Really a Country of Low Income-Inequality? Observations from Eight Villages

Madhura Swaminathan and Vikas Rawal

Village Common Land, Manure, Fodder, and Intensive Agricultural Practices

in Tamil Nadu from the Mid-Nineteenth Century

Haruka Yanagisawa

Cropping Pattern and Farming Practices in Palakurichi Village, 1918–2004

V. Surjit

Agricultural Employment in a Vidarbha Village: Results from a

Resurvey

R. Ramakumar and Karankumar Raut

Are there Benefits from the Cultivation of Bt Cotton? A Comment Based

on Data from a Vidarbha Village  
Madhura Swaminathan and Vikas Rawal

Symposium

Transgenic Varieties and India's Agriculture: Questions for

Professor M. S. Swaminathan

M. S. Swaminathan, David A. Andow, Ronald J. Herring, Suman

Sahai, K. R. Kranthi,

S. Ramachandran Pillai

Research Notes and Statistics

Changes in the Number of Rural Bank Branches in India, 1991 to 2008

R. Ramakumar and Pallavi Chavan

A Note on Recent Trends in Wage Rates in Rural India

Yoshifumi Usami

Field Reports

Changing Lives and Landscapes: A Case Study of Employment Guarantee

in Bonkati Gram Panchayat  
Aparajita Bakshi

Book Reviews

Market and Non-Market Forms of Discrimination

S. Viswanathan

A Contribution to Agrarian History

Parvathi Menon  
In 2011, we launched the first issue of the journal.

# PERSONNEL

FAS and the Review of Agrarian Studies draw on the voluntary services of academics across India. They include

Abhijit Sen, Professor Jawaharlal Nehru University and Member, Planning Commission  
S. Mahendra Dev, Vice Chancellor, Indira Gandhi Institute of Development Research  
Venkatesh Athreya, Professor (retd.), Bharathidasan University  
C. P. Chandrasekhar, Professor, Jawaharlal Nehru University  
K. Nagaraj, Professor, Madras Institute of Development Studies and Asian College of Journalism  
Indira Chandrasekhar, Tulika Books  
V. K. Ramachandran, Professor, Indian Statistical Institute  
Madhura Swaminathan, Professor, Indian Statistical Institute  
Vikas Rawal, Associate Professor, Jawaharlal Nehru University  
R. Ramakumar, Associate Professor, Tata Institute of Social Sciences  
Aparajita Bakshi, Assistant Professor, Tata Institute of Social Sciences



## The Team

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Santanu Basu  
Mohidur Rahman  
Koustav Dutta  
Krishna Basu  
Arindam Das  
Nabanita Adhikari  
Reeta  
Santanu De Roy