

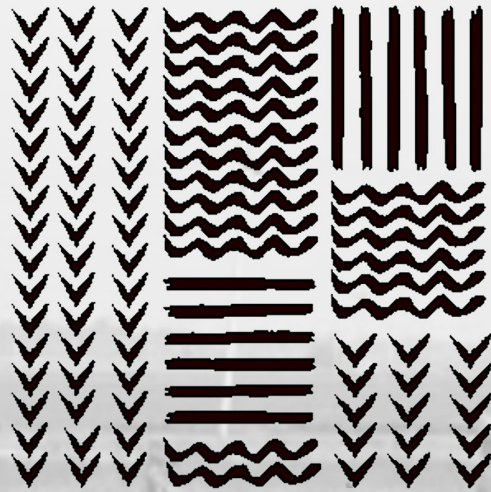


Foundation for
**Agrarian
Studies**



ANNUAL REPORT

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Foundation for
**Agrarian
Studies**



CONTENTS

1 Introduction

2 Project on Agrarian Relations in India (PARI)

Papers and presentations based on the PARI archive

Books published based on PARI data

Forthcoming books based on PARI data

3 Other Research

4 Doctoral and Pre-Doctoral Level Theses

5 Seminars

6 Review of Agrarian Studies

7 Library

8 Visitors

9 Personnel



INTRODUCTION

The Foundation for Agrarian Studies (FAS) is a charitable trust based in Bangalore, India, and established in 2003. The major objectives of the Foundation are to facilitate and sponsor multi-disciplinary theoretical and empirical research in the field of agrarian studies in India and other less-developed countries.

FAS works 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.



PARI

PROJECT ON AGRARIAN RELATIONS IN INDIA

The Project on Agrarian Relations in India (PARI) was initiated in 2005 with the following objectives:

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

facilities of modern life.

The villages studied represent a wide range of different agro-ecological regions in the country. Each year, one or two States are selected and two to four villages surveyed in different agro-ecological regions. As of 2016, PARI has conducted surveys in 22 villages in 10 States in India. PARI data have been used for books, reports, theses, and papers. The details of the same are listed below.

West Bengal Round, 2015

In 2010, census surveys were conducted in three villages of West Bengal. In 2015, PARI resurveyed a sample of households from all three villages in order to update our findings and assess the direction of change in the countryside. Preliminary results from these surveys were presented to the academic community as well as to members of peasant organisations in September 2015.

A brief description of the three villages follows.

Panahar, Bankura district:

Panahar (Deshra-Koalpara gram panchayat, Kotulpur block, Bankura district) falls in the Old Vindhyan Alluvial region of West Bengal. Panahar has been surveyed five times since 1995. Household-level data from the survey of 2005 are also a part of the FAS archive. At the time of the PARI survey in June 2010, a total of 250

households lived in Panahar. Agricultural land in Panahar was primarily irrigated by tubewells. Although the village is in the command area of the Kangsabati project, very little irrigation was received from it. The area covered by ponds and a river lift irrigation scheme, important sources of irrigation in 1995-6, had declined steeply by 2010.

Amarsinghi, Malda district:

Amarsinghi is situated in Samsi gram panchayat, Ratua I Block, Malda district in the New Alluvial Plains region of West Bengal. 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.

A wide variety of crops was 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.

Kalmandasguri, Koch Bihar district:
Kalmandasguri village (Bararangras gram panchayat, Cooch Behar II Block, Koch Bihar district) is in the Terai Teesta Region of West Bengal. At the time of the PARI survey of 2010, 148 households were resident in Kalmandasguri.

Kalmandasguri was surveyed in 1988-9 as part of a study sponsored by the United Nations University-World Institute for Development Economics Research (UNU-WIDER). It was studied again in 1995 as part of a study of rural schooling in West Bengal, 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. It was studied in 2013 as part of a study on land reform by Ranjini Basu.

About a third of the net sown area in the village was irrigated. The major crops in the village were paddy and jute, and more recently, potato. Fishing was an important occupation among Muslim households in the village. Migration from the village for non-agricultural employment was also substantial.

Papers and Presentations Based on the PARI Archive

Basu, Ranjini (2015), "Land Tenures in Cooch Behar District, West Bengal: A Study of Kalmandasguri Village," *Review of Agrarian Studies*, vol. 5, no.1, Feb-June.

Das, Yasodhara (2015), "Socio-Economic Aspects of Migration From Rural West Bengal," paper submitted to the Centre for Development Studies under K. N. Raj Fellowship, March.

Das, Yasodhara (2016), "Socio-Economic Aspects of Internal Migration in India With Special Focus on Rural West Bengal," paper prepared for the National Seminar of Population and Development: Issues and Challenges in 21st century, Nagpur, conducted by the International Institute for Population Sciences, March.

Ramachandran, V. K. (2015), "Issues in Seed Diversity, Seed Cost, and Agrarian Crisis in India," presentation at Saatmachtsaat (SEEDS) conference in Berlin, May 29-31.

Sarkar, Biplab (2015), paper prepared for a panel discussion on farmers' distress, organised by Samudaya Karnataka State Committee on August 6, Bangalore.

Sarkar, Biplab (2015), "Irrigation Development and its Impact on Farm Business Incomes: Evidence From a Village Surveyed in West Bengal, 2005 to 2015," paper presented at the 75th Annual Conference of the Indian Society of Agricultural Economics, held at the Punjab Agricultural University, Ludhiana, Nov 19-21.

Singh, Shamsher (2016), "Factors Affecting Households' Access to Water and Sanitation in Rural India," paper presented at National Seminar on Rural Sanitation in India, organised by the Centre for Rural Infrastructure, National Institute of Rural Development and Panchayati Raj (NIRD&PR), Hyderabad, Jan 27-29.

Singh, Shamsher (2016), "Housing and Labour Relations: A Study of Long-Term Workers in Rural Rajasthan," paper presented at the National Seminar on Dynamics of Rural Labour Relations in India, organised by S. R. Sankaran Chair (Rural Labour), National Institute of Rural Development and Panchayati Raj (NIRD&PR), Hyderabad, Mar 10-12.

Singh, Shamsher (2015), "Residential Segregation and Access to Basic Amenities: A Village-Level Case Study," *Review of Agrarian Studies*, vol. 5, no. 2, Jul-Dec.

Swaminathan, Madhura and Usami, Yoshifumi (2015), "Women's Role in the Livestock Economy," paper prepared for National Seminar on Gender, CSO, MOSPI, New Delhi, September.

Sivamurugan, T. (2016), "Features of Non-Farm Employment in Karnataka: Evidence From Three Villages," paper presented at the National Seminar on Dynamics of Rural Labour Relations in India, organised by S. R. Sankaran Chair (Rural Labour), National Institute of Rural Development and Panchayati Raj (NIRD&PR), Hyderabad, Mar 10-12.

Swaminathan, Madhura and Athreya, Venkatesh (2015), "Economic Status and Child Deprivation: Findings From Village Surveys," in *India's Children: Essays on Social Policy*, A. K. Shiva Kumar, Preet Rustagi, and Ramya Subrahmanian (eds.), Oxford University Press, New Delhi, pp. 68-97.

Books Published Based on PARI Data

Jun-ichi Okabe, and Aparajita Bakshi (2015), *A New Statistical Domain in India: An Enquiry Into Village Panchayat Databases*, Agrarian Studies Series 4, V. K. Ramachandran (ed.), Tulika Books, New Delhi.

A new statistical domain has emerged in rural India as a consequence of the Constitution (73rd Amendment) Act, 1992, a domain that is based on the needs and constitutional functions of the gram (village) panchayat. This creation of a new structure of local government, the contemporary village panchayat, requires statistical databases for the development functions allocated to it. In the formulation of the Expert Committee on Basic Statistics for Local Level Development (BSLLD), "the Gram Panchayat should consolidate, maintain, and own village level data."

The objective of this book is to study panchayat-level databases and their potential use in local-level administration, planning, and policy implementation. The authors study the overall status of local-level data available in two contrasting village panchayats: Raina gram panchayat, Bardhaman district, West Bengal; and Warwat Khanderao gram panchayat, Buldhana district, Maharashtra. As part of the study, the authors examined all records maintained by the gram panchayats, and by other important

panchayat-level departments and institutions, such as Integrated Child Development Scheme (ICDS) centres, primary schools, health centres, revenue offices, agricultural offices, and Block development offices. They conducted interviews on the process of record-keeping and use of accumulated data with officials from panchayats, officers of other departments, Block Development Officers, ICDS officials, land revenue, and agricultural officials. The study attempts to understand the use of such records in decentralised development planning, the periodicity at which the records are updated, and the reliability of such records.

Another aspect of the book is its attempt to evaluate the accuracy of certain panchayat-level databases. In order to assess the reliability of household-level databases available with the panchayat, such as ICDS registers, Civil Registration System birth registers, and Below Poverty Line (BPL) survey data, the authors conducted a micro-discrepancy analysis that compared the panchayat data with data collected by FAS in the two villages.

Madhura Swaminathan and Vikas Rawal (eds.) (2015), *Socio-Economic Surveys of Two Villages in Rajasthan*, Tulika Books, New Delhi.

This is the second book in a series of field reports on village surveys conducted by the Foundation for Agrarian Studies. The report deals with agrarian relations in two villages of Rajasthan: Rewasi in Sikar district, and 25F Gulabewala in Sri Ganganagar district. It presents an analysis of statistical data collected through census-type surveys conducted in both the villages.

The choice of villages was made so as to capture different agro-ecological regions of the State: 25 F Gulabewala of Sri Ganganagar district from the Trans-Gangetic Plains and Rewasi village of Sikar district from the Transitional Plain of Inland Drainage (TPID) category of the Western dry

agro-climatic region of Rajasthan were selected. 25 F Gulabewala is irrigated by the Ganga Canal Project.

A unique feature of these surveys is the estimation of household incomes based on information on income from crop production, animal resources, agricultural and non-agricultural wage labour, salaries, business and trade, rent, interest earnings, pensions, remittances, scholarships, and other sources. The focus of the study is on differences across socio-economic classes and social groups, in respect of a range of variables, including land, assets, income, crop production, employment, indebtedness, schooling, and housing.

The report attempts to contribute to the discussion on agrarian relations and economic distress in contemporary rural Rajasthan and India.

The contributors to the research are:

Vikas Rawal, Madhura Swaminathan, Pallavi Chavan, Arindam Das, Aparajita Bakshi, Venkatesh Athreya, Niladri Sekhar Dhar, Shamsher Singh, Jayan Jose Thomas, Biplab Sarkar, Yasodhara Das, and A. Bheemeshwar Reddy.

Forthcoming Books Based on PARI Data

Arindam Das and Madhura Swaminathan (eds.), *Socio-Economic Surveys of Three Villages in Karnataka*, Tulika Books, New Delhi.

This book is a field report on surveys of agrarian relations in three villages of Karnataka conducted as part of the Project on Agrarian Relations in India. Census surveys were conducted in the three villages in May-June 2009 with follow-up visits and case studies in October-November 2014. These surveys estimate household incomes, based on detailed information from crop production, animal resources, agricultural and non-agricultural wage labour, salaries, business and trade, rent, interest earnings, pensions, remittances, scholarships, and other sources.

The choice of villages, as in other PARI surveys, was made so as to capture different agro-ecological

regions of the State: Alabujanahalli of Mandya district from the Southern dry region, Siresandra village of Kolar district from the Eastern dry region, and Zhapur village of Gulbarga district from the North-Eastern dry region were selected.

The book presents an analysis of quantitative data collected through the surveys with a special focus on differences across socio-economic classes and social groups. Socio-economic classes are defined on the basis of sources of income, extent of land ownership, and nature of family labour. In addition, there are two introductory chapters with a broader focus on selected features of the agrarian economy of Karnataka and on farmer suicides.

The chapters of the book are as follows:

R. Ramakumar, *Macroeconomic Data From Karnataka*

Yoshifumi Usami, *A Note on Sericulture in Karnataka*

T. N. Prakash Kammardi, H. Chandrashekar, K. J. Parameshwarappa, Harsha V. Torgal, Gireesh P. S., Malipatil Vijaykumar, and Nagendra, *Agrarian Crisis and Farmers Suicides in Karnataka*

Arindam Das, *Introduction to Study Villages*

V. K. Ramachandran, *Socio-Economic Classes in the Three Villages*

Venkatesh Athreya, *Literacy and Schooling in Three Villages of Karnataka*

Deepak Kumar, *Landholdings and Irrigation in the Study Villages*

Yasodhara Das and Madhura Swaminathan, *Features of Asset Ownership in Three Villages of Karnataka*

Biplab Sarkar, *Cropping Pattern, Yields and Crop Incomes: Findings From Three Villages Surveyed in Karnataka*

Niladri Sekhar Dhar, Arindam Das, and T. Sivamurugan, *Manual Workers in Rural Karnataka: Evidence From Three Villages of Karnataka*

Aparajita Bakshi and Arindam Das, *Household Incomes in Karnataka Villages*

Pallavi Chavan, *State of Rural Banking in Karnataka: With Special Reference to the Three Study Districts*

R. V. Bhavani, *Rural Indebtedness in Karnataka: Findings From Three Village Surveys*

Shamsher Singh, *Condition of Housing and Access to Basic Household Amenities*

OTHER RESEARCH

FAS-Japan Collaboration

Junko Shindo, T. Jayaraman, Kamal Murari, Biplab Sarkar, and Sanjukta Chakraborty, *The Environmental Impact of Chemical Fertilizer Use in Indian Agriculture: A Study Based on Village-Level Data*

One of the striking features of the agricultural economy of India since Independence has been the dramatic increase in agricultural production, especially cereal production. Some of the factors associated with this increase are the expansion of irrigation and the increased application of bio-chemical inputs, particularly chemical fertilizers. It is noteworthy that 16 per cent of world nitrogen fertilizer use takes place in India, the largest consumption in the world after China.

Although chemical fertilizer was essential for India's Green Revolution, it has the potential to cause pollution in groundwater and river water in agricultural areas. According to our estimation of nitrogen balance in farmland in India, potential nitrogen load to the environment from farmland has increased rapidly after the 1980s, especially in the northern States in the Indo-Gangetic Plain.

Published scientific papers that evaluate groundwater quality for domestic use show nitrogen concentrations exceeding drinking water standards in many sites.

Further development of Indian agriculture cannot neglect the issue of the optimum use of nitrogen as part of a more general concern for environmental sustainability. The term "optimum use" is particularly important, given the importance of agriculture for both food security in general and the income and livelihoods of farmers, especially poor and marginal farmers.

The studies, now running into their second year, are led by Junko Shindo and T. Jayaraman, and quantify the nitrogen balance and nitrogen outflow to the environment at the micro level, specifically at the level of the village. While doing so, this project will also re-examine the sources of secondary data for estimating nitrogen balance and nitrogen outflow at the district and state levels.

The research for this project is nearing completion and will soon result in publication.

Small Scale Farming in Indian Agriculture

The Foundation for Agrarian Studies (FAS) and the Rosa Luxemburg Stiftung (RLS) entered into a partnership project titled "Small Scale Farming in Indian Agriculture" in June 2015. The project aims at an improved understanding of small scale farming in Indian agriculture, drawing on theoretical and

empirical study.

The project supports seminars and workshops to discuss and disseminate the findings from the research in order to reach a wider audience. This partnership will lead to publications on the subject of small scale farming in Indian agriculture.

Internal Projects

Yasodhara Das, *Economic Conditions of Bengali Migrant Workers in Kerala: A Survey in Kerala*

This project aims to explore migration as a livelihood strategy with special focus on migrant workers from rural West Bengal by studying their place of origin and

place of migration. FAS in its West Bengal Round (2010 and 2015) studied three villages: Amarsinghi in Malda district, Kalmandasguri in Koch Bihar district, and Panahar in Bankura district. In 2010, a census survey was done in these three villages and in 2015 a sample survey was conducted in the three

study villages. The preliminary results from these two surveys indicate that there has been an increase in the number of migrants from these three villages, especially Amarsinghi and Kalmandasguri. In these two villages, migration outside the state was common. The most popular destinations for these migrant workers were Kerala, Delhi, Haryana, and Rajasthan. In Kalmandasguri, specific case studies of return migrant workers and migrant worker households were also done. A total of 16 case studies were done using a snow ball sampling method, out of which 11 reported Ernakulam and Kollam in Kerala to be their place of work. The majority of these migrant workers was engaged as construction workers (mason and helper) and cashew nut factory workers in Kerala.

The results from the empirical data collected by FAS and surveys conducted by other institutions, indicate Kerala to be one of the most important destinations of work for a large population of migrant workers from West Bengal. An extensive study of work and living conditions of migrant workers at their place of work,

i.e. Kerala, is important in this respect. FAS aims to understand this crucial aspect of the migrant labour force through this project.

The preliminary results from this survey show that the migrant construction workers canvassed were mostly male (50 out of 51 surveyed construction workers) with a majority of them from Murshidabad district of West Bengal (65 per cent). The respondents were predominantly young migrants, falling in the 15-50 age group with 78 per cent of them reporting to be OBC Muslims. The broad occupational structure of these migrants was construction workers working as “helpers” and as “masons”. Wage rates for masons and helpers were found to be higher in Kerala than in West Bengal. Data relating to living conditions reveal that migrant workers live in unhygienic conditions in migrant colonies spread across Perumbavoor and nearby areas. Preliminary results on the mode of sending remittances also reveal the popular practice of sending remittances mainly through agents, with only a few using bank accounts.

DOCTORAL AND PRE-DOCTORAL LEVEL THESES

FAS supports various doctoral and pre-doctoral level theses by providing data from the PARI archive. Any student from an Indian or foreign university is

eligible to apply for the use of PARI data for research. The final selection depends on a review of their research proposal and a personal interview.

Completed Ph.D. Theses Based on PARI Data and Submitted in 2015-16

R.V. Bhavani, *Rural Credit Outreach in the Reform Period: A Study With Special Reference to Karnataka State.*

This thesis examines rural credit in India, tracing its developments since Independence and the changes since the financial sector reforms in the 1990s. The primary data on indebtedness was obtained from the FAS survey of three villages in Karnataka in 2009. This data reinforced the secondary data analysis at the national and state levels on dependence on the informal credit market for borrowing at high rates of interest

A. Bheemeshwar Reddy, *Aspects of Intergenerational Economic Mobility in India*

Intergenerational mobility measures the association between the socio-economic attainments of individuals and their children. Low intergenerational mobility implies the persistence of socio-economic deprivation from one generation to the next for poorer sections of society. On the other hand, it implies the persistence of socio-economic advantages from one generation to the next for the rich. This thesis presents four essays on aspects of intergenerational economic mobility in India by examining the levels and patterns of such mobility over the last three decades and comparing variations across different social groups. Following the international literature on social mobility, this thesis measures intergenerational economic mobility in terms of the occupations of individuals. The thesis also examines changes in

and the exclusion of small and marginal land holders and vulnerable groups from access to formal sector credit. Hypothesis testing results reaffirmed the evidence from the larger surveys on greater access to formal sector credit and lower rates of interest for households with larger land size and higher level of asset ownership. The share of formal credit in total household debt was found to be lower for Scheduled Caste households as compared to Other Backward Class households. Based on this, the thesis makes recommendations for necessary policy support and rural credit infrastructure for effective outreach and impact.

two factors that are strongly correlated with intergenerational mobility: inequality in educational attainment and levels of assortative marriage. Our results on intergenerational occupational mobility between 1983 and 2012, based on evidence from National Sample Surveys, show that relative mobility declined between 1983 and 2012 and that this decline was sharper among Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes than among non-Scheduled Castes and Tribes. Our results also show that, in general, the impact of socio-economic origin on an individual's educational attainment at the secondary, higher secondary, and graduate levels did not change dramatically between 1983 and 2011-12. This suggests that individuals from advantaged socio-economic backgrounds continue to have better access to educational opportunities than individuals from disadvantaged family backgrounds. Our results, based on

intergenerational correlation between the educational attainments of fathers and sons, showed that educational mobility largely remained unchanged between 1983 and 2012. It is possible that this relative immobility could have contributed to the lack of improvement in intergenerational occupational mobility during the study period (1983-2012) in India. We found that the overall relative homogamy rate, or the chances of individuals within a given level of education

choosing a spouse with the same level of education, increased over the reference period.

This increase in educational homogamy characterised all social groups. The increase in the propensity of individuals to select spouses from within their own educational groups coincided with the increase in economic inequality and the persistence of intergenerational immobility during the three decades under study.

Ongoing Ph.D. Theses Using PARI Data

Biplab Sarkar, *The Economics of Household Farming: A Study With Special Reference to West Bengal*

This research attempts to examine farm business incomes of rural households in West Bengal, paying particular attention to the absolute levels of crop incomes earned by households from their operational holdings, and the variations in farm business incomes across crops, regions, and socio-economic strata.

Yasodhara Das, *Migration from Rural India: A Study of West Bengal*

This thesis is concerned with migration for work from rural India. It attempts to describe and analyse certain features of such migration; in particular, it deals with the magnitude of rural-urban and rural-rural migration, features of socio-economic conditions of households of migrant workers in their villages of origin, the conditions of living and work at certain selected migrant destinations, and the impact of migrant earnings on household incomes in villages, with specific reference to rural West Bengal.

Migration for employment is an important livelihood strategy for people in rural India. It is now established that the magnitude of migration among the rural population is growing and takes place today at an unprecedented scale. Between 1981 and 1991, the total number of migrants grew by only 12 per cent, but between 1991 and 2001, the migrant stock increased by 37 per cent (Census of India Reports, 1981, 1991, 2001).

The study is based on the examination of both secondary and primary sources of data. The main sources of official data used here are the National Sample Survey and the crop income data collected by the Directorate of Economics and Statistics in the Ministry of Agriculture. The main sources of primary data are from household surveys conducted in three villages located in different districts of West Bengal and belonging to distinct agro-ecological and socio-economic types.

According to the National Sample Survey Organisation (NSSO), there were 326 million internal migrants in India in 2007-8, approximately 29 per cent of the total population. Also 91 per cent of migrants in rural areas and 59 per cent of migrants in urban areas in India had migrated from a rural region.

The two streams of movement of workers from rural India in search of employment are the rural-rural and rural-urban streams. According to official sources of data, the number of rural-urban migrants in contemporary India is higher than the number of rural-rural migrants. There is also variation in the duration of migration among different sections of the rural work force. Migration may be permanent or long-term migration where organic links are maintained with the place of rural origin, medium-term migration, and short-term migration, including migration for weeks and days in the year. Short-term migration is

common in rural India. Intra-district, inter-district, and inter-state migrants in India who migrate for work and employment related reasons contribute in a significant way to the present and the future status of the Indian economy. Research on the socio-economic

characteristics of migrant workers, the work and living conditions that migrants encounter, and the impact of migrant earnings on rural household incomes, is thus necessary for an understanding of a crucial segment of India's labour force.

Tapas Singh Modak, *Groundwater Irrigation, Ownership and Exchange: A Study in the Specific Context of West Bengal*

This study will try to describe and analyse groundwater development and its implications on agricultural growth and agrarian relations in West Bengal. In spite of fertile alluvial soil and adequate rainfall, the rural economy of West Bengal stagnated, often referred to as "an agrarian impasse", between 1950 and 1980. In the 1980s and 1990s groundwater irrigation expansion played a vital role in the rapid agricultural growth in the State. But after the mid 1990s, since the implementation of economic reforms, there was a down turn in agricultural growth in the State. In this context, this study will try to analyse the changes in agricultural production that depended on groundwater development in different regions of the State, as well as the agrarian relations that emerged from ownership and exchange of groundwater. This study will also analyse the State policies related to groundwater and energy use in agriculture.

Groundwater irrigation in many parts of India and especially rural West Bengal, is mediated through an informal water market. The allocative efficiency and distributive impacts of such informal water markets have been much debated. However, other forms of water exchanges or water sharing arrangements, such as government owned wells, water cooperatives, or SHG owned tubewells also exist, which have not received adequate attention. Therefore, through a detailed examination of three villages at different stages of groundwater development, this study will try to understand the impact of groundwater irrigation on development of farm business income, profitability, and productivity in agriculture. It will examine different types of water exchange systems and try to understand the allocative and distributive impact of market driven and cooperative water exchange systems in the study villages. The study will use secondary data from official sources and primary data from the Project on Agrarian Relations in India (PARI) archive.

Ranjini Basu, *Land Reform in West Bengal: A Study of its Movement and Implementation*

The thesis will analyse land reforms in West Bengal after 1977. It will examine land reforms in the State as a whole and at the micro level, the role of mass organisations of the rural poor, and local body governance.

However, since the end of the 1970s till the 1990s, the State saw a transformation, when agricultural growth rates saw a manifold rise. This extraordinary growth was seen as a counter-product of the land reform programme implemented in the State.

West Bengal underwent a period of "agrarian impasse" in the decades after Independence, till the late 1970s. This era was denoted by low levels of agricultural productivity and overall food grain deficiency.

Gaps in the history of contemporary land reforms of the State are those of the role of mass organisations in the implementation of these reforms, of the interaction between land reforms and local governance, and the transformation in the relations of production that took place at the local village level. This thesis will try to contribute towards each of these gaps.

SEMINARS

Symposium on Results From Village Surveys, West Bengal Rounds 1 and 2

A Symposium on the results of the surveys conducted by the Foundation in West Bengal in 2010 and 2015 as part of the Project on Agrarian Relations in India (PARI) was held at Durgapur from September 11 to 13, 2015. The Symposium was organised jointly by the Foundation and the Paschim Banga Krishak Sabha, and attended by academics from our network of scholars and 70 leading activists of the Krishak Sabha.

The list of presentations from the Symposium is provided below:

Welcome and Introduction to PARI and the Symposium V. K. Ramachandran, Madan Ghosh

Agricultural Economy of West Bengal R. Ramakumar

Introduction to the Study Villages Aparajita Bakshi

Socio-Economic Classes in the Study Villages V. K. Ramachandran, Arindam Das, T. Sivamurugan

Land Ownership and Irrigation Deepak Kumar with Tapas Modak

Land Tenures in Cooch Behar District, West Bengal: A Study of Kalmandasguri Village Ranjini Basu

Reversal of Land Reforms: A Case Study of Panabar Village V. K. Ramachandran

Land Market in the Study Villages V. K. Ramachandran and Deepak Kumar

Crop Production, Yields, and Farm Business Incomes Biplab Sarkar with Anshu Srivastava

Employment of Rural Labourers in the Study Village Yoshifumi Usami with Arindam Das and Yasodhara Das

Land Ownership and Mobility in the Study Villages Madhura Swaminathan and Bheemeshwar Reddy

Labour Absorption in Agriculture and Number of Days of Employment Niladri Shekhar Dhar and T. Sivamurugan

Wage Rates and Wage Earnings of Rural Labourers: PARI and NSS Data Yoshifumi Usami and Arindam Das with Vijaykumar

Socio-Economic Aspects of Internal Migration Yoshifumi Usami and Yasodhara Das

Household Incomes Aparajita Bakshi and Arindam Das with Subhajit Patra

Rural Banking in West Bengal Pallavi Chavan

Credit and Household Indebtedness in the Study Villages R. V. Bhavani and Sanjukta Chakraborty

The Public Distribution System in the Study Villages Madhura Swaminathan and Subhajit Patra

Agrarian Relations in West Bengal by Surjya Kanta Mishra

Household Asset Holdings Madhura Swaminathan and Yasodhara Das with Ritam Dutta

Condition of Housing and Access to Household Amenities Shamsheer Singh with Rahul Kumar

Schooling and Education in the Study Villages Venkatesh Athreya and T. Sivamurugan

Issues of the Environment and Climate Change T. Jayaraman

Book Release: A New Statistical Domain

The book release of *A New Statistical Domain in India: An Enquiry into Village Panchayat Databases* by Jun-ichi Okabe and Aparajita Bakshi was held on February 29, 2016 at the Tata Institute of Social Sciences, Mumbai. The book has been published by Tulika Books, a long term publication partner of the Foundation. It is the fourth in the Agrarian Studies Series, of which V. K. Ramachandran is the general editor. The book was released by T. M. Thomas Isaac, former Finance Minister of the Government of Kerala.

The programme began with an introduction by Indira Chandrasekhar, Publisher and Managing Editor, Tulika Books, and V. K. Ramachandran, Trustee, FAS.

This was followed by a talk by Professor S. Parasuraman, Director, Tata Institute of Social Sciences, Mumbai. The authors, Jun-ichi Okabe (through Skype) and Aparajita Bakshi, then spoke in detail about the basic objective of this book, which is to study panchayat-level databases and their potential use in local-level administration, planning, and policy implementation. This was followed by the release of the book by T. M. Thomas Isaac, who presented the first two copies of the book to Gopal Galkar, Pradhan of Warwat Khanderao village in Maharashtra, and Professor S. Parasuraman. The concluding talk was given by T. M. Thomas Isaac, which led to a discussion among the participants, mostly academics from the field of agrarian and rural studies.

Launch of the New Website of FAS

The new website of the Foundation for Agrarian Studies, (www.fas.org.in), was launched on March 19, 2016 at an event held at the M. S. Swaminathan Research Foundation, in Chennai. The website is designed and maintained pro bono by TNQ Books and Journals, to provide an agriculture-related repository of studies, research material, and publications. The new website was inaugurated by the eminent agricultural scientist M. S. Swaminathan.

The day began with a lecture by M. S. Swaminathan, titled "The Recommendations of the National Farmers' Commission: A Ten-Year Balance Sheet." M. S. Swaminathan, who was also the Chairperson of the National Commission on Farmers, presented an analysis and overview of the recommendations made in the five Reports submitted by the Commission between 2004 and 2006, and their relevance even today. Hannan Mollah, General Secretary of the All India Kisan Sabha, explained how and why the farming community and the mass organisations of

farmers and agricultural workers supported the NCF's recommendations and urged the Government to implement them in the context of increasing agrarian distress. Chairing the session, N. Ram, Chairman, Kasturi and Sons, publishers of *The Hindu* group of newspapers, re-emphasised the importance of the recommendations of the Commission, and lamented the decline in the systematic coverage of agriculture, especially the agrarian crisis, by newspapers and other media.

This was followed by the formal inauguration of the website, with V. K. Ramachandran, Trustee of FAS and Editor of the *Review of Agrarian Studies*, giving an overview of the studies conducted by FAS in various States and providing an insight into agricultural and developmental issues in rural India. The day-long seminar featured a series of presentations on results from rural surveys conducted by FAS for discussion with the audience of researchers, representatives from farmers' organisations, and academics.

Workshop on Results From Village Surveys

A seminar to discuss the preliminary results of the surveys conducted by the Foundation in West Bengal in 2010 and 2015 as part of the Project on Agrarian Relations in India (PARI)

was held at TERI, Bangalore on April 29, 2015. The purpose of this seminar was to present the results of the surveys to the academic community.

Seminar on Marketed Output and Price Variability in Panahar Village

Kaushik Bora, a doctoral scholar from ISI Bangalore, presented preliminary results from an exploration of data on marketed output and price variability in Panahar village, in West Bengal, at a seminar on March 9, 2016 at the FAS office, Bangalore.

presented included production per acre, the sale price realised by each household for each sale, the marketing agencies used, and the time of each sale. Kaushik also presented corresponding data (to the extent that they were available) on Bankura district in West Bengal.

Kaushik Bora and Madhura Swaminathan have jointly conducted the study, using the data on the monsoon and winter (*aman* and *boro*) rice crops and potato crop in Panahar village. The variables on which farm-level household data were

These preliminary results point to further avenues of investigation; including a comparison of farm-gate prices in the village, retail prices in nearby markets, and more intensive study of marketing institutions in the village.

Seminar on Trends in Agricultural Production and Productivity in West Bengal

Dr Anjan Chakrabarti, Assistant Professor and Head, Department of Economics, St. Joseph's College (University Section) made a detailed presentation on the topic "Trends in Agricultural Production and Productivity in West Bengal: A Disaggregated Study" at the FAS office, Bangalore office, on March 16, 2016.

The presentation examined the trends in growth of production and the productivity of food grain, particularly rice in West Bengal, disaggregated at the level of the districts. In this empirical exercise, 1970-1 was chosen as the starting point and the time series continued till 2008-9.

REVIEW OF AGRARIAN STUDIES

The *Review of Agrarian Studies* is the peer-reviewed journal of FAS (www.ras.org.in). 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* carries theoretical and empirical articles on social, economic, historical, political, scientific, and technological aspects of agriculture and rural societies.

The print edition of the *Review* is published jointly by FAS and Tulika Books, New Delhi, a noted publisher of books in the social sciences.

The journal is rendered online, and the print

edition typeset, by TNQ Books and Journals (www.tnq.co.in), one of India's leading providers of scholarly publishing services worldwide.

We are grateful to the Indian Council of Social Science Research for a publication grant for the journal. During 2015-16, two issues of the journal were published online and in print.

FAS and the Rosa Luxemburg Stiftung entered into a partnership project titled "Understanding Agrarian Relations in India" in September 2014. The partnership continued through 2015. The activities under this project include research for theme based articles, seminars, and workshops whose results are published in this journal.

VOLUME 5, NUMBER 1 (FEBRUARY- JUNE, 2015)

RESEARCH ARTICLES

Spatial Characteristics of Long-Term Changes in Indian Agricultural Production: District-Level Analysis, 1965-2007

Takashi Kurosaki and Kazuya Wada

The WTO Agreement on Agriculture and Tropical Commodities: A Study in the Context of South India

K. N. Harilal and V. Dhanya

Land Tenure and Forest Conservation in the Dooars of the Eastern Himalaya

Govinda Choudhury

Land Tenures in Cooch Behar District, West Bengal: A Study of Kalmandasguri Village

Ranjini Basu

The Kisan Sabha and Adivasi Struggles in Thane District After 1947

Saqib Khan

SPECIAL ESSAY

Agricultural Land Policies and Their Impact on Agricultural Production and Peasants' Lives in Viet Nam Today

Pham Van Duc

FIELD REPORTS

Justice for Bagair Hukum Cultivators in Karnataka

Vikram Gopal

DISCUSSION

Why We Need Political Ecology to Understand Climate Change: A Response to T. Jayaraman

Marcus Taylor

BOOK REVIEWS

The Literati and Colonial Rural Bengal

Malini Bhattacharya

VOLUME 5, NUMBER 2 (JULY- DECEMBER, 2015)

RESEARCH ARTICLES

Food Security in Brazil: An Analysis of the Effects of the Bolsa Familia Programme

Sabrina de Cassia Mariano de Souza, Niemeyer Almeida Filho, and Henrique Dantas Neder

IN FOCUS

The Paris Climate Change Conference and Sustainable Agriculture

M. S. Swaminathan with Arivudainambi Appadurai

The Paris Agreement on Climate Change: Background, Analysis, and Implications

T. Jayaraman

What Should the Climate Goal Be, 1.5°C or 2°C?

Tejal Kanitkar

Agriculture, Climate Negotiations, and the Paris Summit

T. Jayaraman

Climate Change in Agriculture: Voices from the Paris Conference

T. Jayaraman

TRIBUTE

Introduction

Editor, *Review of Agrarian Studies*

Amalendu Guba: A Tribute

Sabyasachi Bhattacharya

Amalendu Guba: A Personal Memoir

M. S. Prabhakara

REVIEW ARTICLES

On Colonialism and the Indian Economy

Amiya Kumar Bagchi

FIELD REPORTS

Peasant Struggles in Andhra Pradesh and Telangana:

Reports from the Field

Telakapalli Ravi

Residential Segregation and Access to Basic Amenities: A Village-Level Case Study

Shamsher Singh

LIBRARY

An important feature of the Foundation is its Library. The current collection of the Foundation covers some 10,000 books, reports, working papers, and dissertations, back issues of journals, and other documents and publications. These publications are housed mainly in a recently constructed library wing on premises owned by the Trustee of the Foundation and located in Thrissur, Kerala.

At the core of the collection is a gift to the Foundation of about 5,000 books and other publications by Yoshifumi Usami, retired Professor of Economics at the University of Osaka Prefecture, Japan. The collection of books covers Indian economy and agriculture, including agronomy, agricultural economics (price policy, agricultural wages, the Green Revolution, and food policy) and demography. This part of the collection also includes related official serial publications, such as the Farm Management Studies (a complete set), Rural Labour Enquiry Reports, reports from the series titled Agricultural Wages in India, Agricultural Price Commission Reports, National Sample Survey Reports, and publications of the Census of India. There are also miscellaneous reports on agriculture and rural development-related topics issued by the

Government of India, State Governments, and other official agencies.

The Library has received a bequest of more than 200 books in the field of agrarian studies from the family of the late Jayati Gupta, Reader in Sociology at the Delhi School of Economics. In addition, the Library has a few thousand books in the areas of agrarian studies, development economics, and related social sciences.

The collection is unique, one of the best of its kind in India, and a valuable resource for scholars working in the field of agrarian studies and rural development, and, more generally, in related social sciences.

The Foundation is seeking financial and technical assistance and collaboration for cataloguing, housing, preserving, and partially digitising the collection in its library. The first collaboration is under way: members of the faculty at the Documentation Research and Training Centre of the Indian Statistical Institute, Bangalore, one of India's leading centres for teaching and research in Library and Information Sciences, have begun a pilot project for cataloguing the collection using Koha library software.

VISITORS

International

Junko Shindo, University of Yamanashi, Japan
Carola Franz, Rosa Luxemburg Stiftung, Berlin, Germany
Daniel E. Little, University of Michigan, Dearborn

India

Stefan Mentschel, Rosa Luxemburg Stiftung, New Delhi
Vinod Koshti, Rosa Luxemburg Stiftung, New Delhi
Tauqueer Ali Sabri, Rosa Luxemburg Stiftung, New Delhi
Nitin Arora, Rosa Luxemburg Stiftung, New Delhi
Sheila Bhalla, Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi
Kalyan Kumar Das, CITU, West Bengal
Anjan Chakrabarty, St. Joseph's College, Darjeeling
Sudhanva Deshpande, Leftword Books, New Delhi
Bhaskar M.V., TNQ Books and Journals, Chennai

Student Interns

R. Jagannath, National Law School of India University, Bengaluru
Siddharth Sekhar Barpanda, National Law School of India University, Bengaluru
Rahul Kumar, Tata Institute of Social Sciences, Mumbai

PERSONNEL

The Team

V. K. Ramachandran - Adviser and Trustee
Sandipan Baksi - Programme Coordinator
Aditi Dixit* - Programme Coordinator
Arindam Das - PARI Coordinator
Pinki Ghosh - Accounts Coordinator
L. Divyabharathi - Editorial Coordinator
Deepak Johnson - Website Content Manager

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Yasodhara Das
T. Sivamurugan
Vijaykumar
Anshu Srivastava
Shamsher Singh
Ritam Dutta
Subhajit Patra
Tapas Singh Modak
Rakesh Kumar Mahato
Rahul Kumar*

Office Secretary

Divya S Devadiga

Office Assistant

Jaya Mary

Cataloguing Assistant

Soja Mohan
V. P. Arathi
Neenu Vimalkumar*

Collaboration With Research Scholars

A. Bheemeshwar Reddy (Indian Statistical Institute, Bangalore)
Biplab Sarkar (Indian Statistical Institute, Bangalore)
Deepak Kumar (Yokohama National University)
Ranjini Basu (Tata Institute of Social Sciences, Mumbai)
Aravindhan Nagarajan (Tata Institute of Social Sciences, Mumbai)
Kaushik Bora (Indian Statistical Institute, Bangalore)

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They include:

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Abhijit Sen, Jawaharlal Nehru University and Member, Planning Commission
V. Sridhar, Deputy Editor, *Frontline* magazine, Bangalore
V. Surjit, International Crops Research Institute for the Semi-Arid Tropics (ICRISAT)
Madhura Swaminathan, Indian Statistical Institute
Jayan Jose Thomas, Indian Institute of Technology Delhi
Yoshifumi Usami, University of Tokyo

*Left during this year



FOUNDATION FOR AGRARIAN STUDIES
514, First Floor, 16th Cross, Indiranagar II Stage,
Bangalore, India - 560038
www.fas.org.in
agrarian_studies@vsnl.net
(+91) 080-40952150 / (+91) 080-25252625
Foundation for Agrarian Studies
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