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Monograph Series

ASHRAM VILLAGE:
AN ANALYSIS OF RESOURCE FLOWS
BANGLADESH RURAL

Research and Evaluation Division, BRAC



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BANGLADESH RURAL
ADVANCEMENT COMMITTEE
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PREFACE

This study is the second of BRAC's village micro-studies undertaken in the process of training a group of BRAC staff in the essentials of observational research. This kind of research was initiated with a view to gaining a systematic understanding of the social system that operates in the rural areas of Bangladesh and that underpins the resource structure of the village. It was felt that a deep-rooted strategy for the development of the rural sector of Bangladesh could be effectively evolved only if we had a sound grasp of the nature of the traditional institutions. To this end BRAC decided to gain insights that could be developed, analysed and documented through detailed studies of the resource distribution within particular villages. The first of these studies has already been successfully published under the title Who gets What and Why: Resource Allocation in a Bangladesh Village.

This second study remains faithful to the methodology developed for the earlier study by Dr.S.P.F. Senaratne of Sri Lanka and attempts to extend that kind of analysis over another village located within BRAC's Sulla Project area. It is essentially a cataloguing of the resource distribution within the village and it attempts to uncover some of the most basic processes by which this distribution comes about. In particular it tries to look at the way in which social relations and institutions play a prominent role in influencing this distribution. In this way it highlights the fact that the acts of the individual villagers take place within a "total field" of social, political, economic and ideological forces and that a complete comprehension of the villagers' actions can only take place if we consider the over-all impact of all these integrated forces.

This study is the product of the team effort of a number of BRAC's research and field staff. Anjan K. Datta was primarily responsible for conducting the analysis and writing of the first draft of this study. Field investigation was carried out by Mr. Kaji Najmul Huq who was also involved together with Ahmed M. R. Chowdhury in the initial stages of data analyses. Izzeddin I. Imam was responsible for extensive editing and preparation of the final draft for publication.

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INTRODUCTION

Although the resource structure in the rural areas of Bangladesh is still based primarily on land, there are gradual trends to diversify into other forms of resource utilization. The increasing trend towards landlessness has forced large numbers of people to look into alternative sources of employment within the rural situation such as trading, business, pisciculture, horticulture, small-scale industries and other similar avenues. This study has been conducted in one particular village to observe the way in which this increasing quantum of resources is distributed amongst the village community. We have especially been interested in the way in which existing distribution patterns are affected by the in-flow of new resources. Another concern has been to observe the inter-relationship between the quantity of resources available and the economic aspects of behaviour.

In order to approach this question of resource behaviour we have been guided by a model that attempts to encompass all the different influences that simultaneously shape the behaviour of individuals. We acknowledge the fact that behaviour is guided not only by considerations of an economic cost-benefit type of analysis but also by social and ideological considerations. The four major elements that we have identified consist of the Complex of Resources, the Pattern of Relationships, the Distribution of Power and the System of Ideology. It is within this framework that relationships are initiated and subsequently operated and it is a conjunction of these four forces on individuals that produce manifest behaviour. In this study we have been able to pursue in detail only the first two of the forces while the two latter elements have been examined in more general terms.

The study thus is a descriptive analysis of all the resources that are exploited in the village and of the distribution of these resources amongst different sectors of the community. We have tried to identify the norms and institutions together with the objective conditions that channel resources in certain directions. In doing this we inevitably uncover elements of the power structure within the village and the data reveals how this power structure co-relates with the flow of resources.

The field work for this study was conducted by one member of the team during two periods in 1977. The first period (2 months) was essentially a "getting to know" exercise during which a village-wide census and survey of household heads was conducted. The survey was designed to give information on land ownership so that households could be classified into land-holding categories from which sample households could be chosen. Geneologies were drawn from the survey data and indepth interview. A preliminary report on the village was prepared in which the critical issues and indicators for the village surfaced. The central problems to be investigated were then formulated and a field plan prepared for the second field period. The second period in the field (3 months) generated the indepth information on which the study is based. Key informants were interviewed to gain general knowledge about the village. Indepth interviews of sample household heads (65 out of 260 household heads) were conducted. Case studies were taken on the critical institutions of the village: kinship, family, faction, religion, shalish. Indepth observation on sample interviewees and key institutions were recorded in note form throughout the field period. The data was analysed by team of two during 1978. An additional field visit (1 month) was made in 1978 to gather missing data.

Selecting the village to be studied had to be done carefully in order to ensure that it was representative as far as possible of other villages in Bangladesh. Thus we had to take into consideration that factors such as availability of skills, employment opportunities, land-holding patterns and external resources showed a distribution that was typical of villages in other areas. These factors, however, differ widely from region to region and as such there can be little meaning attached to the term "the typical village". The results obtained from this study must therefore be appropriately qualified if they are to be applied to other regions. The selected village also had to fulfill other criteria such as access to markets, town and education facilities. Moreover, the selected village had to fall within or near a BRAC project area. The village selected for this study is Ashram which is within BRAC's Sulla Project area and is near to Dhall market and the thana headquarter at Derai.

PART I

ENVIRONMENT AND INSTITUTIONS

SECTION ONE
PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT AND HISTORICAL BACK GROUND

Ashram village is situated on the North Bank of the Kalni river a downstream extension of the Surma river. The Kalni then flows another 2 miles downstream to meet the Kushiara at Markuli from where the combined course flows into the mighty Meghna. The village is under the Tarol Union of Derai Thana in the Sunamganj Sub-division of Sylhet district. The village is comparatively large extending over an area of approximately half a square mile.

The region in which the village is situated has its own peculiarities. The region is known as a 'Haor' area which extends through the major parts of Sylhet district and Netrokona Sub-division of Mymensingh district. The region is intersected by numerous tortuous and sluggish rivers and is dotted over with huge saucer-like depressions called 'Haors' "The haors are big natural depressions which dry up during the winter. During winter a haor is a vast, almost limitless stretch of green land, whilst in the rainy season it is a vast sea of turbulent water."¹ There are as many as six big haors and nearly 500 small haors (marshes) in the district of Sylhet. Derai Thana has 31 small haors and one big haor. The haors are big natural lakes which are not very deep. As a result they dry up during the winter, but during the monsoon these haors become fishing area. By their very natural configuration as the outfall area they form excellent fisheries and supply abundant sweet-water fish. There are about 60 fisheries in the district of Sylhet of which 31 are in Sunamganj Sub-division. The village is surrounded by two other villages on the East and the West, a river on the South and a haor on the North. Waterways are the only means of

transport in the monsoons. In the dry season, motor-launches ply between Derai (8 miles upstream of Dhall), Ajmiriganj and Sherpur (20 miles from Sylhet town) via Markuli. A small impoverished road connects Ashram with Derai. This road goes under water during monsoon. Country boats are the only transport for moving from one village to another and from one hati to another during monsoons. Dhall is the local market and a Post Office, Tahsil Office and the Union Parishad Office are situated at this market. There is a High School and a Primary School adjacent to the market. There are several permanent shops in the market, most of which (11 in number) are owned by villagers of Ashram. Floods have affected land, housing and cropping patterns. The quality and quantity of land is also affected since land which had hitherto been used as a fishery is now being cultivated due to heavy siltation. The houses built by the people are on higher and raised land because water level goes up by 7 to 8 feet. The houses are contiguous and congested. Homesteads are threatened by excessive waves of water during the monsoon and are protected from erosion by Aar (protection walls). These are mostly made of bamboo and Chailia (a kind of Grass). Well to do people make concrete walls.

Floods are a regular phenomenon during monsoons. They are so regular and general in character that they are treated by the husbandmen as part of the "established course of nature". During the monsoon, waters that come down through the Kalni (Surma) from the hilly course cause heavy damage to the crops. As such the area is not suitable for any cropping other than Boro. Even Boro is not safe if there are early floods. On the other hand, floods are followed by rich deposits of silt which increase the fertility of the soil. Due to this the people of the village (and the area) seldom feel the need to apply

¹ District Census Report, Sylhet, 1961 p. 1-3

manures. Irrigation is, however, are essential when seedlings of Boro Paddy raised. Irrigation after transplantation is done by country processes with the help of Kunds or Sheetis (basket) and also with pumps. The introduction of pumps in the, area is a recent development.

Crops grown are mainly Boro. The introduction of improved irrigation facilities has facilitated the cultivation of high yielding IRRI.

One of the chief peculiarities of the area compared to the rest of the district is in the size of agricultural holdings. There is a yawning gap between the two classes of the society, rich and poor. Most of the land is in the hands of a few while about half of the populations have no ownership of arable land. There is evidence of bumper crops in the area which has always had a rice surplus even though it is a mono crop area. The harvest is normally abundant and secure. During the monsoon, which lasts for about six months, many people are confined to their houses and spend their time idly.

The size of the village is relatively large. There are 1980 people living in 260 households. The sex ratio is almost 100 implying that there are almost an equal number of men and Women. In contrast to other villages in the area, Ashram has a predominantly large Muslim Population (83%). The village is divided into different neighbourhoods or "hati". The hatis, having an average population of 100, are mostly based on mixed kinship. Each hati has a distinct name of its own signifying the characteristic features of the majority of the population of that hati. Out of 15 hatis in the village, two are inhabited by Hindus only, one is mixed and the rest are inhabited exclusively by Muslims. Though the two religious communities live in separate hatis, the relationship between

the two communities are cordial which is reflected in social interactions and festivities.

Landless people are either engaged as agricultural labourers or day labourers. The wages have always been low. The Bangladesh District Gazetters of Sylhet District, examining the relevant history of wages in the district commented that "during 1902 the usual wage of a labourer was four annas a day. The minimum was in Sunamganj where men sometimes were hired for 2.5 annas per day". The Gazetter further says, "in May 1966 the daily average wage of an agricultural labourer was Rs.3 at Sunamganj and Rs.4 at Maulavi Bazar". The situation has improved since these years. Now-a-days, a non-agricultural worker gets Tk.5 to Tk.10 per day. This wage varies depending on the "merits" of the labourer. Merit is generally measured in terms of skill or kinship connections. They are generally engaged in earth cutting work, in the construction of houses or making of Aar (protection walls) of homesteads. The village cannot offer sufficient work to such workers everyday. The Government's food for work programme in the winter provides some work.

The bulk of the labour force is engaged as agricultural labourers. Landowners hire them for the period from Kartik (October) to Jaishtha (May) and pay a wage of 25 maunds of paddy. Unlike the non-agri cultural labourers they get free food in the employer's house, but their families are not given any food hence they have to take credit at high rates of interest. When they are given their wage at the end of the contract, a major portion of this is taken back as outstanding loans and interest. But labourers still prefer this because it ensures employment during that period. All labourers are not provided agricultural employment, because landowners use certain criteria in selecting labourers. The

most important criteria are skill, kinship links, patron-client relationships or neighbourhood connections.

The village, as well as other villages in the area, provide seasonal employment to labourers from outside the district, particularly Barisal, Faridpur, Comilla and Dacca. The harvesting season is very short lived because of the speedy on rush of monsoon waters. The responsibility for harvesting the paddy is mostly entrusted to the labourer groups coming from outside the district. These labourers are paid one eighth of the paddy harvested by themselves. Local labourers seldom get employment in harvesting.

The topography of the area also provides a stimulus for business to these people. Till 1965, cargo ships of I.G.N. and R.S.N. Co. used to ply between Calcutta in West Bengal and Silchar in Assam through this region and used to call at Markuli, which is 4 miles south of Ashram, and Ajmeriganj. Regular launch services connect Markuli with Dhall Market. Water ways are the only means of transport available to the people. Because of the importance of this river transport the area had easy access into the field of trade and commerce and Markuli and Ajmeriganj have become prominent as commercial centres. Ajmeriganj was a well-known wholesale and aratdari business centre. At one time it used to get supplies from areas far flung as Patna, Cooch Bihar etc. (Sylhet Gazetteers).

The occupational distribution of households reveals that inhabitants of the village are predominantly employed in farming, wage-labour, business and service. Only two live on begging.

Institutional education started in the Muslim families after 1947. Before then, there was a primary school in the village but only Hindus from Ashram and neighbouring villages were enrolled. Changes in the attitude of the Muslims of Ashram towards education started taking place with the establishment of Ashram Madrasha in 1955 and Dhall Primary School in 1960. The literacy rate in the Hindu community is still higher though (Hindus 49%, Muslims 20%). There is one M.Sc. (a Muslim) and a small number of educated persons who crossed the secondary level of education. BRAC too has imparted literacy to a large number of adults through its "functional education".

Rice and fish are the main food intakes of the villagers but most of the time the poor cannot afford to take rice at every meal and consume wheat instead of rice. Cultivation of pulses and vegetables is limited, resulting in the low consumption of such items. Abundance of fish in the monsoon leads them to dry fish for consumption during the rest of the year.

The village of Ashram, a predominantly Muslim village, and the surrounding land associated with it, were once a part of the estate of Zamindar Bakar Mahmood of Jagannathpur. The neighbouring villages were under the control of Hindu Chowdhuries who considered Bakar Mahmood an indirect threat to their influence and resources. In the period following Bakar Mahmood's death there was considerable tyranny and inner conflict amongst his successors. Eventually his estate was divided between two of his grandsons, Wakib Mia and Syedur Reza. Conflicts continued between the Zamindars and the Hindu Choudhuries and eventually led to both the Zamindars having to sell off large portions of their land to the Hindu Choudhuries. This period also saw the emergence of a wealthy

Muslim named Abdus Soban, whose ancestors had accumulated land by deception from the Zamindar. Food shortages in other parts of Bengal, coupled with the fact that Ashram is in a rice surplus area, had provided a stimulus for the local people to expand their trading activities. Abdus Soban gave patronage to the poor in their trading activities and thereby secured a following and influence in the area. He played a role in the Pakistan movement and gained enough support to become the leader of the village. This brought him into direct conflict with Zamindar Wahab Mia who ultimately had Abdus Soban murdered. After his death, Abdus Soban's son Dilfor took up the leadership. This was followed in 1952 by the implementation of the Last Bengal Estate Acquisition and Tenancy Act which led to the dissolution of the Zamindar's estate. Dilfor continued to consolidate his position as the power of the Zamindar declined until the Zamindar was eventually forced to leave the region after a defeat in the 1963 election. Land began to change hands, sometimes illegally, and the one-time tenants began to acquire land of their own. Moreover, following the partition of India, many Hindus migrated from the area making additional land available. Those people who had made fortunes out of their trading activities began to purchase land and started consolidating their position as a new class of land owners. One of these was named Mobarak. They invested their wealth in land as well as in fisheries and started establishing an extensive resource base. Some were even able to send their kin abroad to send back remittances which would become yet another source of income for them. They also established links with the Hindus by offering them protection by utilizing ready made influential contacts with the Muslim League.

By 1955 Dilfor had taken on the role of religious leader and had acquired the leadership of the newly, established

Mosque and Madrassa in the village. The 1965 Indo- Pakistan war was also of great benefit to the new class of wealthy people since they could move in to occupy the vacuum left by the withdrawal of the Hindus from the money lending field. Thus a new socio-politico-economic polarization had taken place in the village. Mobarak used his links with influential Hindus to become the Chairman of the School Committee, The Liberation war of 1971 proved to be another opportunity for expansion of his resource holdings. He succeeded in obtaining a rice mill that had belonged to the Hindu Headmaster of the school who had taken shelter in Mobarak's shop. His son established a useful relationship with the local MP which helped him to obtain a postgraduate scholarship to India. Other members of the newly wealthy class identified with the Awami League and thus managed to obtain business facilities and control over the distribution of relief materials.

Since times past land ownership had been concentrated in the hands of a few elite members of the society while the majority of the people of Ashram led a precarious existence. They had no land and hence no secure source of income. A few managed to exploit the lucrative opportunities for trade and commerce in the area but these few went on later to become the new elite land owning class. The vast majority, however, remained in the same position of not having any physical or political assets and without a guaranteed source of income. None of the historical changes in the village had any effect on their state of affairs.

In 1972, after the area had been shattered by the Pakistan Army, relief operations were started in the area by BRAC. BRAC's workers came into close contact with the landless poor of Ashram and were able to identify the most disadvantaged groups of people in the village by the end of

1972. BRAC imported the idea to form a cooperative among the landless following a Government decision to distribute khas land(public land) among the poor through cooperatives.

By 1973, the formation of Ashram Landless Cooperative Society was completed with 164 members. Apprehending that the very term "Landless" might be a possible barrier in obtaining registration, it was de jure named as "Machuteka, Burungi and Gumora Krishak Samabaya Samity." Soon after the formation, they decided to fight the local Union Parishad election and Surokullah was agreed as the candidate. He contested and sailed through comfortably by beating all other contestants most of whom were from the elite class.

In late 1973, BRAC leased in 10 acres of demonstration plot from the Government with an aim to engage the landless people. BRAC commissioned an expert on agriculture to look after the project. The first opposition from the village elites who were supported by the then Agriculture Minister of Bangladesh (who was from the same region) began to be felt. The elites contended that the land was grazing field and were successful in cancelling the lease agreement.

In the meantime the landless continued to unite themselves for collective actions. They started building up a fund through individual compulsory subscription and within a few months an amount of Tk.18,000 was collected. They applied again for Government "Khas Land" and were awarded 33 acres of fellow land under a temporary settlement in early 1974. BRAC assured to supply them with all inputs including seeds, power tillers and power pumps. Thus they started their maiden venture with great zeal and enthusiasm.

They soon started facing opposition from the richer sections, however, who prevented them from taking possession of the land. Although the Police interfered briefly on behalf of the landless; it was all to no avail and the will of the powerful elite prevailed. Moreover, elements from the landed sections were infiltrating the co-op and deflecting its energy and resources away from the real issues. At one point the, co-op was in danger of breaking apart altogether and it was at this point that BRAC adopted a new strategy. Having made an attempt in 1974 to build an embankment in the area and having had this attempt foiled by the richer sections, BRAC realized that the only way to make the co-operative effective would be to restrict its membership only to the most disadvantaged sections of the community.

Thus, with the dedicated efforts of the enlightened landless and BRAC workers, the co-operative was given a new lease of life. BRAC workers participated with the local members to bring about a sharper awareness of the most important issues. BRAC's Functional Education courses were imparted, healthcare education and family planning was given.

The co-operative members started to engage in collective activities and, where necessary, they were also given economic support by BRAC. The co-operative soon became an organization of central importance for the improvement of the lives of the poorest people in the village. The running and leadership of the co-operative, under the guidance of BRAC workers, remained in the hands of the landless and, in May, 1977, a decision was taken to seek affiliation with Derai Thana Central Co-operative Association.

SECTION TWO
INSTITUTIONS

Kinship

In Ashram there are 13 Kinship groups, out of which 8 are very large and strong. The kinship groups are known by the name of their leaders who are usually amongst the elders of the group and are selected on the basis of their resource position, intelligence, interests and connections with other kinship groups. In the village community kinship is a very important institution in all affairs but here we are particularly interested in looking at the resource aspects of kinship interactions.

Sale of land

When land is sold priority options are given to kinsmen and if kin are unable to buy then the kinship leader helps in obtaining a suitable buyer. Kinsmen get preference as a result of a traditionally accepted norm and also because of the government pre-emption rulings.

Employment

In employing labour, the people in the upper land-owning category put less consideration on kinship ties while the people in the lower category put more so in order to obtain political and factional support, support in disputes with others etc. On the other hand, the poorer members of a kinship group tend to rely on their rich kin for employment and other obligations.

Marriage

Amongst the muslims, marriage between kin is generally preferred. One of the advantages of this kind of marriage is that it minimizes the outflow of resources from the kinship group, especially through daughters (daughters not only inherit some of their father's property according to Muslim inheritance laws, they also carry large dowries upon marriage). Another advantage, especially important to the poorer members of the group, is that intra-group marriages strengthen the ties of solidarity between kin.

Reciprocity

Reciprocal services between people of one kinship group differ significantly from another kinship group. Kinsmen help each other during celebrations of domestic and religious function, marriages, rituals and in disputes. In domestic functions first level kin (i.e. brother, sister, uncle) attend and help each other. During muslim festivals (say, Eid, Sab-e-barat, etc) households within each kinship group distribute sweets among each other. In the selection of bride or bride-groom in marriages, some of the knowledgeable and elderly people of the kinship group make the final decision. The marriage function is attended by all kinsmen, On the marriage of poorer kin, rich kinsmen usually help them with cash or in kind and also with management problems so that the status of the kinship group as a whole is maintained.

The kinship leader may resolve, within his capacity, household disputes relating to credit, children, share of business, homestead etc.

In the poorer families kinsmen help one another in making houses, plying boats to visit relatives, providing agricultural equipment like ploughs, ladders, bullocks, spades etc. They also help each other in fishing which they generally do jointly with the some boat and net. Sometimes rich kin also provide their poorer kinsmen with agricultural and fishing equipment. The rich kin also provide some services such as short term credit or accommodation facilities. Some economic transactions are regulated through kinship e.g. ornaments are mortgaged to kinsmen, and not to others in order to upheld discretion.

Neighbourhood

Ashram is composed of 15 neighbourhood groups. Each of those neighbourhoods possesses a definite geographical boundary and has its own name which is based on the caste, profession, surname, etc. of the majority of the neighbourhood population. There are two neighbourhoods which are exclusively Hindu, one which has both Hindus and Muslims and the rest which are exclusively Muslim. Out of these 15 neighbourhoods, only one is composed of the same kinship group while all the others are composed of different kinship groups. The two Hindu neighbourhood groups are composed of kinship groups of two different castes. All the neighbourhoods contain mixed economic status and most of them have at least one rich or medium stratum of households. The rich households have larger homestead areas, quality houses, sanitation facilities, ponds and roads while the majority do not have these facilities. Some households have no residential plot at all and so they have to reside either in their kinsmen's house or in the house

of a patron to whom they have sold their residential land. The rich in the neighbourhood are found to have expanded their residential area by purchasing land from their immediate neighbours and are thus able to dominate the whole neighbourhood group. It is also found that the newly rich tend to migrate to neighbourhoods where better housing facilities exist. The rich groups sometimes sponsor their poor kin from another village by providing housing facilities in their neighbourhood. This trend is also found among landless and marginal farmers who own a residential plot or house when they allow their married daughters or widowed sisters to reside in their neighbourhood.

In selecting people for employment, neighbourhood plays a less important role than kinship. However, during the time of plantation, it is the immediate neighbours who are usually employed. This is because labour is in short supply at that time hence it is not possible to show any particular preference to kinsmen. The nearest available labour is used usually from among immediate neighbours) without regard for ties of kinship, faction etc.

Reciprocal services are found between people of the same economic level in the neighbourhood groups with few exceptions. Reciprocal services in the neighbourhood are mostly in kind rather than in cash. Neighbours help each other by giving short term credits, agricultural equipment, helping in repairing houses, helping with boats to go to the market in the monsoon. The poor use the courtyard of rich and medium farmers for drying of paddy. Sometimes, when threshing paddy, the rich and poor farmers of the same neighbourhood perform the task jointly the poor farmer gets the benefits of threshing equipment while the rich farmer gets the benefits of free labour.

In the celebration of the domestic functions and festivals, each of the neighbourhood groups invite their kin; firstly, those from within the same neighbourhood and secondly, those from outside the neighbourhood. Then they might invite close neighbour whom they regard as guests while the kinsmen are regarded as members of their group.

Faction:

There are two factions in the village, centred around two personalities, which started long ago but came to the surface during the U.P. election of 1962. One of these persons had inherited a large amount of property, power and status while the other had started with very little and improved his position through some illegal and anti-social activities. In the U.P. election of 1962, the man who had inherited his wealth won the election, defeating his opponent's candidate. His faction was also opposed by his opponent's in the election for the post of chairman. From then on, factional contradictions developed further in the village and, because of this factionalism, no one from the village could win the election for the post of chairman. This factionalism is also present in the selection of teachers for school, madrasha, the selection of school/madrasha managing committee etc. Though Ashram's a big and resourceful village in the region, its internal factionalism deprives its scope for influencing the administration of the union parishad.

Factionalism plays an important role in the selection of labour for both public and private works. It is found that large numbers of labourers get employment in public works because they have their representatives in the administration. Similarly, in the distribution of tube-wells by the union member, it has been found that some neighbourhoods have got

two tube-wells whereas some others do not have any.

During the study period, there was a dispute between these two groups regarding the selection of the ration dealer. The ration dealer was selected by the U.C. Chairman from his own factional group which led the other to become agitated with what seemed to them to be a biased selection. They started to criticise the chairman on the grounds of corrupt practices in the sale of ration goods and lodged a complaint with higher authority. As a result of this complaint, the police came and the dealer was arrested. However, the chairman intervened and secured his release in exchange for a bribe, although the dealer had his ration-dealer's license cancelled. This last action delighted the opposing faction but the overall effect of this arrest and the re-appointment of a new dealer was that the general mass was deprived of any ration goods for two weeks. This sort of factional hostility is evident in many aspects of the socio-politico-economic activities of the village.

Samaj and Shalish

The samaj is a social institution of considerable authority which provides advice and suggestions in the social and religious fields and which approves and sanctions the activities of the community. It is composed of the eldest members of the community and its leaders are often the same persons who are also kinship and neighbourhood leaders. Before the partition of India, the samaj was dominated by a Hindu influence as was the area in general, the Hindus controlled the majority of the resources and the Muslims remained dependent. After partition, however, the resources started changing hands and so did the nature of the samaj. Dilfor was elected leader of the samaj and he started establishing some

Islamic institutions on the village level, such as a mosque and a madrassa. Behavioural and ideological norms slowly began to swing into a more Islamic orientation.

Beginning in 1969, national level political organizations began to make their influence felt in the area through an educated set of young activists. This led to a conflict between the younger leaders and the more established, traditional leaders culminating in the nation-wide victory of the Awami League in 1970. From then on, the young activists consolidated their hold on the positions of power and influence, especially after their active participation in the liberation struggle during 1971. They gradually extended their links with the regional and national level political leaders and also with the thana and district level administration officials. By 1977, the sons of resource holding families had become active political leaders and it was noticed that these families were encouraging their sons on the one hand while placating the traditional older generation of leaders on the other, by giving assurances that they would be responsible to the older leaders for their sons. However, the new leaders were able to exercise control over the samaj because of their wider links with administration officials. The traditional leaders fear the interference of police and Government officials in their social problems and discourage the activities of any strangers within their territory.

Furthermore the greater alienation and increased suffering of the disadvantaged people in the area, supported by BRAC's consciousness raising and motivational efforts, led to the formation of a landless cooperative society. This society started becoming vocal in its demands for greater rights over public funds and wanted more control over resources that were in the hands of the traditional samaj

leaders. This led to an election confrontation where the co-operative succeeded in getting one of its nominees elected to the Union Parishad Council. However, a lack of social status and economic backing prevented this man in effectively defending the interests of the co-operative.

The power of the traditional leaders is based on their control of kinship and neighbourhood groups. Household heads who are rich in resources and have control over neighbourhood economic relationships usually become the leader within the neighbourhood. Most neighbourhoods, except for those which are very poor in resources, have such leaders and it is they who are the samaj leaders - thus, there are no samaj leaders from the poorer classes. Of the 15 neighbourhoods, there are 4 neighbourhoods whose leaders have influence and authority over the whole village. These 4 leaders, who have close inter-relationships with each other, also act as the chief arbiters of samaj activities.

Neighbourhood leaders are also called upon to arbitrate in matters of intra-neighbourhood disputes and have the authority to issue verdicts and impose sanctions when necessary. More serious disputes, especially if they cut across neighbourhoods, are referred to the samaj leaders who may call a shalish (judicial bench). The shalish is the legal institution through which the most serious transgressions of social norms are monitored and judged and through which punishments are meted out to guilty parties. The shalish may sometimes seek recognition as an authentic legal body by inviting a Union Parishad Chairman or member to participate in it or, alternatively, it may occasionally send an unresolved conflict for deliberation in an official court of law. However, as the shalish are controlled by those with economic power and special interests, they tend to favour the resource

holding groups at the expense of the poorer groups. Thus we hear a poor villager say, "Nowadays the shalish gives verdicts by looking at the face and economic position." Further more, there is some expense involved in convening a Shalish which means that it rarely, if ever, sits to judge a dispute between poor people. Hence their conflicts remain unresolved and they constantly look for other mechanism to deal with their disputes.

Politics and Administration

Prior to the decline and collapse of the Zamindari, the village was under the direct administrative control of the Zamindar who used to rule through his "morol" a brutal and ruthless group of people who paid allegiance directly to the Zamindar and maintained a strict enforcement of the Zaminder's order. After the end of the Zamindari era, the administrative structure was centered around two nearby institutions the Union Council (later known as Union Parishad) and the local market - since both of these were manned and controlled by villagers of Ashram. In the 1963 election, the vice chairmanship of the U. C., (Union Council) came into the hands of a villager from Ashram while the chairmanship went to a villager in a neighbouring village, a colleague and ally of the newly elected vice-chairman. These two had the headquarters of the U.C. brought to the nearby market of Dhall and, over the next few years, managed to attract substantial amounts of public funds into the area. They established, besides the headquarters of the U.C., a BADC godown (warehouse), a Post Office and a Primary school in or around the market. They established themselves as leading figures in their area and continued to exert much authority until a new wave of political awareness swept the net generation in 1969. This saw the rise of younger leaders who maintained wide links

with the national political scene and who finally wrested power in the wake of the Awami League and NAP victories. Although this younger set of leaders now control political and administrative activities they often consult and seek approval from their older leaders.

Money Lending

Money lending is a prominent institution in the village. Money lenders operate in almost all economic categories, although the degree of involvement may differ from one individual money lender to another. Since the volume of money lending is almost insignificant amongst the lower income categories, we will deal exclusively with those who are professionally engaged in money lending with substantial capital.

Money lenders have multiple sources of income, the profits from which are invested into the money lending business. Sometimes, a petty money lender may borrow money from a kinsman or patron at a lower rate of interest and then reinvest into money lending at a higher rate of interest.

The operation is not confined to the boundary of a village. For instance, the money lenders of Ashram have their operations spread over seven adjacent villages. There are some money lenders in the region who have their network spread throughout the region.

Credit is mostly extended in the pre-harvesting period. The terms and conditions of credit vary from one individual borrower to another and from season to season. The rate of interest is generally low for clients but this may again vary from one individual lender to another. For a credit of

Tk.100/- in the pre-harvesting period, the debtor has to pay an amount of three maunds of paddy at the end of harvesting. The period for which this credit is taken is hardly one month. Thus, in a month, a borrower has to pay an interest of 200 percent*. If a borrower fails to repay in time, he is charged according to compound rate of interest and, in case of failure to pay the outstanding debt, the borrower's right over his land or other assets are "confiscated" and are forcibly mortgaged to the lender. In case of post-harvest credit, an interest rate of 10 percent per month is charged.

The moneylender's business is sometimes hampered by the inflow of external institutional credits, in which case they lower the rate of interest. However institutional credit has not been effective so far, because of the excessive bureaucratic procedure required and also due to the apathy of officials concerned.

Market

Markets are always an important institution in the context of the village and Dhall is the nearest market available to the villagers of Ashram.

The Dhall market has 19 permanent shops - 7 trade :n stationery and grocery, 2 in cloth, 2 tea stall, 1 betel leaf, 1 in tailoring, 2 in paddy and rice, 2 in dispensary goods and 2 are wheat rice mills. 12 of these are owned by the villagers of Ashram and people from seven village come into the market for sales and purchase. In addition to the permanent shops, about 50 temporary shops are opened on each of the two hat

* For Tk.100 a borrower can purchase one maund of paddy before harvest but he has to pay back three maunds at the end of the harvest

days (Sunday and Thursday) dealing mainly in perishable goods. About 1,000 people on average visit the market on hat days and the total transaction in a hat day is estimated to be around Taka 10,000. About half of the sales in the permanent shops are on credit for which each keeps a permanent book of accounts.

The market is now registered with the Government Revenue Department and is auctioned every year to private parties- the present holder is Mobarak of Ashram. He collects taxes from the traders through two of his clients.

There is a market committee for the management of the affairs of the market. The present committee has seven members of whom three are from Ashram.

Educational Institutions

Education has been a rare privilege for the people of the region and Ashram may consider itself lucky to have two rival educational institutions within its reach.

The first is the Dhall High School that was born as a primary school in 1962 through the efforts of some Hindus in a neighbouring village. It was upgraded to a junior school in 1966 and in 1975, after its development into a high school, 15 of its student formed the first batch to appear in the S.S.C exam. Eight of them appeared successfully. Three of the 14 teachers and four of the eight members on the Managing Committee (including Mobarak, Chairman of the Committee) are from Ashram. The enrolment in the school, mostly from Ashram, is about 250 although regular attendance is around 150. Funds are collected publicly at the annual "Dhal Mela", a fair held on the first Wednesday of every Falgun (Bengali. month

corresponding from Mid-Feb to Mid-March), and are administered by the Managing Committee.

The other educational institution, established in 1955, is the madrassah situated in the centre of the village. It was set up as a result of funds collected from the well-to-do in the region and further expenditures are met through the contributions of the villagers. After several years of saving, the school's Managing Committee acquired 5 acres of land, the income from which is used for the development of the madrassah. The Committee is composed largely of people from Ashram including Dilfor as its chairman. The enrolment is 125 and about 70 mainly girls, attend regularly. The madrassah is now registered with a Government development scheme which provides it with a sum of Tk.4000 annually.

PART II
RESOURCE HOLDINGS

SECTION ONE**LANDOWNING STRATA**

Ashram is no different from the majority of villages in the low lying areas of Sunamganj in that the land owned by the people of Ashram is not confined to the area within its commonly recognised boundaries. Like other villages, Ashram too has a share of the haor land to which all have access. In discussing the ownership of land in Ashram we have therefore to consider not merely the area which is clearly Ashram but also those other extents which at any of given time may be its share of/haor land. We shall identify this total quantum, the possibilities of increasing this amount, why it remains at that particular level, its "value" in terms of returns, the possibilities of increasing this return, how the total resource of land is shared by different groups in the community, the changes in this distribution which has taken place over the last 25 years and the factors which determine the direction of this process.

This village owns 959.33 acres of land comprising residential, cultivable and public regions. The mount of residential land owned by this village is 71.83 acres divided into 13 paras (neighbourhoods) of different sizes all of which are on raised land which escapes flooding. The residential area includes baris¹ and footpaths connecting both baris, and paras.

The amount of cultivable land owned by this village at present is 845 acres. All these are part of haor lands. Out of the 845 acres of haor lands owned by this village, 242 acres are in its own mouza (survey unit demarcating land plotting)

while the remaining 603 acres are in eight other mouzas belonging to two unions.

Apart from residential and cultivable land, an area of 42.5 acres is used for public purposes. This land includes the village mosque, madrassah, grave yard and common grazing land.

Now let us see how this quantum of land is shared by the people of Ashram. A person in Ashram will be referred to as an owner as long as he has rights over the land, whether or not he is using it, whether or not he is exercising his rights and whether or not the land is usable. We have categorized the village population into five broad landowning strata in terms of this ownership of cultivable land. The classification is as follows:

Rich:	above 10 acres
Medium:	6.01 - 10 acres.
Small:	3.01 - 6.00 acres
Marginal:	0.01 - 3.00
Landless:	Zero

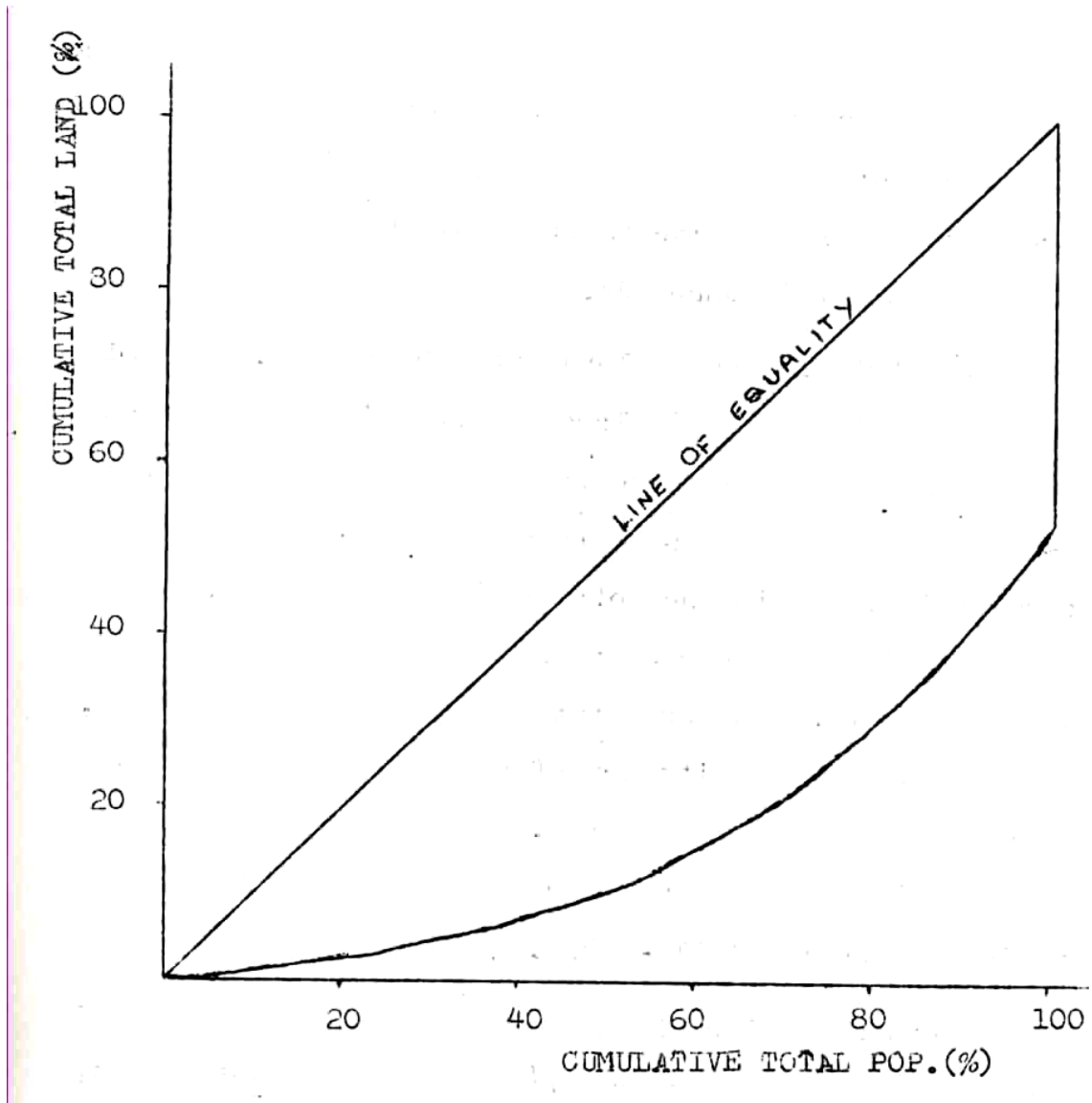
Table 1 shows the distribution of land ownership in Ashram between these five strata. The Table shows that a high Proportion of households (46.3%) are in the landless stratum. Thus the cultivable land owned by the village in fact belongs only to 54% of households. Further, 42% of the households, in the rich stratum, own 29.1% of the cultivable land, reflecting a very uneven distribution. A calculation of Gini's Co-efficient yields an estimate of 0.67.*

¹ Groups of houses belonging to the same family.

* Gini's Coefficient varies from, 0 to 1. The higher the value of the co-efficient, the more is the inequality. Had there been no inequality, the curve would have merged with the line of equality (figure).

TABLE 1 OWNERSHIP OF LAND ACCORDING TO LAND HOLDING STRATA

Landholding stratum	Rich	Medium	Small	Marginal	Landless	Total
No of household in the stratum	11	24	42	63	120	260
No. of households as % of total No.	4.2	9.2	16.2	24.2	46.2	100
Residential land owned (in acres) - (A)	20.40	13.2	19.42	13.73	5.04	71.82
Res. Land as % of total	28.41	18.31	27.02	19.13	7.01	100
Cultivable (in acres) - (B)	245.9	235.7	188.4	175.0	Nil	845.0
Cult. Land owned as % of total	29.1	27.9	22.3	20.7	Nil	100
Total land (in acres) (A&B)	266.33	248.90	207.85	188.73	5.04	916.82
Land owned as % of total	29.05	27.15	22.67	20.58	0.55	100



Gini coefficient was calculated by measuring the area under the above curve using the method of dividing area into narrow strips and considering each strip as an approximate trapezium.

This unevenness is also characteristic of the amount of residential land owned, as revealed in table 1. The table reveals that 29.41% of residential land is owned by 4.2% of the households, while 46.3% of households own only 7.01% of the residential land. It is evident that those who own large extents of cultivable land also have large residential compounds.

The total quantum of land owned by the village and the distribution of this land between different landowning strata has not remained constant. There is a continuous re-arrangement in the pattern of distribution and there is also an increase in the total quantum of land that is owned by the village. These changes have taken place due to various factors such as natural increase of population, migration, the exploitation of new resources, sale and purchase of land and so forth. Here, we have tried to identify and explain the changes which have taken place during the period 1951 - 1977.

A reconstruction of the position of landownership in the village in 1951 is presented in the following Tables (Tables 2A and 2B)

TABLE 2A **Position of landownership**

Year	1951	1961	1974	1977
Total land (in acres)	604	767	797	845
Annual increase %	- (2.7)	(.3)	(2.0)	
Popn.	880	1126	1463	1596
Annual increase%	- (2.8)	(2.3)	(3.0)	
Household	148	188	253	260
Annual increase %	- (2.7)	(2.7)	(0.9)	
Per capita holding of land	0.69	.68	.54	.53

TABLE 2B HOUSEHOLDS BY STRATA OVER THREE TIME PERIODS

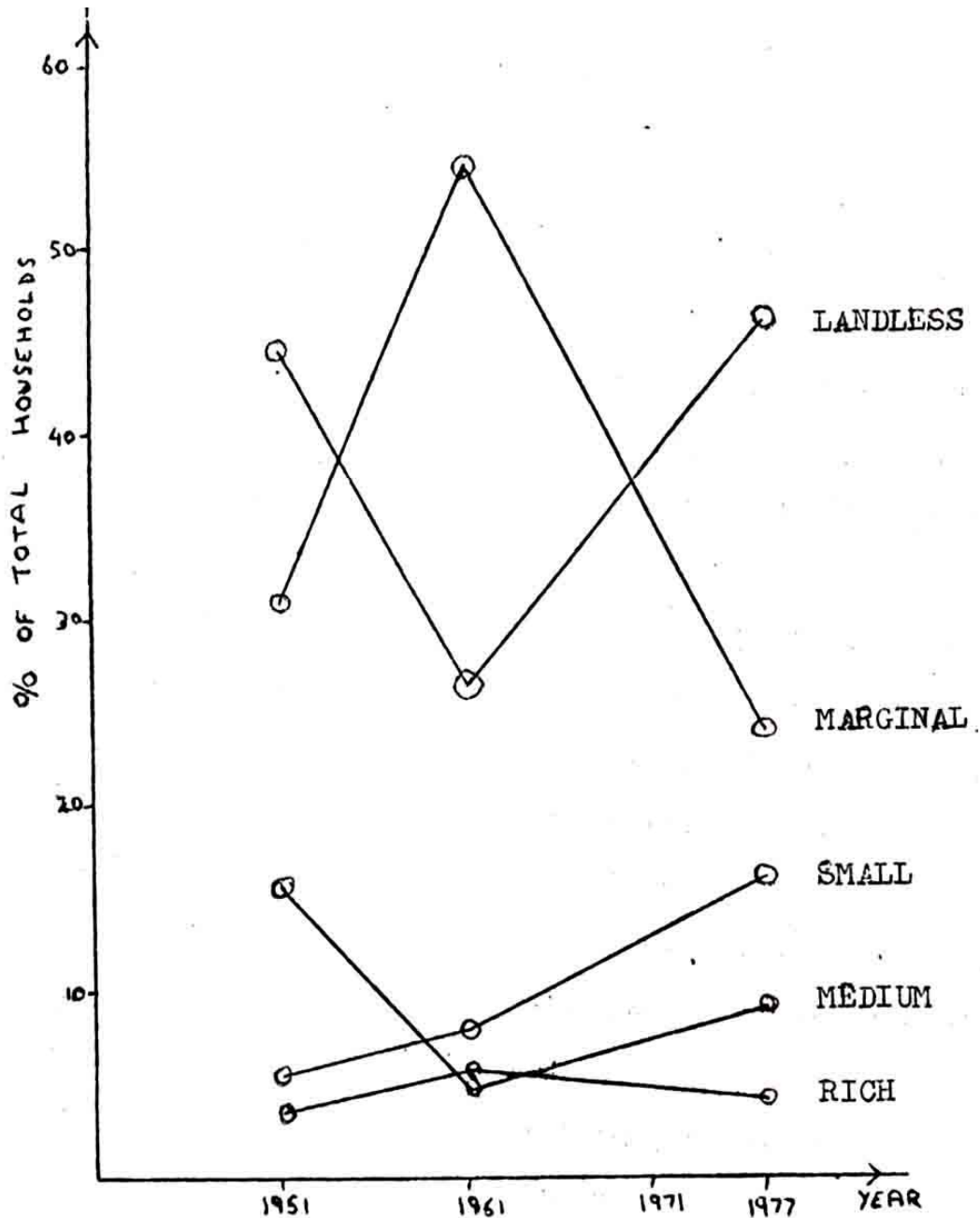
Land holding Stratum	No. of Household	% of Total	No. of Households	% of Households	No. of Households	% of Total
Rich	11	4.2	11	5.8	5	3.4
Medium	24	9.2	9	4.8	23	15.5
Small	42	16.2	15	8.0	8	5.4
Marginal	63	24.2	103	54.8	46	31.1
Landless	120	46.2	50	26.6	66	44.6
Total	260	100	188	100	148	100

The table above shows that no particular landowning stratum has remained static during the last 26 years. The number of households in each stratum has changed inevitably due to the increase in population. Beyond this, however, the percentage of households in each stratum has also fluctuated, revealing some readjustment of resource holdings.

In order to understand the processes which lie behind these changes we have to recall some of the critical events of the period under review. As mentioned earlier, the Zamindari system was abolished just after 1951 and the immediate consequence of this was that the tenants of the region became owners of the land which they used to till. Moreover, the Zamindars and many migrating Hindu landlords released large amounts of land which thus became cheaply available in the land market. This the period from 1951 to 1961 saw an opportunity for many of the poorer residents of Ashram to increase their land holdings. However, the period between 1961 to 1977 saw a great many hardships hit the area including the 1971 liberation war, the floods and famine of 1974 and then more crop-damaging floods in 1977. Thus, this was a period when people were compelled to sell land under circumstances of great hardship and poverty for the poorer section of the community. This brief recapitulation of the socioeconomic conditions characterizes the two periods, 1951-1961 and 1961-1977, as having opposed sets of opportunities. In the first

period, opportunities were favourable for all strata of land owners to improve their landholding situation but, in the second period, opportunities were available only to those who had a secure position in terms of resources.

In graph 2B we have plotted the percentage of households in each stratum for the three years for which we have data. Examining this graph, we note that the percentage of households in the small stratum increased through both periods - this was the only stratum which showed this trend since all other strata which expanded in one period, shrank in the following period and vice-versa. Thus, through both periods, the rate at which households entered the small stratum was slightly greater than the rate at which households left the small stratum. This seems to indicate that a household finding itself in the small stratum tends to be in a somewhat "stable" situation. If we look at the other strata we note, in the period 1951-1961, that the percentage of landless households decreased sharply while the percentage of marginal households showed a marked increase. In the next period, however, when opportunities for acquiring land became more hazardous, the trend reversed itself so that the ranks of the landless were again replenished while the size of the marginal stratum showed a consequent decrease. A similar set of swings is noticed between the medium and rich strata. In the first period, the percentage of medium households decreases and we note a rise in the percentage of the rich households while, in the second period, this trend is reversed.



GRAPH 2B (FROM FIGURES IN TABLE 2B) % of households in each stratum over three time periods

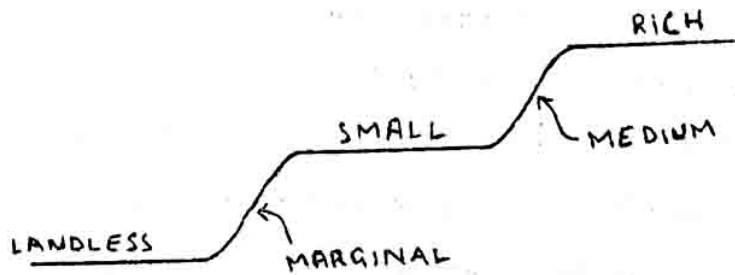
From these observations we feel that we can classify the landless, small and rich strata as having a more or less "stable" quality, although each category is considered "stable" for different reasons. First, though, we ought to explain carefully what we mean by the term "stable". The

individual households in each of these three classes will tend to avoid taking risks as far, as increasing their landholding is concerned. By this we do not mean that the households will not increase their land holding at all since that involves a complex decision making process influenced by a large number of individual factors. What we mean is that the household, when faced with a decision regarding its land holding, will be less inclined to initiate any risky moves and more inclined to maintain a secure status quo. This would, of course, only be present as an underlying tendency which would be mediated by a number of other factors and influences but it would, nevertheless, remain as an inherent motif, guiding the behaviour of the relevant households. Again, we must point out that the three strata concerned display this inherent tendency towards "stability" due to entirely different reasons. The landless households would show this tendency since, in that situation, the household's prime concern is with survival and any thoughts about acquiring land must be subordinated to concerns about ensuring an adequate wage to feed the household members. In this precarious situation, the landless household is planning in terms of its immediate needs and usually worrying about paying off last year's loan to pave the way for obtaining this year's loan in a situation where initiating risky moves to acquire land would be virtually unthinkable. The small-farmer household, however, has usually reached the stage where self-sufficiency has been or almost been attained. It is therefore not altogether surprising that such a household would usually tend to display a certain cautiousness in its financial dealings especially with regard to obtaining land. A household that has just managed to work itself into a position of being able to make both ends meet would naturally tend to suffer a slight jading of its desire for greater landholdings and would certainly be wary of jeopardizing its hard-earned position. The combination of these two effects,

confirmed by the tendency revealed in graph 23, leads us to believe that the households in the small stratum would tend to display the characteristics that we have labeled as "stable". The rich stratum on the other hand, is also considered stable since these households would be more or less assured of a steady surplus income and would thus begin to transfer their surplus resources into more diversified fields. In any case, the group would appear stable in the fact that we have not defined any further strata beyond the rich- stratum so an increased landholding could not be reflected as a transition to a higher stratum. As far as slipping into a lower stratum is concerned, the rich households usually have an adequate "buffer" income to be able to avoid this pitfall.

This leaves the two strata which we have called marginal and medium - two strata that we believe to be "transitional" in quality. By "transitional" we mean that the households concerned would tend to have a greater mobility as far as changing strata is concerned. This would arise as a result of the households developing a more active involvement in taking risks to increase their landholding. Of course, by the very nature of this kind of activity, these households would increase not only their chances of acquiring more land and moving into a higher stratum, but would also increase the possibility of incurring sufficient losses to push them down into a lower stratum. These households would tend to feel that they were on the threshold of acquiring a position of greater stability and would consequently feel emboldened to indulge in somewhat more risky ventures. This tendency seems to be reflected in the wide changes of percentage experienced by these two strata in graph 2B. Again, we must stress that the characteristics associated with the "transitional" phase will only appear, in any particular household, as a submerged tendency open to mediation through other factors and

influences rather than a fixed rule rigidly governing each of its decisions. We refer to these two strata as "transitional" because the households concerned would tend to take quick decisions about buying or selling land in the hope of reaching higher strata, would often succeed in the attempt and, quite often, find their bold plans backfiring so as to push them down into a lower stratum. The entire decision-making and risk-taking in these two strata would be charged with a greater sense of urgency and dynamism. We may characterize the entire situation in the following schematic way:



We would stress that the "x-axis" in the above scheme does not represent time, in other words the scheme should not be interpreted as an "evolutionary type" of process. We are not proposing that there are five stages in the development of a household's landholding nor that any household has to follow any particular sequence of stages. We are only suggesting that a household, when it finds itself in any one of the above phases or strata, would tend to be characterized by a certain perspective or attitude with regard to its decisions on acquiring more land. In each individual case, however, a number of factors would enter into determining the actual decision taken - the position in the scheme being merely an underlying trend rather than a conclusive determinant.

The significance of the new scheme, we believe, is in the fact that it adds a new dimension to the five land-owning strata that we have been using. Until now, the categorisation depended only on a quantitative variable for distinguishing between different groups - the quantity of land owned by a household. Now, however, the categorization also reflects a qualitative variable - the perspective of a household towards acting to improve its landholding position. We believe that this added variable enriches our understanding of the behaviour of households in terms of the land-owning stratum to which they belong.

Two important qualifications to the scheme should be pointed out here. Firstly, it should be remembered that the stratification of the households into five classes is an arbitrary division. At least it was not originally made on the basis of any obvious demarcating features between the different classes. However, the division was arrived at by field-workers and researchers who are thoroughly acquainted with the field conditions and on the basis of a strong, intuitive hypothesis that the various lifestyles would best be reflected in a division into five rather than, say, four or six classes. The hypothesis now seems to be further corroborated by the fact that we can fit these five classes into the above scheme. Of course, we leave open the possibility that further research will show that the data may best be presented in a different configuration. We are merely highlighting at this stage the possibility of understanding the quantitative stratification in terms of qualitative' responses and attitudes. Secondly, we must emphasize that the stratification reflects only one of the variables available to us for classifying the villagers - the amount of landholdings involved. It should be clear that this does not necessarily reflect the actual wealth-standing of any particular household

since the total household income is not completely determined by the amount of land held by that household. One might easily find a landless household that exploits other resources in such a way as to earn a total income that is comparable to the total income of a small or medium household. The question being addressed by the scheme above is: given a classification made on the basis of a chosen variable, can we also extract a set of responses, attitudes or perspectives that correlate with the classification? We may also very briefly mention here the various individual factors that operate in influencing the upward or downward mobility of a household. These are presence of contacts with the wealthy people of the region; use of external employment or trading opportunities; misuse or misappropriation of a joint family's property; the desire to maintain a balance between income and expenditure; reluctance to invest in ecologically unsafe land; the loss of land due to government imposed ceilings or settlement disputes; subdivision and fragmentation of land due to breakdowns in the joint family; business failures; uncontrolled and accidental expenditures such as gambling, drinking, polygamy or illnesses; natural calamities; victimization in the shalish.

We will next consider the variations in the way in which sales of land take place. Most sales take place between kin, as there are socially accepted sanctions that approve of the flow of resources within kin. If a person is unable to find a kinsman who is willing to buy land that he wishes to sell, he will often seek their help in finding a buyer.

Another important means by which land transfers take place is through mortgaging to moneylenders. An instructive case where this happened is that of Mobarak who initially started off landless. He moved into the money lending business with the help of the rich Hindus whom he had helped during the

partition of 1947. At the time he had acquired considerable influence through his activities with the Muslim league and he had used this influence to give protection to the Hindus. With the capital that he built up through the money lending business, he began to purchase and mortgage in land. In this manner he built up his landowning to 40 acres and now is one of the biggest landowners in the village.

In the sale of residential land as well, there is a strong inclination to make sales to kinsmen. The rationale here is the chance that the seller might one day wish to buy back his residential land. In that event, it would be much easier to buy the land back from a kinsman rather than an outsider.

There are cases, rarely, where ownership of land does not necessarily mean that the owner can utilize the land. This may be due to conflicts over inheritance rights with kinsmen especially when the inheritance cannot be verified with proper documentation.

SECTION TWO
YIELDS FROM LAND

So far we have discussed various aspects of land ownership including its distribution among different strata in the village, mobility etc. In this section we will try to assess the value of the yield of the given quantum of land. Here, the value of the yield of this resource has been calculated from the owner's total return during the year 1977 (in Taka) deducting from it all input costs both labour and other inputs. The following three tables (3A, 3B, & 3C) demonstrate the crop-wise yields of land and their distribution amongst the different strata. Tables 3A & 3B reveal that most of the cultivable land (96%) produces local variety paddy while only 4% is used for HYV paddy. The total return generated by the village owned land (845 acres) in this particular year of study was Tk.11,22,921.79 which was shared by the different landholding strata as shown in table 3(C).

The question arises whether the value of the yield of 845 acres of land in the village (Tk. 11,22,921.79) must remain static or is it the optimum? The answer is definitely negative if we look at the returns of paddy per acre, where yield of HYV is much higher than that of local variety. We have calculated the maximum returns which could be generated with the present available technology and inputs by changing the crop i.e. replacing local variety by HYV. The yield value would be Tk.19, 78,778.76 (Table 4), provided certain changes take place e.g. flood control measures are taken up, people have the ability and will to spend the stated amount on inputs as shown in the table. Control over floodwater depends on Government policy since it is beyond the capacity of this particular village to come up with the big investments necessary for the construction of an embankment with one or two sluice gates.

From the whole discussion on ownership of land, its value, distribution, mobility etc., two fundamental issues have emerged. Firstly, why this village earns this particular size of returns and, secondly, why land has been moving from one group to another.

The size of the returns is determined by the quantum of land, its quality and prices of the agricultural product. Presently, the village owns 845 acres of cultivable land of three varying qualities: high, medium and low. If the villagers want to extend their land areas, they will have to acquire land through purchases which depend on the presence of surplus incomes providing scope for investment, i.e. there must be a group of people willing to sell land due to a deficit in income over expenditure and another group willing to purchase due to a surplus over expenditure.

TABLE 3A HYV VALUE OF YIELD

Landholding stratum	Rich	Medium	small	marginal	landless	total
1. Total acreage under cultivation	15.40	9.60	Nil	8.82	Nil	33.82(4%)
2. Yield per acreage (in mnd)	45	45	45	45	45	
3. Price per mnd in Tk.)	60.00	60.00	60.00	60.00	60.00	
4. Total price (in Tk.)	41580.00	25920.00	Nil	23814.00	Nil	
5. Mandays per acre	62	62	62	62	62	
6. Total mandays	955	595	Nil	547	Nil	
7. Wage @10/- per manday (in Tk.)	9550.00	5950.00	Nil	5470.00	Nil	
8. Input cost per acre (in Tk.)	559.64	487.50	-	404.08	-	
9. Total Input cost (in Tk.)	8618.46	4680.00	-	3563.99	-	
10. Net returns (in Tk)4-(7+9)	23411.54	15290.00	-	14780.01	-	
11. Returns per acre (in Tk.)	1520.23	1592.71	-	1675.74	-	53481.55

Input Cost:

Seed 1 md. 5 seer @ Tk. 100/-	=112.50	292.50	Rich	Md.	292.50
Tilling -12 hal @ 15/-	=180.00	+267.14	(P.P.+Fer.)		+ 195.00
		Total			487.50

TABLE 3B Local Variety

Landholding stratum	Rich	Medium	Small	Marginal	Landless	Total
1. Total acreage	230.5	226.1	188.4	166.18	Nil	811.18 (46%)
2. Yield per acre (in mds)	34.5	34.5	34.5	34.5	34.5	
3. Price per mand (in Tk.)	60.00	60.00	60.00	60.00	60.00	
4. Total price (in Tk.)	477135.00	468027.00	389988.00	343992.60	Nil	
5. Mandays per acre	47	47	47	47	47	
6. Total mandays	10834	10627	8855	7810	Nil	
7. Wage @10/- (in Tk.)	108340	106270	88550	78100	Nil	
8. Input cost per acre (in Tk.)	281.92	287.47	280.51	274.49	Nil	
9. Total Input cost (in Tk.)	64982.56	64996.97	52848.08	45614.75	Nil	
10. Net returns (in Tk.) 4-(7+9)	303812.44	296760.03	248589.92	220277.85	Nil	1069440.24
Input Costs: Seed - 1.5 mds. @ 100 per md. =	150	Rich: 270.00	Small: 270.00			
Tilling charge 8 hals			+11.92 (P.P. + Fert.)			10.51
@ 15/- per hal. =	120		281.92			280.51
	270		Med. 270.00		Mg. 270.00	
			17.47			4.49
			287.47			274.49

TABLE 3C**TOTAL RETURNS**

Landholding stratum	Rich	Medium	Small	Marginal	Landless	ALL STRATA
Returns from local	303812.44	296760.03	248589.92	220277.85	Nil	1069440.24
Returns from HYV	23411.54	15290.00	Nil	14780.01	Nil	53481.55
Total Returns	327223.98	312050.03	248589.92	235057.85	Nil	1122921.79
Percent (%)	29.14	27.79	21.14	20.93	-	100.00

TABLE 4 MAXIMUM POSSIBLE RETURN (USING HYV)

Landholding stratum	Rich	Medium	Small	Marginal	Landless	Total of all strata
1. Type of crop	HYV	HYV	HYV	HYV	HYV	
2. Total acreage	245.9	235.9	188.4	175.0	Nil	
3. Yield per acre (in mnd)	60	60	60	60	60	
4. Price per maund (in Tk.)	60.00	60.00	60.00	60.00	60.00	
5. Total Price (in Tk.)	885240.00	848520.00	678240.00	630000.00	Nil	3042000.00
6. Mandays per acreage	62	62	62	62	62	
7. Total Mandays	15246	14613	11681	10850	Nil	
8. Wages @ 10/- per mandays	152460	146130	116810	108500	Nil	
9. Input cost per acre	638.25	638.25	638.25	638.25	638.25	
10. Total Input cost	156945.67	150435.52	120246.30	111693.75	Nil	539321.24
11. Net Returns 5-(8+10)	575834.33	551954.48	441183.70	409806.25	-	1978778.76

Input Cost:

Seed = 106.25
 Tilling = 180.00
 Fertilizer = 232.00
 P.P. = 120.00
 638.25

Assumptions:

- i) Lands are free from flood due to the construction of an embankment with One or two sluice gates.
 ii) People have the ability and will to Use the inputs shown in the input cost table.

The quality of land is also an important factor in determining the size of the return. This quality can be improved if certain changes take place in the existing infrastructure and available technologies, but the change in infrastructure depends on Government policy. The technological aspect depends both on Government policy (as regards its supply), and on individuals who own land (as regards its demand). The demand side is of crucial importance because we have found that certain technologies which are available to the village are not used due to the complexity of marketing system (i.e. low price for the product). So we can say that the size of the return is regulated by a combination of ownership, quality, prices of product, Govt. policy etc.

The other aspect of the picture is the mobility of land i.e. the fact that no particular class remained static in composition. Rather, each is a mix of people from different landholding classes some of whom are going up, some are going down. In either of these directions we have identified some common elements responsible for that particular trend. People who are moving up or purchasing land generally achieve this through business or through linkages with the established rich and the businessmen of the region. Moreover, some people have gone up through external employment earnings from relatives in U.K., local schools, U.F. etc. and a few through misappropriation of a joint family's funds.

The people who dropped down did so due to the loss of land after the abolition of Zamindari. Other factors which also helped are sub-division and fragmentation of land resulting from the breaking up of a joint family; income deficit due to uncontrolled and accidental expenditures; natural calamities; loss in business etc.

SECTION THREE
UTILIZATION OF LAND

We now examine and explain the utilization pattern of land in the context of the landowning groups. In discussing this utilization, our emphasis will be on three broad aspects namely,

- i. Method or System of Cultivation
- ii. Selection of labour
- iii. Choice of Crop & Technology

Method of Cultivation:

System or arrangement in carrying out cultivation is an important factor and is determined by the choice of how much of his cultivable land a farmer operates himself and how much he chooses to lease, mortgage or sharecrop out or in.

The following table (5) will explain the system of cultivation as per different landowning strata.

Only rich stratum people give out their land on share cropping while all other groups take land in on share cropping.

The people who get land in on sharecrop usually do so through kinship connections, caste, neighbourhood and patron-client linkages. Moreover it has been found that these sharecroppers own very small amounts of land which are uneconomical to operate considering the manpower available. So these people use their various connections to get more land on sharecrop.

TABLE 5

STRATUM	Rich	Medium	Small	Marginal	Landless	Total
Owned land (in acres)	245.9	235.7	188.4	175.0	Nil	845
Share Crop in (in acres)	Nil	6.4	1.4	41.97	18.9	68.67
Share Crop out (in acres)	2.2	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil	2.2
Lease & Mortgage in (in acres)	15.03	5.6	53.10	36.7	18.9	129.33
Lease & Mortgage out (in acres)	Nil	8.4	Nil	4.8	Nil	13.2
Operational holding (in acres)	258.73	239.3	242.9	248.87	37.8	1027.6

The share cropper is usually also an employee of the owner of the land and his follower in politics and factionalism.

The people who take land either on lease or mortgage have a positive or surplus income over their expenditure. In this regard the share of small farmers is greatest (about 41%). The small farmers who are taking lease or mortgage are "small" with regard to their land holding position but they are in a high income bracket, and have access to other avenues of income. These high income villagers invest their surplus in getting land either on lease or mortgage as that is a means to get ultimate ownership. Showkat is a small farmer who owns only 5.66 acres of land, but he has taken 6 acres of land on lease and mortgage from people of neighbouring villages. He used to belong to a joint family with his brother and, through misappropriation of the joint family's funds, he managed to buy a big boat (present value of which is Tk.40,000.00) and started a paddy supply business. This supply business gave him good returns and through this business he came into contact with other businessmen in the region who helped him to start a money lending business.

With the help of these businesses he earned enough to start investing in land and thus managed to get 6 acres of land on lease and mortgage.

The people of medium and marginal landowning groups who have given out their land on lease or mortgage are of low income groups and have a negative balance of income over expenditure. Tasin Ali, a medium farmer who owns 7.66 acres of land, has had to give 2 acres on lease. The reason is that he has no significant income except for what he earns from his land but he has to provide for a big family, including

educational expenses for one of his children studying in college. All these expenditures forced him to give up 2 acres of land on lease.

Selection of Labour

As regards the input of labour, it is seen in table 6 that people of some strata take part in the cultivation while others rely entirely on hired labour.

The rich people do not employ their family for labour in the field because they view agricultural work as having low prestige. So, for the sake of status, they prefer activities like business, services etc. rather than agriculture. In some cases it is found that even if they have enough time and manpower they are not working in the field and they do not go to supervise the cultivation. Dilfor, a rich farmer who represents a particular segment of the society who are status conscious, never goes to the field to supervise and leaves the job of cultivation entirely to hired labour, with occasional stock, taking of the situation. It is heard in the village that whenever he goes to or passes by the field he never goes down into the field, rather he throws a stone into the field to have some idea on the water level.

TABLE 6 MANDAYS REQUIRED/USED BY THE VILLAGE FOR OPERATIONAL HOLDING

STRATUM	Rich	Medium	Small	Marginal	Landless	Total
Total mandays	12392	11391	11416	11829	1777	
Paid mandays	12392	10935	9704	4968	258	
Percent of mandays paid	100	96	85	42	14.5	
Unpaid mandays	Nil	456	1712	6861	1519	
Percent of mandays unpaid	Nil	4	15	58	85.5	

People of other landowning strata directly engage in agriculture with their family members due to the non-availability of other economic activities, lack of capital, opportunity, skill, qualification and also because they are less conscious about status. It is found that whenever one gets the chance to explore other avenues of income he is likely to go for that and give less importance or time to agriculture. This is also true for those who own little or uneconomic units of land.

It is found that each and every landowning stratum recruits labour in the field of agriculture. Here we will try to identify and explain the principles on the basis of which this selection is made. In this village people recruit three types of labourers - seasonal labour, day labour and harvesting labour. Our discussion will be limited to seasonal and daily labour as the other category is recruited not only from outside the village but also from outside the region. People of rich landowning stratum prefer skilled labourers rather than kin-labour in order to maximize their output and for effective management. They avoid kin-labour since in some cases it becomes difficult to press them for work. For example, Motalib, a rich farmer of the village, employs 3 seasonal labourers selected from outside kin on the basis of skill though eight of his kin do sell their labour. The reason being that since he does not work in the field he finds it easier to supervise and guide the skilled labour staying at home and, in case of any wrong doing or absence from work, he can take punitive actions. However, if the labourers were selected from kinsmen, it would be very difficult to punish them if any wrong-doing took place and, in some cases, he could not even give strict orders due to the existing behavioural norms of kin relationships.

Persons who prefer kin as labourers do so because they want to keep and maintain kinship solidarity and consider kinship as the primary basis of one's power, prestige and politics.

In those cases where people have no kin but are influential in factionalism or politics and ambitious for power, recruitment of labour takes place from amongst their clients or followers. For example, Mobarak recruits 7 seasonal labourers who are all his clients or followers in politics. He employs them not only in agriculture but also in other fields such as a boatman on his big supply boat and in some cases helps them in getting jobs within the village.

Choice of crop and technology

We will now focus our discussion on the choice of crop and technology with reference to landowning strata.

TABLE 7 TECHNOLOGY AND CROP

Land holding stratum:	Rich	Medium	Small	Marginal	Landless
Land owned (in acre)	245.9	235.7	188.4	175.0	-
Operational land holding (in acre)	258.73	239.3	242.9	248.87	37.8
Land under local variety (in acre)	243.33	229.70	242.90	240.05	37.80
Land under HYV (in acre)	15.4	9.6	-	8.82	-
Av. Exp. For Technology for local variety per acre (in Tk.)	11.57	13.63	11.90	3.53	-
Av. Exp. On Technology for HYV per acre (in Tk.)	267.14	195.00	-	114.23	-
Total cost of Technology for Local (in Tk.)	2815.00	3131.00	2891	847	-
Total cost of Technology for HYV (in Tk.)	4114	1872	-	1007.50	-
T.C. of Technology (in Tk.)	6929.00	5003.00	2891	1854.50	-
Av. Cost of Technology per acre	26.78	20.91	11.90	7.45	-
Av. Cost of Technology per H.H.	630	208.5	68.8	29.44	-

Cost of Technology includes cost of power pumps

Table 7 shows that, except for the landless category, the other four categories use at least some new technology in agriculture. It also reveals that though all four groups spend some funds on technology, expenditure (both, per acre and per household) is closely co-related to the landowning stratum. That is, expenditure on technology increases as we move up the landowning strata.

TABLE 8

Land holding category	Bullocks		Ploughs		Non-Chemical Fertilizer
	Owned	Shared/ Bought	Owned	Shared/ Bought	
Rich	11	-	11	-	Yes
Medium	14	10	24	-	-do-
Small	21	21	42	-	-do-
Marginal	20	43	40	23	-do-
Landless	-	19	-	19	-do-

TRADITIONAL TECHNOLOGY

As regards traditional technology, which includes bullocks, ploughs and non-chemical fertilizers, table 8 shows that the whole of the rich landowning stratum, 58% of medium, 50% of small and 31% of marginal have their own ploughs or bullocks. Others have to buy, hire or share with others. Regarding the choice of crop, table 7 shows that, except for the small and landless strata, the three other strata grow HYV on very small amounts of their land.

A possible explanation is that the richer landowners spend much on modern technology because they have the surplus capital and the linkages with the government officials to avail of all sorts of modern technology. The very system of distribution of technology goes in favour of the rich. Other people use modern technology, specially power-pumps, through

rich kin, neighbours or through patron-client linkages with the rich. The higher expenditure of the rich on technology is also due to the fact that they produce more HYV than other groups, which needs more fertilizer and irrigation. Paresh, a rich farmer, owns 12 acres of land out of which he is producing HYV on 2 acres. His expenditure on technology is Tk. 600/-. He is a teacher at the local primary school, a member of the school committee and is associated with the market committee, local politics and village level associations. One of his brothers is a businessman residing at the thana headquarter. Through all his associations he has acquired very influential linkages with people both at home and at the thana level. By using these associations and linkages he managed to obtain a pump in collaboration with some others (most of whom are rich) on a scheme which provides power-pumps to be managed by local factional leaders of the village.

The choice of crop variety depends mostly on the quality of land and the means and ability to use technology. So it is found that rich stratum people produce more HYV than others. Another important factor which influences the choice of crop is the topography of the land because it remain under water for about 7 months, the flood waters coming generally in late May. Due to the chance of crop damage by flood, local varieties are preferred over HYV since the local variety can be harvested early.

SECTION FOUR
DISPOSITION of CROPS

In this chapter we endeavour to present and explain the disposition of crops with reference to our earlier stated strata. Our emphasis will be on processing of crops, (including only winnowing and drying), storage and marketing of crops.

Processing

Every landowning stratum processes its product but they do not all process in the same mode. From Table 9 it is clear that the rich landowning stratum processes its paddy entirely through hired labour while all other strata use their own family members.

The rich stratum uses hired labour because of the fact that they have little time and also because they view this kind of work as less prestigious. The other groups however, process their own paddy as they are less conscious about status and want to maximise their income by minimising their labour cost. The trend or pattern followed in the amount of added value reflects the size of the operational landholding unit.

TABLE 9 PROCESSING (WINNOWERING & DRYING)

LAND HOLDING STRATUM	Rich	Medium	Small	Marginal	Landless	Total
Operational land holding (in acres)	258.73	239.30	242.90	248.87	37.80	
Total Yield (in mds.)	9087.89	8356.65	8380.05	8678.63	1304.10	
Mandays per 10 mds.	1	1	1	1	1	
Total Mandays Required	909	836	838	868	130	
Paid Mandays	909	-	-	-	-	
Unpaid Mandays	-	836	838	868	130	
Wages (in Tk.)	9090.00	8360.00	8380.00	8680.00	1300.00	
Price per md. at harvest (in Tk.)	60.00	60.00	60.00	60.00	60.00	
Price per md. at processing (in Tk.)	65.00	65.00	65.00	65.00	65.00	
Price variation per md (in Tk.)	5.00	5.00	5.00	5.00	5.00	
Gross value added after processing (in Tk.)	45439.45	41783.25	41900.25	43393.15	6520.50	179036.6
Net value added after processing (in Tk.)	36349.45	33423.25	33520.25	34713.15	5220.50	143226.60
Percent (%)	25.38	23.34	23.40	24.24	3.64	100.00

1. Wages are calculated taking Tk. 10.00 as cost of labour per day

2. Price for paddy is calculated on assumption

Each landowning stratum Processes its product upto the stage of drying but does not go in for processing it into rice. The reason is that the village and its surrounding area is a surplus rice producing area. After harvesting of Boro paddy, which is the only crop of the area, the market price of processed rice goes down due to low demand by the local people. Practically no one wants or needs to buy rice from the market as everybody gets some amount of paddy either from the land they cultivated or from their employers as wages for their labour. On the other hand, during that time the demand for paddy increases as it is purchased by outside businessmen who go into the area with their big boats. They can store the paddy for a long period of time but they cannot store rice for that long, hence the businessman prefer paddy to rice.

Storage

In our earlier discussion we have seen that all people Process their grain upto the stage of drying. The question now is what do they do after that stage? Do they sell the whole produce or store it? If stored, then what amount do they store: In this section we will try to present the relevant data and reveal any trends.

Now let us see why all the groups store part of a their produce and sell a part. The people who sell some of their produce after processing do so to meet their immediate expenses, such as payment of wages, repayment of loans etc. After the harvest, the lenders or Mahajan exert some pressure for the realisation of outstanding loans and debts. Sometimes it is found that they come directly to the houses of their clients with their own labourers and gunny bags and press them for repayment. In these cases the payment is usually made in kind not in cash.

TABLE 10

STORAGE:

LAND HOLDING STRATUM	Rich	Medium	Small	Marginal	Landless	Total
Total Yield (in mds)	9125.8 3	8246.25	8355.90	7954.81	978.07	
Yield stored (in mds)	8578.2 8	7009.31 (85%)	6266.92 (75%)	5568.37 (70%)	831.36 (85%)	
Mandays per 30 mds	1	1	1	1	1	
Total Mandays Required	286	234	209	186	28	
Paid Mandays	286	-	-	-	-	
Unpaid Mandays	-	234	209	186	28	
Wages (in Tk.) @Tk.10.00 per mandays	2860	2340	2090	1860	280	
Price per md. at processing (in Tk.)	65.00	65.00	65.00	65.00	65.00	
Price per md. after storage(in Tk.)	70.00	70.00	70.00	70.00	70.00	
Price variation per mds. (in Tk.)	5.00	5.00	5.00	5.00	5.00	
Total Gross return out of storage	42891. 4	35046.55	31334.6	27841.85	4156.8	
Total net return out of storage	40031. 40	32706.55 (24.81)	29244.6 (22.18)	25981.85 (19.71)	3876.80 (2.94)	131841.20 (100)

The people who store their produce (fully or partly) do so for future consumption and to get a higher price. After harvesting, or at the time of processing, the price of paddy comes down due to the low demand in the market. The Paddy market during this time is totally dependent on outside demand because this is a surplus rice producing area in Bangladesh. However, the outside buyers do not want to purchase at this time due to carrying problems, since they have to carry the grain by boat. Usually they do not start large scale purchasing until the monsoon starts. In that situation if anybody wants to buy he offers a very low price. Other than those who are forced to sell their grain to meet immediate needs, all the people try to store their paddy at least for a short span of time i.e. till the monsoon starts.

The rich landowning groups store the highest proportion of their product because they have other avenues of income and are not totally dependent on land. They store most of their product for future consumption and better prices. The only sales are those that take place for the payment of labourers.

For the other strata, it is seen that the percentage of paddy stored is closely co-related to the landowning stratum. The only exception is in the case of the landless who stored 85% of their product. The reason for this is that the landless people who produce paddy often have access to other avenues of income and may even be in fairly high income situations.

Marketing:

In the previous section we have seen that almost all people store some of their product, either to wait for a higher price or to meet future consumption needs. Table 11 below will explain the marketing preferences for paddy amongst the villagers.

The medium group people sell all their produce at home due to comparative profitability. That is, if this group wants to sell in the market then they will have to carry their grain through hired labour, as they are not willing to carry their own grain due to status reasons. The cost of transport and carrying is not covered by the profit margin they earn due to the variation between market and home prices so they prefer to sell the produce at home.

TABLE 11

MARKETING

LAND HOLDING STRATUM	Rich	Medium	Small	Marginal	Landless
Total product stored (in mds)	8578.28	7009.31	6266.92	5568.37	831.36
The amount sold (in mds.)	5147 (60%)	3435 (49%)	3757 (60%)	2394 (43%)	307 (37%)
Sale in terms of percentage (at home)	60	100	48	26	-
Sale in terms of percentage (at market)	40	-	52	74	100

The landless people sell their paddy at the market, carrying the grain themselves, in order to get a higher price. The rich landowning people sell most of their surplus product (60%) at home because they can sell to one person at a time. On the other hand, if they wanted to sell at the market they would have to sell to different persons at different points in time as there is no single, big merchant (Aratdar) in the market.

Those of the rest, who sell outside their homes do so at markets outside the region. These people have their own big boats and carry their grain to outer regions in order to get better profits. Generally these people prefer to sell large amounts at a time as they invest the returns in other business.

People of small and marginal strata who have other fields of investment also sell large amounts of their product at home while others sell both at home and in the market to get a better price. These people usually sell in times of household needs.

Some of the small and landless and the whole of the marginal classes sell more than their consumption needs as in some cases they are forced to sell and in other cases they sell in order to get capital to go into some seasonal businesses like fishing, betel leaf business, grocery etc.

SECTION FIVE
OTHER RESOURCES

In the previous chapters we have presented relevant information on land - its ownership utilization pattern and the disposition of the resultant crops. The importance of land in our economy is well recognised but because of the limited amount of land available to the bulk of the villagers, they also have to exploit other resources, both internal as well as external. Here, we shall endeavour to present and explain some information on the types of other resources exploited by different groups of people and their impact or importance on the rural economy.

There is a wide range of resources used by different people. We shall now discuss non-agricultural production which includes fishing, poultry, horticulture, animal husbandry etc. The following Table-12 explains the exploitation pattern of fish resources.

Fishing

People of sound financial position having external linkages, specially with the fishermen co-operative societies, and the willingness to take risks usually go in for large scale fishing. Those who have their own equipment and are less concerned about status go in for fishing as a means of deriving an income. It is seen from the table that an increase in the volume of income and quantity also leads to external marketing and processing.

Now let us examine the whole operational system of fishing. That is, how the fishermen co-operative societies obtain their rights, why they then sell these rights, who are

the people that buy these rights and for what reasons, how do they operate i.e. management, allocation of tasks, actual practice, distribution of income etc?

The fishermen co-operative societies obtain rights over fisheries from the Government, which leases out the fisheries. The co-operative societies have to submit a proposal to the Sub-Divisional Officer, duly signed by the C.O* (Rev.) and T. C.O*. On a duly arranged date the co-operators contest by putting in bids for the fisheries and the winning co-operative deposits its rent with the treasury to obtain the fishing rights.

In most cases, the fishermen co-operative societies are not regular societies and are controlled by one or a few people in the executive committee.

Most of these societies suffer from shortages of funds. So, when they submit their bids, they borrow the money from the rich farmers. The rich farmers advance the funds to the co-operative societies under the contract that, if they get the fisheries, then the society will, in turn, sell these rights to the rich farmer or at least, will give them a share in the fisheries. In most cases the leaders or executive members of the committees convince their members to sell the fisheries to the outside sponsor. It is also found that these members of the executive body get a share from the businessmen, depriving the general members of the society. The committee leaders in these cases get a share in return for supplying some inputs (nets) and personnel.

* C.O.(Rev.) = Circle Officer (Revenue)

* T.C.O. = Thana Co-operatives Officer

TABLE 12 FISHING

LAND HOLDING STRATUM	Rich	Medium	Small	Marginal	Landless
Persons involved	2	1	9	22	67
Drying and storing	Yes	Yes	No	No	No
Income	39000	1500	10310	9625	13147
Income per person	19500.00	1500.00	1145.56	437.50	196.22

The persons who buy the fishing rights from the co-operative societies are the rich and influential people. They usually have good linkages with the fishermen co-operative societies and also are less conscious of status since, in this community, fishing business is viewed as a low status business. In spite of that, however, people are attracted to this particular business as it is very profitable from the economic point of view. It also has some political impact. The rich who sponsor fishing practically become the patron or master of that community. These fishermen are mostly poor, illiterate and neglected sections in the community so the rich and influential men take advantage and exploit them both in the fields of economy as well as politics. On the other hand, the fishermen regard their interaction with the richmen as something which enhances their status.

The over-all operation of fishing is a complicated and costly activity. The villagers divide the whole operation into various stages and distribute the responsibilities to various groups of people. The only responsibility which remains in the hands of the rich non-fishermen is the total management. They appoint one or two guards from neighbouring villages to look after the fisheries and these people are supervised by one or two persons from the patron's village. This selection is made strictly from amongst the clients or followers on the basis of qualifications such as reliability, cunning and harsh disciplinary tendencies.

Since these people cannot catch the fish by themselves, they hire skilled fishermen, and in most cases the co-operative members get preference. The nets which are needed sometimes are either bought from the market or rented from others.

They sell most of their fish to outside buyers who come in during that period and, in most cases, these sales take place on partial credit. The remaining unsold fish, usually the small ones, they process into dry-fish and then sell later.

But all these activities, right from catching the fish to sale, are viewed by local people as a job of low status even though it gives good profits, Not all rich people go in for this business although they may have the capacity to invest or to finance the whole fishing operation.

Other people are involved in fishing as a means to derive an income to supplement their main income. These people are not really concerned about status. They fish during the monsoon since, during that period, they do not find any other work to do. The people usually catch fish in small nets, hocks or other indigenous methods and sell both within and outside the village.

Poultry and Horticulture

In addition to fishing, there is poultry and horticultural production. Table-13 (below) shows the quantum of resource that the villagers derive from this activity and its distribution amongst the different landowning strata.

Each household, irrespective of category has some amount of poultry or horticulture as this is a normal practice of village life. It also helps some villagers to reduce expenditure and to bring in an extra cash income. In some cases it also helps people to meet unexpected expenditures or demand.

TABLE 13 SUBSIDIARY AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTION (POULTRY, HORTICULTURE)

LAND HOLDING STRATUM	Rich	Medium	Small	Marginal	Landless	Total
Total Production in Tk.	1870 (7.45)	4680 (18.64)	10143 (40.39)	5764.5 (22.96)	2652.63 (10.56)	25110.13 (100)
Consumptions (in Tk.)	1870 (14.37)	2400 (18.45)	3570 (27.44)	3150 (24.21)	2021.05 (15.53)	13011.05 (100)
Sale within the village (in taka)	-	2280 (30.18)	4053 (53.65)	590 (7.81)	631.85 (8.36)	7554.58 (100)
Sale outside the village (in Tk.)	-	9999 -	2520 (55.45)	2025.50 (44.55)	Nil	4544.50 (100)

Poultry raising is done specially by the female members of the households and it is found that female members of rich and medium households are less interested in poultry raising due to the regular and substantial flow of other income. Another factor which also discourages poultry raising by these two upper strata is the fact that they spend their leisure time on more fashionable diversions such as knitting, embroidery etc. The female members of the marginal and landless strata are pushed for time to take care of poultry because, apart from their own household work, they also occasionally work in other households to earn some extra income. The female members of the small group do not work in other households and thus are able to derive the maximum benefit or income from poultry and horticulture.

Though each stratum produces poultry and horticulture, only some strata actually sell their produce while the others keep them for home consumption. The rich landowning stratum do not sell at all because the amount they consume is much greater than what they raise.

Both the medium and landless people sell their produce at home, though for different reasons. The medium stratum sells its produce at home due to reasons of status while the landless sell at home in order to get a higher price.

The small and marginal stratum people sell both at home and in the market because they have a surplus production in response to village demand. Here, marginal people sell mostly horticulture which needs to be sold quickly in order to avoid loss and damage. Moreover, for horticultural produce, the market is very limited within the village.

Non-agricultural Employment

In this section our discussion is aimed at non-agricultural employment in the village, both internally i.e. within the village, and externally i.e. outside the village.

TABLE 14 NON-AGRICULTURAL EMPLOYMENT (Internal)

LAND HOLDING STRATUM	Rich	Medium	Small	Marginal	Landless	Total
No. of persons	Nil	Nil	Nil	14	26	
Nature of service	Nil	Nil	Nil	Boatman Day Labour House building	Boatman Day Labour House building	
Total Income (in Taka)	Nil	Nil	Nil	3360 (41.79)	4680 (58.21)	8040 (100)
Total no. of Mandays	Nil	Nil	Nil	475	620	

TABLE-15 NON- AGRICULTURAL EMPLOYMENT (EXTERNAL)

Land-Holding stratum	No. of persons	Nature of service	Total Income (in Taka)	Total no. of Mandays
Rich	7	Teacher-2 U.K. (a)-4 U.P. (b)-1	1,19,000.00 (73.15)	2555
Medium	6	Teacher-2 Business, Shop-3 F.P.A (c)-1	15,240.00 (9.37)	2190
Small	6	Business, Shop-6	10,800.00 (6.64)	2190
Marginal	6	Business, Shop-5 BRAC'S LFPO(d)-1	9,360.00 (5.75)	2190
Landless	6	Business, Shop-3 LFPO/BRAC-1 Chowkidar-1 P.M.BRAC(e)-1	8,280.00 (5.09)	2190
Total			1,62,680.00 = (100) =	

- a. Working outside the country - mainly in U.K.
- b. Union Parishad
- c. Family Planning Assistant
- d. BRAC'S lady family planning organizer
- e. Paramedic

Let us examine the underlying factors responsible for the trends in Tables 14 and 15. people who have insufficient or no land but have the patronage of an influential person go for boatman services. People of low stratum-who do not have any patronage usually go for day labourer services. These people have large families to maintain, need cash incomes and have to keep in constant touch with their kin so they prefer taking up daily labouring rather than to go for service as a seasonal boatman.

The people of upper landowning strata do not go for those internal services as they view these jobs as having low prestige.

People who have gotten services in the educational institutions (schools) and offices do so through their educational qualifications, good linkages both at the village level and the thana level and some through the use of financial power, used to bribe Govt. officers.

People working in shop business do so because of their educational qualifications, skills and connections. Often, the people who are serving in shops are not the main earners of their families but they are doing jobs with an ultimate view to becoming established as businessmen. The richer people do not engage in services in shops as their family members are usually involved in their own businesses.

Some of the upper landowning stratum people have gone outside the country (England) for jobs, through good linkages with brokers of foreign employment and because of sound financial backing.

The jobs of Lady Family Planning Organizer and Paramedics are obtained through skills, interest, needs etc. and since the nature of the jobs is motivational work moving from village to village, the upper landowning stratum people are not interested in these jobs.

Services

In every society people need some services which they are willing to pay for and in this regard Ashram village is not an exception. Among the services needed by this village some are supplied by the village itself while others are supplied by other villages in exchange for payment.

The services required include those of Doctor, Barber, a Washermen, Carpenter, Mason, Deedwriter, Kabiraj*, Midwife, Singer or Ritual Practitioner, Mullah, Blacksmith, Mechanics etc. Among these services some are rendered by the villagers from both within and outside the village and they are a means to earn a good income.

* Practitioner of herbal-medicine.

TABLE - 16 SERVICES

Landholding Stratum	No. of person	Nature of services	Annual Income (in Taka)
Rich	Nil	Nil	Nil
Medium	2	Carpentor Deed writer	2,400.00 (19.2)
Small	5	Carpenter-1 Singer-2 Midwife-3	5,300.00 (42.4)
Marginal	4	Mason-1 Kabiraj-1 Midwife-2	2,000.00 (16.0)
Landless	3	Midwife-1 Kabiraj-2	2,800.00 (22.4)
Total			12,500.00

Let us see how these skilled people acquired their special skills. Some persons inherited the skills while others got them from their patrons. Both carpenters in Ashram acquired this skill through inheritance. Those persons are the two sons of a carpenter and this has always been their family occupation.

On the other hand, there are three kabiraj and two singers. These people, acquired their skills not by inheritance but due to the patronage of their masters, e.g. Surukullah, a landless farmer, now sells his skills as a kabiraj, a skill he got from his patrons who reside in the neighbouring village. He spent a few years with his patron, acquiring the necessary techniques and now earns a living by selling his skills.

There are some other services which the village needs but for which there is no internal supply. The village needs the services of a barber but no-one tries to acquire that skill

instead they go to a neighbouring village where there is a group of professional barbers. The reason that no-one takes up this profession is that it is regarded as having very low status value amongst the villagers. This is also true for services like washermen, blacksmith etc.

On the other hand there are some services which they need e.g. services of doctor, but cannot acquire due to a lack of skills and adequately qualified people.

Business & Commerce:

Business & commerce plays a vital role in the economy of Ashram. In the region there is ample opportunity to do business and the people of this village exploit this opportunity to some extent. The village, as well as the region, is totally dependent on outside supplies for their day to day requirements other than paddy and fish. During the six month period when the land remains under water the people do not have any work other than doing fishing or business while the outside merchants who come to this area usually do so at the time of harvesting. The merchants arrive in their big boats carrying necessities such as salt, kerosin oil, edible oil, spices, onions, arum roots, potatoes, clothes, furniture etc. They sell these commodities to the villagers in exchange for paddy, which is the only grain of the area, or in exchange for cash money. Usually, the rich farmers who can afford to do their yearly or six monthly shopping from those businessman. The businessmen, when leaving the area, buy paddy and sell it in outside districts where the price is comparatively higher.

However, poorer households cannot afford to make large purchases in one go. So, for the basic necessities, they have to depend on the constant and regular supply of the local

market and thus allow the local markets to flourish. These markets are also subject to seasonal change in demand. Usually the volume of transactions in these markets is good during the winter but deteriorates at the time of the monsoon because the only means of communication during monsoons in that area is by boat which most of the families cannot afford.

Bad weather also hinders the boat transport so during monsoon periods most of the villagers depend on traders who come to their door with basic necessities for day to day consumption. These peculiarities of the region give rise to many mobile traders who are often seen in the village.

Now we shall examine which areas of business this village exploits. Table 17 shows the areas of trade in which the villagers are engaged and the returns from this trade.

People who are engaged in large scale permanent business, irrespective of stratum, all have surplus incomes from land and have some links with external businessmen either through patronage, political or caste connections. All these people use either their own family members, like brothers or sons, to look after the business or they themselves find time to look after these affairs. It will be easier to clarify the circumstances if we briefly discuss two cases one of whom has a permanent business and one of whom has not.

TABLE - 17 TRADE The areas of trade in which the villages are engaged

Landholding Stratum	No. of persons Involved	Nature of business	Annual Income (in Taka)
Rich	4	Permanent	70,930.00
	3	Supply business	37,000.00
	1	Rice processing	10,000.00
	9	Money lending	60,050.00
			<u>1,77,980.00</u> (44.93)
Medium	1	Permanent	6,000.00
	6	Mobile Trade	25,100.00
	12	Money lending	18,948.00
		<u>50,048.00</u> (12.63)	
Small	12	Mobile	17,800.00
	3	Permanent	20,180.00
	1	Supply	3,000.00
	7	Rice processing	17,810.00
	8	Money lending	6,304.00
		<u>65,094.00</u> (16.43)	
Marginal	13	Mobile	31,600.00
	11	Rice processing	31,176.00
	5	Money lending	1,125.00
		<u>63,901.00</u> (16.13)	
Landless	10	Mobile	27,398.00
	6	Rice processing	11,031.00
	3	Money lending	700.00
		<u>39,129.00</u> (9.88)	
Total			<u>3,96,152.00</u> (100)

Sabarak is now in the rich stratum and has permanent business both at the local market and in the thana headquarter market. Initially, he was the boatman of a local betel leaf trader and thereby managed to get himself acquainted with others connected with this trade, including the khasia tribes. Khasias are the growers of a particular type of betel leaf which is popular in the region. Subsequently, with his master's patronage, he started retailing in a small way. He succeeded in accumulating some capital and eventually left the boatman's job to start full fledged retailing of betel leaf in the local markets. This trade turned out to be profitable and he earned the trust of the kashias who started to give him the leaves on credit. Taking advantage of this trust, he deceived the khasias of a large amount of money. There was a small fire in his residence in which only his kitchen was gutted. However, Sabarak reported the incident by inflating the actual losses. One of the khasia visited his village and was convinced to believe the story told by Sabarak. As a result, Sabarak got all his credit waived and was given further assistance to restart the business. He utilized this deceptively obtained money in purchasing a large quantity of land and, from the income of this land and his betel leaf trade, he started cloth and medicine businesses in the local market. Now, he himself looks after the cloth and medicine stores assisted by one of his nephews and a hired helper who has some skill in the medical line. His betel leaf business is now being looked after by one of his younger brothers.

In contrast, Turan Chowdhury, who has a substantial surplus from his land, does not go in for permanent business because he is an old man and his sons are too educated. Though he has the capital, he cannot start a business due to a lack of people close to him who have the skills and knowledge to run a business.

The people doing paddy business are all surplus farmers who have their own big boats of 400 - 600 mds capacity to carry the grain outside the region where they can get comparatively higher prices. They also have their own managerial personnel and linkages with outside businessmen, specially some aratdhars.*

In the field of rice processing business we find that two groups of people are involved. One group uses its own family labour and small amounts of capital with the help of strong patronage benefits or kinship connections. This group normally uses mechanical means of processing.

The other group, which is involved in seasonal rice processing business, has intra or inter-neighbourhood and patronage connections, small amounts of capital and family labour. These people generally process their rice manually.

The people, in the four lower strata are involved in mobile trade both within and outside the village. Sometimes, less educated, married members of small, marginal and landless strata get involved in mobile trade to avoid cash shortages and to supplement their incomes. These people usually have some sort of caste or neighbourhood business connections and have some amount of capital of their own. In some cases, it is also found that they are doing business as shareholders with their business patrons.

Lastly, there are some other people doing seasonal mobile trade. These people are usually from amongst the poor and they have very small incomes from land. They are doing business on capital borrowed from the village moneylenders or outside

* Warehousemen

agencies like BRAC in order just to survive.

Public Resources

Here we endeavour to identify and explain the distribution of resources flowing into this village from different government agencies and public bodies which are operating at the thana or union levels.

There are many agencies working at the thana or union levels but they do not have direct effects on all the villagers. The benefits of these agencies do not go to all villagers, Table - 18 shows that the resources coming in from the different government agencies and public bodies are in terms of credits, service opportunities, fertilizers and opportunities to work under Food for Works programmes.

The table also reveals that the total quantum of public resources exploited by this village is not distributed according to the landowning positions of the people.

The total amount of public resources enjoyed by the people of this village amounted to Tk.78,841.07. This amount is determined by the supply of labour and number of contacts with thana level and union level offices in the case of Food for Works programmes. In the case of service opportunities the amount is determined by educational qualifications and connections with the chairman and the regional leaders. The amount of fertilizers delivered is determined simply by demand, backed by purchasing power and quality of land. Bank loans or credits are determined according to the qualifications of the borrowers and these qualifications include landowning position supported by legal documents and linkages with the bank officials and U.P. personnel.

TABLE-18 PUBLIC RESOURCES

LAND-HOLDING STRATUM	Rich	Medium	Small	Marginal	Landless	Total
Loan amount	1100.00	5760.00	11067.00	980.06	Nil	18907.06
Percent	5.82	30.47	58.53	5.18	Nil	100
Services amount	9000.00	9840.00	Nil	360.00	3780.00	22980.00
Percent	93.16	42.82	NIL	1.57	16.45	100
Fertilizer amount	2970.00	1500.00	2511.60	708.75	Nil	7690.35
Percent	38.62	19.50	32.66	9.22	Nil	100
Food for works amount	Nil	1000.00	Nil	9253.13	19010.53	29263.66
Percent	Nil	3.42	Nil	31.62	64.96	100
Total amount	13070.00	18100.00	13578.60	11301.94	22790.53	78841.07
Total percent	16.58	22.96	17.22	14.33	28.91	100

In deriving the benefits of public resources, the landless stratum enjoys the maximum (28.9%) amount. This group exploits two avenues: services and F.F.W. programmes. Their major avenue is the Food for works programmes which the landless engage in because they are least conscious of their status position and because they have the necessary manpower for earth-cutting jobs. In addition, it may also be stated that these people have a very good reputation for earth-cutting and sometimes they ever work outside the village. The amount of income they derive from service opportunities is due to their skill, interest and connections. They usually take up the services of chowkidar (village police), Lady Family Planning Organizer etc. The other landowning strata do not come forward for these jobs as they think them to be

demeaning. For instance, the job of a Lady Family Planning Organizer demands not only the quality of motivation but also door to door visits of all the villagers, irrespective of class and status.

The medium landowning stratum gets the second highest share (22.96%) of public resources. They exploit all possible avenues for obtaining public resources because of their skills, educational qualifications, linkages and connections with local government administrative personnel. In this stratum one person is exploiting the Food for Work programme by being a contractor, which he achieved through his connections with the officials.

The marginal people make least use of public resources due to a lack of skills and connections. In addition, many of the marginal are not ready to work under Food for Work programmes again due to reasons of status-consciousness. They consider the job of an earth cutter as very low so they are not interested in the job. The few people who are earth cutters are of low income groups and in some cases it is also found some of them have given their land on lease or mortgage to others, either due to bad economic conditions or because the size of the holding is uneconomical for them.

PART III
INFLUENCES OF RESOURCE HOLDING
ON BEHAVIOUR

SECTION ONE**RESOURCE SHARING WITHIN THE COMMUNITY**

In all the landowning strata the operational holding is greater than the owned holding and this increase in operational holding is greater in the three lower strata than the two upper strata. This increase in operational holding is the result of large scale leasing, mortgaging and share cropping in of land from outside the village. The people who have taken land either on lease or mortgage have surplus incomes over their expenditure and are thus investing in land.

The lower strata people who are taking land either on lease or mortgage usually have some other sources of income and have a large surplus. They invest in land because mortgaging and leasing are means of eventually taking full ownership of the plot of land, which, in turn, leads to greater security, as well as a raising of one's status base. Furthermore, their own holdings are usually too small to employ all their available family manpower effectively. On the other hand they do not have enough capital to employ themselves in some other profitable business. So, the option they usually have is either to sell labour to others or to take land from others either on share crop or lease. They usually take the latter option through their small savings or by using their patronage, neighbourhood or kinship connections since the job of a farmer or share cropper is more prestigious than the job of an agricultural labourer.

The upper strata people also take land on lease or mortgage but the amounts are much lower because the rich people already own large amounts of land and are now diverting their funds to other sectors. They are now investing their

surplus mainly in business and are acquiring assets like houses in district and thana towns. Some have increased their consumption and also changed their life style, they are constructing good houses and wearing expensive clothes. The rich are also not investing in land because their children, after receiving education and exposure to the out-side world, are not interested in looking after agricultural work, preferring business and services which are viewed as more prestigious. Hence, the rich are totally dependent on hired labour. Another important factor why the rich are investing less in land but more in other fields of economic activities like business, and fishing is ecological considerations. Due to siltation in rivers some agricultural fields are now within reach of early floods and so the rich people are diverting their funds into other economic areas which ensure a more reliable flow of income.

The medium stratum people are also not taking much land on lease or mortgage because in this stratum there are few people who have a reasonable surplus over their expenditure. Their consumption level is relatively high and the life style is also different: they are the declining rich of the village but still are unable to cut off certain relationships and expenditures due to reasons of prestige. For the same reasons they are also not in a position to start small businesses or to get employment as salesmen.

However, even though the operational holdings in the lower three strata are comparatively high, the average return per household is greater in the upper category. The question is why? Is it only due to their large operational holdings or are there other factors? This is not merely due to the size of operational holdings but also due to the system of cultivation, the choice of crop and inputs used. The rich

farmers take land from others only on lease or mortgage and thus they get whole returns on the land. On the other hand, for the landless category, 50% of their operational holding is under share cropping and so they get only half of the production. The rich produce both HYV and local varieties and thereby increase their returns while the landless produce only local varieties which give a low yield in comparison to those of HYV.

The question of inputs is also an important factor in determining the level of production and returns. The rich use both modern and traditional technology in agriculture whereas the landless use only traditional technology. In some cases it is also found that they have no ploughs and bullocks of their own. They till their land either in sharing with others or with hired equipment. They usually do not purchase bullocks as there is no guarantee that every year they will get land on share cropping or lease. Moreover, the presence of long monsoons and the lack of veterinary care services discourage them from such investment.

Labour Recruitment

From the discussion in Part II we have seen that the rich are dependent on hired labour, right from cultivation to storage. On the other hand the landless were able to improve their position by selling their labour to other people. Amongst the small stratum, the people who sell their labour do so mostly to their patrons who belong to higher strata. Now the question is why a particular stratum depends totally on paid labour and what is the basis of selection of labour.

The rich landowning stratum people depend totally on paid or hired labour for their agriculture not because of shortage

of able bodied working members in their families but due to other reasons. The rich stratum people do have their own family members who could look after and work for their land but they do not do so because they have the option to exploit other avenues such as business, employment etc. which they view as carrying more status and being more profitable. They also process and store their produce through hired labour. Generally, this processing (which includes drying and winnowing) and storage is done by the female members of the households assisted by some male members. The female members of the rich households do not participate in these processes rather they employ a few female labourers for the purpose while they spend their time on pastimes like embroidery and knitting.

The medium stratum people also employ labour for their agricultural work but they are not totally dependent on hired labour. For the stages upto harvesting and threshing they hire labour from the village because their family labour is not sufficient. However, the degree of involvement of family labour in the process of agricultural activities is not the same for all households who belong to this stratum.

There are some households which are reluctant to employ their family labourers in the process of agricultural activities due to reasons of status. These people tend to drop down from the top category, either because of a break down of the joint family or through sale of land due to their excessive expenditures in comparison with their earned income.

From the above discussion it is clear that people of certain strata recruit labour for different agricultural purposes while people from other strata sell their labour. This means a sizable quantum of resources in terms of wages is

flowing from one group to another. We now attempt to investigate the mechanism of this resource (wage) distribution. In the case of the rich landowning stratum, out of the total wages which are paid out by them, 36% is enjoyed by their kinsmen while the largest share (54%) is received by clients or followers. These clients are from different fields such as business, politics, factionalism etc. A very small amount 10%) is enjoyed by the neighbours through neighbourhood connections.

The largest share of resources (as wages) flows towards clients and followers because the rich recruit labour primarily on the basis of skill. These rich people are rising and flourishing members of the community and have their presence in every aspect of social and economic life. To exploit all possible resources they maintain an influence and interest in all relationships amongst kin, neighbours and with their followers and clients.

Amongst the medium and small strata, kinship gets the highest priority because in these strata most of the people have no large surplus and are also not involved in factionalism or village level politics. So they basically depend on kin and think of them as their power base. In these two strata there are a few who are now rising and a few who are now falling and these two classes of people are trying to strengthen their position both at kinship and outside levels. Hence, these two classes are recruiting from kin, their clients and their neighbours.

The two lower strata recruit mostly on a kinship basis and thus resources flow along kinship connections.

Control of Subsidiary Food Production

The rich enjoy a huge inflow of income from fishing. The rich are involved in large fishing business which alone gives good returns. Other strata are also involved in fishing but are not earning as much as the rich simply because of a lack of investable resources. The rich villagers take over the fisheries from the Fisherman Co-operative Societies (FCS) either through buying of shares or on a sub-lease. The Fishermen Co-operative Societies get the fisheries on lease from the Government but, due to lack of funds and internal conflicts, they resell these fisheries to the rich and work in the fisheries as paid fishermen. However, for a successful fishing business, only economic weight and connections with Fishermen Co-operatives is not enough. For successful completion of fishing they also have to maintain good links with the thana administration and the villages adjacent to the fisheries. The thana level administration (the Circle Officer, (Rev.), the Thana Co-operatives Officer, the Fishery Officer) has direct control over the F.C.S. and the fisheries while the people of the adjacent villages are important because they can act as guards or watchmen for the fisheries.

The other three strata are also involved in fishing, but in a small way since they have neither sufficient capital nor effective connections and control over the F.C.S and the thana level administration. The small income that these people do obtain comes from fishing by nets and by other indigenous methods during the time of monsoon and as the flood waters begin to recede from the fields.

As regards poultry, duck raising and horticulture, again the income earned by the medium, small marginal and landless strata is not significantly high.

This is due to a variety of factors, topography being one of them. During monsoons, only the homestead remains above water while the fields are submerged, making it very difficult to raise poultry and ducks. People face the problem, during flood season, of losing their ducks since the ducks often float away on the water hyacinth. If they wish to keep their ducks then they have to maintain a boat and a boatman to look after them which is costly and unprofitable. Furthermore, frequent attacks of disease and high mortality rates are also important factors since there are no facilities for poultry and duck care within or adjacent to the village.

Poultry and duck raising is done by the female members of the households. It is found that the female members of the two upper strata are less interested in poultry and duck raising commercially because of the regular flow of other income. The amount they produce is basically for their own consumption. The female members of the lower strata have very little time to take care of poultry and horticulture because, apart from their own work, most of them also works in others' houses to earn extra incomes. Another reason for their poor horticulture is that some of them have no homestead of their own, while others have such small ones that they only have enough room for housing. Due to scarcity of land they cannot even raise poultry and ducks because the ducks tend to go into neighbouring homesteads and destroy small kitchen gardens. In some cases, this may bring about conflicts among the neighbours so, to avoid quarrels, most of them refrain from poultry and duck raising.

Opportunities in Trade and Business

So far our discussion and analysis has been around the resources generated by land. In this section we explore and

analyze resources derived from resources other than land. These resources are employment, services and trade.

In the rich stratum there are four persons who are currently working in England and sending back large amounts of income to their wards and relatives at home. All those people went to England around 1962 through connections with people of neighbouring areas who were in England since before. One of them was a marginal farmer who was charged with a theft case and was absconding to save himself from the clutches of the police. During this period he was residing in a neighbouring thana with one of his relatives where he came to know many people who were working in England. From there he managed to arrange with one of these people to assure him of a safelanding and he left for England after selling his land. From his income in England, he started purchasing land again and gradually improved his position. Now he has also started business at the local market which is looked after by one of his sons. In this rich stratum we find also one tax collector and two school teachers.

The impact of this employment for the rich stratum is not materially significant, except for those who are working abroad. These last have increased their land wealth to a great extent and have also increased and changed their consumption level, life style, status and power by virtue of their employment. What the others have gained out of their employment is status and power in the society.

In the other three strata, employment is mostly in business shops. Only two individuals are working elsewhere. Jobs are mainly acquired through education, skills and connections with patrons, kin or neighbours. For example, a marginal farmer's son is a clerk in a motor launch which plies

between a thana town and a sub divisional town. He got the job not merely because of his educational qualifications but also through his neighbourhood patronage connections. He also belongs to the same caste as the neighbour who helped him to get the job.

The man who got the job of teacher in the primary school did so through his education, social position and connections with a rich neighbour who is also a teacher at the primary school.

The services rendered by the people in these strata, in return for an income, are those of Mullah, Imam of the Mosque, Kabiraj, Carpenter, Midwife etc. These people can render various services because of their skills and knowledge which they have acquired either by inheritance or through patronage connections.

The employment and service incomes of the medium landowning strata do not bring about any significant change in their material possessions. What they do gain is an increase of status and improvement of life style.

The small and marginal strata gained much out of their employment and services. In addition to their increased consumption, some of them managed to get land on share cropping through the connections they made or took land on lease or mortgage out of the extra income that they earned. Sattar, a marginal farmer, also working as a boatman for a wealthy supply merchant, used this connection to acquire 2 acres of land on share-crop from his patrons. The son of Sikdarullah, a small farmer, working as a salesman in a shop, used his substantial income to start investing in land. So far he has managed to get 1.33 acres of land on mortgage.

Huge amounts of income are earned by the rich stratum through varieties of trade such as permanent businesses of cloth, stationery, betel leaf, money lending, supply business of paddy etc. Business of cloth, medicine, stationery (i.e. permanent shops in the market) are not only viewed as signs of status but also as elements of one's power. This sort of business give the owners the opportunity to dispense patronage to their clients and followers through employment, business facilities and goods on credit to consolidate their power position and status in the community. Amongst the rich stratum, except for one household, each and every household is earning from trade in one form or another.

Prospective businessmen enter the different fields of business in different ways. Some enter by virtue of their land, some through their connections with established businessmen in the region and outside the region and some through services. People involved in the paddy supply business are doing so by virtue of their own surplus production from land, connections with outside traders and ownership of carrying-boats. People in permanent businesses in the local and regional markets use their huge incomes from land or employment and their connections with outside businessmen. The moneylending business being done by this stratum is mostly possible due to their own surplus investable funds and on the basis of political and historical precedents. Originally the Hindu people had the monopoly in moneylending but after the independence of Pakistan they started to squeeze their money lending business due to their insecure position in the new born Muslim state, Their partial withdrawal encouraged the rising Muslims to come forward with their funds to fill in the vacuum and start up in the money lending business. Finally, after the Indo-Pak war of 1965 the Hindu people withdrew totally from this business and many even left the country.

After the withdrawal of funds by the Hindu people, the Muslim landowners took over this business both inside and outside the village.

The use of the income earned from trade also varies from person to person. It is found that some are buying land while others are reinvesting in business or spending more on consumption and the construction of large houses in the thana and district towns.

People in the medium stratum do some trading, both permanent and mobile. They use their connections with outside traders, their surplus income from land and their skills and knowledge. The income earned by this group of people is also spent differently. The people in permanent business are investing partly in land and partly in consumption while those in mobile trade usually spend their income on consumption.

The people of small stratum are usually doing business because of their connections and because of the low level of income they earn from land. The amount of income these people are earning is mostly spent on food except for a few who are able to invest in getting land either on a permanent basis (i.e. purchase) or on a temporary arrangement like lease or mortgage.

In the marginal and landless strata, the few people who are engaged in business are doing so mostly through some patronage connections either in the village or outside. These people are involved in business just for subsistence, except for three who are able to invest in land in the form of leaseholdings or mortgages.

SECTION TWO**CONCLUSION**

In this conclusion we would like to draw attention to two aspects that emerge from our study. Firstly, we will focus on the fact that resource management may be seen in terms of a set of strategies and, secondly, we will examine the inter-relationship between what is ordinarily considered to be economic behaviour and that side of relationships which are termed as social.

Every individual confronts the problem of managing the resources available to him in such a way as to consolidate and expand his resource holdings. The range of resources available to any individual varies considerably in quantity and nature. Moreover, there is often a range of options available for the deployment and utilization of these resources. Thus, a number of possible avenues exist, for any particular individual, for the management of his resources. We find that these ranges of options may be classified into groups of possible actions that we call strategies of resource behaviour. The strategy consists of the choice of resource deployment that any individual employs. Under this title of strategies we can discern the following major threads of economic behaviour:

- i. Sale of labour
- ii. Subsistence farming
- iii. Small seasonal business
- iv. Accepting patronage benefits
- v. Use of co-operatives
- vi. Education
- vii. Service
- viii. Large scale permanent business

- ix. Dispensation of patronage benefits
- x. Large scale farming

The first thing to note here is that the term "resource" is being used in the broadest possible sense of being anything that may be used to enhance one's over-all income or reduce one's over-all expenditure. We must also note that each of the above activities carries a certain prestige value. The list is in ascending order of prestige value so that sale of labour is considered to be of least prestige value while large-scale farming is considered to have the greatest prestige value. These strategies are not mutually exclusive each other in that one or several of the strategies may be employed by any particular individual. However, it is clear that the strategies cannot be selected at random by any individual precisely because each one carries a certain prestige value. Thus, the aim of each individual is to move towards selecting those strategies that carry greater prestige. Those individuals which are operating the lower-prestige options find it economically impossible to opt for the high-prestige options while those who operate the higher options would find it unacceptable from the prestige point of view to select any of the lower options. There is, of course, a strong correlation between the prestige value of an option and the economic advantages derived from that option but it must be emphasized that these are distinct but inter-dependent valuation systems that operate simultaneously. This is highlighted by the case of fishing, which is an ambiguous category that has not been given a specific position in the above list. Although fishing is usually a lucrative venture for those who have the capacity to invest large amounts in it, it carries a relatively low prestige value amongst the villagers. Thus, there are occasions where a wealthy villager will forgo the opportunity to make large profits out of

fishing purely from considerations of prestige and status. On the other hand, we have 'the pair of opposed categories that are, however, "unambiguous" sale of labour and large scale farming. They are unambiguous in the sense that sale of labour carries not only minimal economic benefits but it also has very low prestige value while large scale farming is economically most advantageous as well as highly prestigious. The individual villager, while making his choices, is thus motivated not only to maximize his profits but also to maximize his prestige.

This brings us directly to the second aspect that we want to consider in this conclusion: the social standing of the individual. We have seen in our study that social relations mediate considerably the flow of resources within the community. Labour hiring is often on the basis of kinship relationship (which is a specialized form of social relationship) or neighbourhood relationships; land transfers are most frequent along kinship lines; credit is more easily given to kinsmen or close associates. There are general obligations for exchange of labour and material between kin-groups or other forms of social groupings (e.g. neighbourhoods, friends, work colleagues, peer groups). Thus the resource flow is not only along the lines of greatest economic advantage but are influenced and sometimes re-channeled under the pressure of social obligations and custom. Now social groups almost always have an internal structure which is hierarchic - there are always leaders and followers. Some individuals occupy a position of greater importance than other individuals within the social group simply by virtue of the position they occupy within the structure of the group. Thus, we have here a new valuation system, the system of values that depend on social structures and their associated rules. This we may consider as a third system of values after the two

systems we have already considered: the values based on wealth and economic surpluses and the values ascribed in the form of occupational prestige.

The most important feature of the traditional rural situation, and one which distinguishes it to some extent from the urban situation, is that these three system of values have such high degree of correlation. In other words, the very same people who control a large share of the resources are the people who operate the most prestigious occupational strategies and are also the people who hold positions of social pre-eminence. It is because these three strands are so closely inter-linked within the village situation that they appear to be the same phenomena. In the urban areas, in contrast, wealth, prestige and social status do not go so closely hand - in - hand and thus tend to take on distinct roles. This begins to explain why, in our study of resource flows, we encounter again and again the social influences and questions of status and prestige. In certain situations, which are exceptional, we find a conflict between the "profit-interest" and the "prestige interest" but usually we find a close parallelism between the two. This explains also why there is such a strong tendency in the village for elitist trends to appear. The entire value system is geared to produce a situation where status can easily be monopolized. Needless to say, the reins of political power are also concentrated in the same few hands. It is only through an advent of new resources and different ideas that the traditional value - patterns are undergoing severe changes.

Thus, our study of resource flows and resource behaviour can only be complete when we take account of the system of prestige attached to different strategies and the norms and values that surround social relationships. Moreover, changes

in the distribution and generation of new resources can only be effective in so far as they take account of all the social value systems that inhere within the situation.