



An Assessment of Share Cropping in Paddy Cultivation- An Empirical analysis in Burdwan District of West Bengal

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Abstract

Sharecropping is a practice of crop growing where a landlord agrees a tenant to use the land-dwelling in return for a share of the crops produced on that land area. Share cropping is a significant age old agricultural practise in West Bengal. A massive scope is there to enhance production of paddy in the study area through aggregate the productivity of the crop with the adoption of developed varieties and improved methods of rice cultivation in owed time and space on a sustainable foundation. Results from the study showed that 26.49 per cent of the total operational holding area was put under share cropping cultivation in rice cultivation, which varied from 19.65 per cent in marginal farms to 26.86 percent in large farms. Thus, Share cropping in West Bengal found to be a complementary and supplementary source of farm revenue. There seems to be still abundant scope in the study area, to make share cropping more cost-effective as the productivity of rice crop is 2898 kg/ha quite smaller than the Punjab's productivity (3828 kg/ha) and also smaller than Egypt which has largest productivity in the world.



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Introduction


This paper begins with an examination of the reforms undertaken during the fifties under the Congress regime in West Bengal mainly the Acts of 1950, 1953 and 1955 and their impact on sharecroppers. This is followed by a review of the legislative and administrative decisions taken during the seventies, again under the Congress

regime which were very radical in content, but were not meant to be implemented.¹⁰ In sharecropping, a family farmed someone else's land where the landowner demanded around half of the crop yield (usually cotton) in exchange for rent. But because the landowner provided the sharecropper with seeds, beasts of burden, farm tools, housing, and food, he often claimed a larger share. Farm tenancy

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is a form of lease arrangement whereby a tenant rents, for cash or a share of crops, farm property from a landowner. Different variations of tenant arrangements exist, including sharecropping, in which, typically, a landowner provides all of the capital and a tenant all of the labor for a fifty percent share of crops. The need to bring structure to the sharecropping system, however, has only grown with time. In debt to the landowner for everything, the sharecropper rarely worked up from poverty.¹ The second labor system, tenant farming, also required farmers to work someone else's land and pay rent with a portion of the crop yield. But the tenants usually at least owned a small home, farm tools, and a horse or mule.⁴ Temporarily selected research have claimed that benefit disparity per se is not that much a problematic, rather it is the blend of benefit disparity and bazaar let downs that pointers to undesirable result on development. Easterly (2007) has illustrious among physical disparity and bazaar dissimilarity and has claimed that physical disparity is definitely ruthless, but market disparity has vague effects.² For medium and large farmers, the main reasons for pursuing sharecropping in rice cultivation is due to their comparative better economic condition, better resource endowment such as human labour, draught animal resources, tractor and power tillers availability.³ In West Bengal, Rice is the staple food crop. The risk of yield has dropped from the previously 13 per cent to 5 per cent of late and the yield risk is fundamentally liable for the waning in variability production of rice in this state.⁸

In most of the cases, it was found that share cropping in rice cultivation is surviving on the condition of 50:50 produce sharing between share croppers and land owners who give their land for cultivation to these farmers. In some cases of share cropping, very few land owners give input to their share croppers. In fact, almost all the farmers irrespective of their size of operational holding have 50:50 produce sharing between the share croppers and their land owners.⁵ But 12.24 per cent of share cropping practicing farmers have both 50:50 inputs and produce share among them. Present study is an attempt to know the extent and pattern of share cropping practiced in crop cultivation in general and in rice cultivation in particular. Among the three districts Burdwan was selected for the present study because this district

has maximum area under rice (50.60 per cent of the total cropped area of the district).

Methodology

The sample for the study was made using Three Stage Random Sampling Design. Block formed the first stage unit while the villages and farm households were the second and ultimate unit of sampling respectively. One block was selected in the district, Burdwan of the Damodar valley zone in West Bengal. Survey was conducted on 100 numbers of farm households distributed in ten villages and these villages were selected at random. Later on farm household were stratified into four groups on the basis of their operational or total cultivated land holding as follows:

SI No	Size group	Operational holding
1	Marginal farmer	< 1 ha
2	Small farmer	1-2 ha
3	Medium farmer	2-3ha
4	Large farmer	>3ha

A detailed Survey was conducted by using semi structured and particularly premeditated interview schedules. The analytical procedures like growth rate, simple tabular analysis, were applied to estimate convenience and use of productive resources by sharecropper farmers versus other farmers. Regression analysis approach was used in evaluating relation between land resources inequity and productivity of inputs. In the present paper 'growers with functional prosperities of land extent below 2 ha' have been stated as 'tiny holders'. In order make the data more analogous, recently designed states, viz. Jharkhand, Chhattisgarh, and Uttarakhand were collected with their unique states from which that states were etched out, viz. Bihar, Madhya Pradesh and UP, correspondingly(FAO,2005).⁶

Results and Discussion

West Bengal's sharecroppers have benefited enormously from the State's land reforms and legislation-implementation programs like Operation Barga. The success of West Bengal's efforts is evident in its villages: the economic and social status

Table 1: Instability Indices of Rice and Wheat crops in IGP of India

States	Periods	Rice			Wheat		
		Area	Production	Yield	Area	Production	Yield
Bihar	1966-1991	0.08	0.38	0.32	0.19	0.29	0.23
	1992-2008	0.09	0.21	0.15	0.02	0.09	0.08
Punjab	1966-1991	0.07	0.12	0.1	0.04	0.1	0.08
	1992-2008	0.04	0.06	0.05	0.01	0.07	0.06
Haryana	1966-1991	0.1	0.2	0.16	0.06	0.13	0.1
	1992-2008	0.07	0.11	0.13	0.03	0.06	0.13
Uttar Pradesh	1966-1991	0.05	0.28	0.26	0.04	0.13	0.1
	1992-2008	0.06	0.15	0.1	0.01	0.06	0.06
West Bengal	1966-1991	0.05	0.15	0.13	-	-	-
	1992-2008	0.05	0.07	0.04	-	-	-

Source: Computed from FAO statistics

of many bargadars has been significantly enhanced.¹¹ The NNS 59th round (January-December 2003) report has pointed out that on issues ranging from indebtedness of farmer households to their access to modern technology, Bengal farmers are not better off than their counterparts in other states. Operation Barga involved registration of 1.4 million bargadars, of which over 30 per cent were dalits and over 12 per cent were adivasis.⁹ Through Operation Barga, about 1.1 million acres of land was permanently brought under the control of bargadars and their right to cultivate this land was secured. Below the table 2 provides official data on the extent of SCs and STs among the beneficiaries of land reform.

From the above table there has more pattadar than that of bargadar in the study area and the percentage of scheduled tribe is more in pattadar.

From the Table 2 study showed that 26.49 per cent of the total operational holding area was put under sharecropped cultivation in rice cultivation, which varied from 19.65 per cent in marginal farms to 26.86 percent in large farms (Table1). Thus, it was found that the extent of share cropping in the sampled area increases with the increase in farm size holdings. Again, it was found that 49 per cent of the farm households were practicing share cropping in rice cultivation as a whole. Percentage of farm households practicing share cropping was highest.

The total human labour employment created due to share cropping in rice cultivation in the sample area was 60.09 man days per farm per year in average situation which varied from man days in marginal farm to 141.82 man days in large farms per year. Thus, human labour employment generation due to share cropping in rice cultivation increases with the increase in farm size.

Special characteristics of share cropping in the study area are:

Table 2: Extent of SCs and STs among the beneficiaries of land reform.

Per cent of total	Scheduled Castes	Schedules Tribes
Pattadars	37.1	19.3
Bargadars	30.5	11.0

1. For marginal and small farmers, they undertake share cropping due to their very small size of operational holding (0.58ha & 1.47ha respectively).⁷ and also due to their available human and draught animal power resources. Thus, they are using their disguised un-employment in rice cultivation through share cropping mode of crop

Table 3: Characteristics of share cropping and land use pattern in rice cultivation by size group of farms districts in West Bengal

SI No.	Items	Size groups of farms				
		Marginal	Small	Medium	Large	All Farms
1	Farm household (Nos)	28	38	17	17	100
2	Owned land(ha)	25.71	44.08	28.05	80.5	178.34
3	Leased out land(ha)	6.40	0.27	0.27	11.47	18.41
		(39.43)	(0.48)	(0.67)	(14.57)	(9.54)
4	Share cropped rice area(ha)	3.19	13.89	12.91	21.14	51.13
		(19.65)	(24.83)	(31.94)	(26.86)	(26.49)
5	Farm households having share cropping in rice (Nos)	8	21	11	9	49
		(28.57)	(55.26)	(64.71)	(52.94)	(49)
6	Fixed rented land(ha)	0.13	0.27	0.00	0.00	0.40
		(0.80)	(0.48)	(0.00)	(0.00)	(0.21)
7	Total leased in land(ha)	3.32	14.16	12.91	21.14	51.53
		(20.46)	(25.31)	(31.94)	(26.86)	(26.69)
8	Total operational holding(ha)	16.23	55.94	40.42	78.7	193.05
		(100.00)	(100.00)	(100.00)	(100.00)	(100.00)
9	Average size of holding(ha)	0.58	1.47	2.38	4.63	1.93
10	Farm household having 50:50 produce share in share cropping (Nos)	8	21	21	9	49
		(100.00)	(100.00)	(100.00)	(100.00)	(100.00)
11	Farm household having input share in share cropping(Nos)	2	1	2	1	6
		(25.00)	(4.76)	(18.18)	(11.11)	(12.24)
12	Human labour created due to share cropping (mandays/farm/year)	13.56	43.04	90.45	141.82	60.09
13	Yield of rice crop(t/ha)	2.17	2.67	2.93	4.15	3.26

cultivation. Otherwise, there would be more disguised unemployment. Existing owned resources would be underutilized or remains idle. Thus, sharecropping helps marginal and small farmers in minimizing their level of disguised unemployment. Their resources get seasonal employment and thus, help in supplementing their total farm income and employment.

- For medium and large farmers, the main reasons for pursuing sharecropping in rice cultivation is due to their comparative better economic condition, better resource endowment such as human labour, draught animal resources, tractor and power tillers availability and those who do not have enough of these resources, they are also in position to hire these sources of power for their crop

cultivation. Sharecropping by medium and large farmers also help in supplementing their total farm income, resources get employment and thereby help in enhancing their purchasing power and per capita income.

- Those marginal farmers who give their cultivable land to other farmers for share cropping in rice cultivation, they do that due to their non-availability of draught animal power, their inability to hire tractor or power tillers for ploughing their land and also due to their inability to apply the required amount of fertilizers and plant protections chemicals. Because, economically their purchasing power is very low and their attitude for cultivation is far away from commercial line. Their economic conditions is such that they find wage earning in other's farms and non-

farm sectors more profitable than undergoing traditional mode of crop cultivation in their very small unit of land

Conclusion

Thus, from the above analysis it can be concluded that share cropping in West Bengal state is need of vital reforms. An enormous scope is there to raise paddy production in the eastern India through increasing the efficiency of crops with the implementation of better-quality inputs and cost-effective methods of rice cultivation in due time and space on a sustainable way. In West Bengal Share cropping is established as additional source of farm returns to that producers who accept share-cropping by leasing plots from others landlord. It also provide

a complementary income source and employment generation for both the farmers and non-farmers. It is due to the farmer who accepts share-cropping in landlord and others cultivators who lease their land for share-cropping to other cultivators. Thus, Share-cropping in the study area has created both additional and balancing source of family returns.

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