

CHAPTER IV

THE AGRARIAN CLASS STRUCTURE IN DARJEELING AND SIKKIM

The Agrarian History

Historically, it is seen that Darjeeling district was under Sikkim. During the British regime in India the four sub-divisions of this district - Badar, Kurseong, Kalimpong and Siliguri - were annexed one after another; Darjeeling and Kurseong in 1835, Siliguri in 1850 and Kalimpong in 1865. While the first three sub-divisions were annexed from Sikkim directly the last sub-division was annexed from Bhutan which had annexed it in 1706 from Sikkim and had since then been ruling this area. Thus to know the pre-British agrarian history of Darjeeling one has to know the history of Sikkim and Bhutan also because the agrarian administration of these places might have had an influence on the agrarian processes of Darjeeling.

Before discussing the Sikkimese agrarian history a brief note may be made of the Bhutanese agrarian history. The travel report of Harthman (1971:34-36) records the local inhabitants divided into three classes - priests, government officials and landowners in a hierarchic order. He also notes that the taxes were moderate and each family was assessed according to its substance and the tax was collected in the form of kind. My own impression is that what was true of the agrarian history in Bhutan itself was perhaps not true of the annexed areas like Kalimpong and a part of western Dooars or

Goosh Behar areas. The old villagers still recollect the forceful ways in which the mandals or the headmen used to collect the taxes under the Bhutanesse rule. The chief officers of Bhutan called Bzenabas and Bhasep used to visit Kalimpong once a year to collect the taxes which the mandals would keep ready before their arrival. These officers reportedly used to be provided with the best wine available, meat and females for their entertainment. Failure to meet all these would mean severe punishments to the mandals as well as the local people. / The hangover of this traditional agrarian history of Kalimpong still persists today and the kids in the villages still run away or hide themselves when they hear or see that a Bhotey meaning a person from Bhutan is approaching. The dreadful stories of the past are still told by the old grand parents in the villages.

In Sikkim, the oldest form of the land measurement was in phangs or paces of land and the taxes from the tenants was collected from as early as the history of Sikkim. Even before the inception of the Bhauryal Dynasty in Sikkim the Nazis used to hold grants of land from the former Nicharaja (king), which was hereditary. Land grants used to be made by Nicharaja as a reward or inducement for administrative efficiency (Sikkim, Agail. Census 1976-77:8). The most peculiar feature of the Samindari system in Sikkim was that the landholder was bound to the land for payment of the revenue for the whole term of settlement. The holders of land could not sell the land under the terms of contract they entered into (ibid:9).

During the early Tibetan rule in Sikkim the miyats

were directly controlled by the Palace. These raiyats were of 2 types - Hangzans and Zinchungpas. The former referred to the constant Palace attendants and the latter, to those who served the Maharaja on tours (Nanyal and Maharani 1908, 107). The villagers - the Lepchas, Bhutias and the Nepalis - mostly belonged to the latter group. The whole country was divided into 12 districts under 12 Bhutia Rajlongs or ministers and 12 Lepcha heads of Dzongs or castles (ibid : append : B). The monasteries had no land and depended on the gifts and donation from the people (ibid; 23).

It is noted that besides land tax the raiyats had to render free services to their landlords, mandals and Karbaris (account assistants of mandals) of the respective blocks. It has also been mentioned (Barnet 1974 : 73) that the landlords meaning the kazis and the thikudars had magisterial powers of civil and criminal matters and could easily dispossess a raiyat if they wanted to. With such enormous powers they could utilize the various forms of free labour - rather forced labour - for their personal benefits. The condemnation of Kalo Kheri (literally black land) meaning the forced labour by leaders like Tashi Tshering and Lal Bahadur Barnet in the early 40's with a large participation of the masses is a burning example of the peasant revolution against the feudal excesses in the first half of the present century.

This free labour was later withdrawn vide Notification No. 6374/G dated 15.5.'24 and in place of it a cash payment at the rate of Rs. 1 to landlord, .50 p to mandal

and .25 p to Kharbari was introduced which remained in vogue until the abolition of zamindari system in 1949.

Darjeeling which was a part of the Sikkimese territory used to be governed by a Kazi who submitted the rent amounting to Rs. 20 every year to the Raja of Sikkim (Dorje op cit : 10). The very name 'Darjeeling' is supposed to be an anglicized form of the word 'Dorje-ling' meaning the village governed by Dorje. The system of land taxation and forced labour prevalent in Sikkim earlier probably existed in Darjeeling also but no direct evidence is found as yet to show that a similar situation prevailed there too. Even if it did so it probably does not matter now as much as the British history does. This is due to the fact that these areas were quite sparsely populated before the British annexation.

It is found that even during the British period the system of land management/village administration was not changed significantly but rather the same old system was let to continue. What changed during their rule there for about a century was the nature of economy in the district. The area east of Teesta River was made an agricultural area while the land west of it was covered with tea gardens. Such a clear demarcation in the economy of the district was probably due to many reasons such as : the later annexation of Kalimpong sub-division, nature of land itself which is not very steep in Kalimpong as found in Darjeeling or Kurseong and the climatic conditions which are more suitable for cultivation in Kalimpong than in the land west of Teesta river.

Whatever may be the reasons, the differences in the economy within the district developed different forms of agrarian relations in the region. The class relations in Darjeeling and Kurseong are, for example, more of semi-industrial nature with the maliks (owners of the tea gardens who were mostly British until Independence) on the top, the labourers at the bottom and the managers/asstt.manager or supervisors constituting the intermediary class. In practice, however, the maliks had a direct relationship with the labourers who were very much exploited. Education was denied to them and the wages were very low to permit a subsistence living at the most.* Late Dhanraj Singh Gurusagor, the veteran leader of the hills and specifically of the Gorkha League (a regional political party) and other leaders had fought much for social justice to the garden labourers.

After independence, out of 97 tea gardens in Darjeeling 54 or 55.7% of the gardens were affected by a change of ownership (Chattacharya, 1976 : 39). According to the official records of the Darjeeling Branch, India Tea Association there are today as many as 12 closed gardens while almost all the gardens under private proprietorship are suspected to be sick. With these changes the class relations also seem to have changed. Under the newly emerged class structure the managers and supervisors became rather casual to the garden management work while the real owners were hardly known to the labourers. A

* For further details see my article entitled "Education in Darjeeling and Simin Hills - An evaluation". (Himalayan Observer, Vol 12, No.4, Sept.10, 1933.

kind of bipolarization has also developed in the tea gardens between the managers/supervisors on the one hand and the labourers on the other in the last two decades. The chief force behind the labourers at present are the communist parties which have been very successful in organising the garden labourers. As a result, the bargaining power of the labourers has also slightly improved today.

The class relations in the non-plantation areas are, however, quite different. The Kalimpang sub-division, the only hill tract best suited to agricultural cultivation in this district was, after its annexation, divided into 43 blocks, each under a mandal. The duty of a mandal was to protect the law and order in the village and collect the revenue. The Kalimpang town was a separate block under the Khamsahal office (Bell 1905 : 1) and became a municipal area in 1945 only though the Development Areas* was there since as early as 1919.

There were some rent-free lands belonging to the monasteries and mandals even after annexation. According to the Settlement Report of 1892 the total number of raiyats in Kalimpang sub-division were 5717 and the total raiyati area 33,509 acres; the average size of landholding of each raiyat

* The inception and identification of 'Development Areas' took place during the British regime (late 19th century). In order to augment the British taxation system and development, certain areas of our country were brought under the supervision of the British Peace-Weal Plan. At the time of independence, certain portions of these 'Development Areas' had assumed urban characteristics and were, therefore, declared 'municipalities' and likewise.

was 2.7 acres and the rent, Rs. 6-8 per year. There were about 55 grazing grounds covering an area of 7,900 acres. The raiyats had to serve the government as labourers but unlike in the feudal Sikhs they used to be paid at the market rates. However, they also had to contribute 3 days' free labour for road construction (Bell ibid : 8-12).

In short, the agrarian history of Darjeeling can be separated into three phases - pre-British, British and post-British. The pre-British phase was characterised by the Raja on the top, the kuzis below them, the mandal and kharbaris still below and the raiyats in the lowest ladder. The British period saw the abolition of the top and the rank below it and replaced them with a bureaucratic system of administration. But the mandals were still very powerful. The post-British period slightly changed the British system of administration and the mandals became less powerful with the introduction of the Panchayati Raj because the power of the mandals - specially the administrative power - came over to the hands of the panchayat members with the Pradhan heading the village power structure. Though the mandals were left with the revenue collecting duty only they still enjoyed the status higher than that of the common villagers. In this last phase of the agrarian history the status of the raiyats - politically and economically - has slightly improved.

An important point to be noted with regard to the agrarian history of Darjeeling is that this district was regarded as a 'Non-Regulation District' till March, 1987 implying

that the Acts and Regulations of the State government were not implemented there unless specially extended. Only Act X of 1869 and Act VIII of 1879 regulated the rights and liabilities of the rural people in Darjeeling (Roy Buman 1961 : 330-34). More recently, however, almost every Act of the State government is implemented there.

Writing about the agrarian history of the 17th to the 19th century India, Mukherjee (1957) says that initially the rural hierarchy was characterized by a luxurious aristocracy on the top, the petty traders and the merchants below them, the common peasantry still below and the agrestic serfs in the lowest ladder. In the 18th century, the top ladder dwindled and was replaced by traders and merchants who began to invest their surplus on land. Thus they became the landed aristocracy finally with a wide gap between the rural poor and themselves. Bose (1961 : 64-65), writing about the northern India, says that there were big and small estates together but there was no special privileges based on land.

There are historians (Saha 1970, Field 1985, Roy 1915, Maitra 1975, Banerjee 1980) who blame either the Permanent Settlement or the land legislations as the main factors for causing the agrarian crisis in India. Whitcombe (1971 : 324) and Siddiqi (1973 : 13) note the exploitation by the settlement officers and landlords, which have been reported in Darjeeling and Sikkim also. But the agrarian history of Darjeeling specially has no link with the Permanent Settlement because when it was first introduced in 1793 Darjeeling was outside West Bengal and

was so for many years later.

The agrarian history of Darjeeling starts mainly with the British period and therefore the Mughal agrarian history has little relevance to the present context but not totally irrelevant either. The words like kazi, khazana (revenue) and khazana are urdu words but widely used in Darjeeling and also Sikkim since long indicate some influence of the Mughal rule on this region also. Though a few isolated cases of zamindars are found in Darjeeling the same is officially known as a mahalswari or balyswari area while Sikkim had zamindari system also. In Darjeeling an extensive form of zamindari system could not perhaps evolve as the whole area was covered with forest and had opened up all of a sudden.

The revenue system of the British period had certain adverse effects on the district. Those who worked as bullock-cart drivers or daily labourers in the construction work somehow managed some cash to pay the khazana but the petty agriculturists had much difficulty in paying the same. The money value of the agricultural produce was very low and the market had not developed significantly except in Darjeeling (then called Gundal Bazar). A loadful of maize weighing about 37.5 kilograms could be sold for Rs.1 to 2 only till 1920's. Moreover, the people of Kalimpong and Kurseong had to carry such loads all the way upto the present Sadar town. It is reported that many of them returned to Nepal as they could not pay the revenue.

The agrarian system of Kalimpong was strained first

by the establishment of the Development Area in 1919 with an area of 13 thousand acres; second, the Durbin Military Cantonment in 1928 and finally, the Kalimpong Municipality in 1945. All these establishments took place at a very productive area where the land was thick and fertile.

As a consequence, the villagers had to move further down to more slanty and slide-prone areas. They got compensation which but did not last long. The dense forest which supported the land above it was instead rapidly pushed down near the rivers Teesta and Relli. The major landslides that took place in 1907 and 1963 made a large area not only in Kalimpong but also in the whole region unfit for cultivation. All these factors coupled with a steady migration led to a very strained condition of the agrarian system of Kalimpong - agriculturally the most important area in the district. The same kind of story was repeated in other parts of the district and region also. What differed from one place to another was the degree of harm caused. Under such circumstances the study of the agrarian class structure becomes a very interesting as well as a complex proposition.

A final word about the agrarian history of Darjeeling and Sikkim. Till the Nepalese immigration started in this region, the local inhabitants, called the Lepchas, practised shifting cultivation. In Sikkim, some Tibetans had immigrated even before the large-scale Nepalese immigration took place but, as mentioned in Chapter II already, they were either traders or engaged in landlordism and administration.

As one can easily draw clues from the shifting cultivation areas of the northeast India, the agrarian class structure had not taken roots till the settled cultivation had started. The communal ownership without any special landownership right of even the tribal-chiefs was a powerful system that inhibited the emergence of a class structure. Thus, the agrarian class structure can be safely assumed to have taken its birth with the Nepalese immigration which meant the introduction of settled cultivation and subsequently the prevalence of 'individual proprietorship' over the 'communal proprietorship'.

The Agrarian Structure in Five villages

In the present study of the agrarian class structure 'land' has been taken as the basis of classification. This criterion has been duly emphasized by various sociologists and economists like Mukherjee (1929), Hyndal (1968), Beteille (1963a), Dasgupta (1960), and Thorner (1976). In the context of the hill areas of Darjeeling and Sikkim it may be pointed out that the land does not have as much an economic value as in the plains of India or elsewhere but socially speaking it still has a very high value. Though 'class' is basically an economic concept 'land' as such is rather inadequate to represent this concept fully. Thus many other factors like education, income, occupation, indebtedness and styles of life have also been taken here to give a really comprehensive picture of the class structure in Darjeeling and Sikkim.

The villagers of this region make a very simple

classification of the agrarian society into pattdars and pathuways. A pattdar here means a landowner, whatever the amount of land held by him. He may be a non-cultivating owner, cultivator, cultivator can adhivasi (sharecropper) or partly a khotsa (agricultural labourer). A pathuway, on the other hand, may be a baradar without any land of his own or a landless agricultural labourer. Some of them may be cultivating big plots of land while others may not be cultivating any land at all. Those who do not cultivate any land make their living by working as daily labourers at his malik's (landowner's) house, in the village or even outside the village.

An agrarian classification elsewhere has been mostly a three-tier one. Mukherjee (1957:10), for example, makes a three-tier agrarian classification. Beteille (1969a) also classifies the agrarian society into landowners, tenants and agricultural labourers. Similarly, Thorner (1976) classifies the society into malik or landowners, hisan or artisans and farmers and gaddar or agricultural labourers. Such a three-tier agrarian classification does not appear very helpful in the context of the region under study. The main reason for this is that in the high altitude villages the middle class of Beteille or Thorner is either very insignificant or totally absent while in the lower altitude villages the same is bulky. The economy of the hills characterised by large tracts of unirrigated lands, very small size of land-holding, single cropping, large uncultivable lands and forest areas make it difficult for the

agricultural labourers to exist as a separate category altogether.

It may be mentioned here that the category of agricultural labourers was not noticed in the context of Darjeeling hills till the Census of 1941. It was in 1951 Census that this category was recorded for the first time. From 1961 onwards this category has been found growing steadily and in 1971 census, it assumes quite a significant proportion in the region. On the whole it is 7.5% excepting Mirik and Kalimpong Block where the percentages of this category are 51.4 and 24.3 respectively.

At a glance, therefore, the Census figures seem to disqualify the above contention that it is difficult for this category to exist separately. The very high percentage of this category in the above two cases are found, in fact, due to construction works in tourism development in Mirik and a Military Cantonment at Kalimpong II following the Chinese aggression of 1962. Therefore, the Census has clearly included these labourers also into the category of 'agricultural labourers'. On the other hand, I have classified the agrarian society on the basis of 'household' and not 'individuals' and the criterion to judge the agrarian status is more than 50% of the annual income of a particular household from 'self-cultivation', 'sharecropping' or 'agricultural labour'. And by 'agricultural works' I have understood the 'activities related with agricultural production' and not construction or other works.

The agrarian classification of Betsille, Thorner and others into three tiers sounds more a legal classification than a sociological one in the context of the present study. A sociological classification is expected to reflect the class consciousness in the class differences. In the hill areas of Darjeeling, there are plenty of households which represent all these three layers at the same time. A landowner is often found to be working as a sharecropper and at times as an agricultural labourer also. This clearly indicates the difficulty in identifying the class affiliation of the people in the villages. The present classification of the agrarian society into pattadars and pathureys, on the other hand, relieves of this confusion because a householder cannot become a pattadar and a pathurey at the same time and in the same village. A pathurey of Tenek village may, however, be a pattadar of Ranghuli village. Thus the use of these two local terms in the present agrarian classification has been purely contextual.

The simple classification of the agrarian society into pattadars and pathureys can be supported yet on another ground. There is no local term to represent the class of the agricultural labourers; the word shetain which substitutes 'agricultural labourers' to a good extent means but any person who works in the field of another person. He may be a landowner or a landless peasant. Under the labour exchange systems like a

panga* and a hoori** even the landowners work in the fields of others as khotalas. Thus, khotala does not refer to a class but to a functional category including all those who are hired and those who are not.

The word 'sharecropper' or 'tenant' also does not have any complementary word in the local language. If a landowner is engaged in sharecropping he is called an akhawal but if he has leased out his land on sharecropping then he is called a halik by his leasee(s). But if a landless person is involved in sharecropping he is called a patharay. The word patharay is, however, a little more extensive in meaning in the sense that it also means the landless labourers who do not cultivate any land and who are classified as agricultural labourers in the three-tier agrarian classification. It is for all these reasons that a two-tier classification has been proposed here. This is expected to be more meaningful than the three-tier classification specially in the context of the region under study.

The nature of the agrarian class structure is found

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- * The word panga means a system of direct labour exchange relations in which usually only 2 households participate. They work in each other's land on alternate days or so. No payment of any kind is done except providing food and drinks during the work hours.
 - ** The word hoori means a system of indirect or cyclical labour exchange relations. It may consist of 10 to 20 or even more members. The participants work on each other's lands in a cyclical order. A hoori may also be sold to a fellow villager if any of the participants own inadequate land to engage all the labourers. This group may represent people of different age groups, classes and castes. The panga, on the other hand, is usually between two individuals of the same age, if not of the same caste.

to have varied from village to village and the reasons for this have been discussed in due course. The present discussion seeks to deal ^{with} each village separately lest the nuances should be overlooked.

The following table gives a rough picture of the agrarian class structure of Tenek village.

Table 13

Agrarian Class Structure in Tenek

Class	Categories	No. of Households	Percentage
I Pattadar 137 (67.1%)	Non-cultivating owner	12	5.1
	Non-cultivating cum cultivating owner	25	10.7
	Cultivator	28	36.3
	Cultivator cum adhiawal	31	13.2
	Cultivator cum khetala	4	1.7
II Pathareys 77 (32.9%)	Adhiawal	36	15.4
	Adhiawal cum khetala	23	12.0
	Khetala cum coolie	18	6.6
Total		234	100.0

This table shows that the pattadars constitute 67.1% of the total number of households in Tenek and the pathareys 32.9% only, which is less than one third of the total. Categorywise, the cultivators constitute the largest percentage (36.3) followed by the adhiawals (15.4). If the total percentage of the adhiawals, i.e., landowners as well as the landless, is worked out it comes to 43.6 which is a significant figure. This

table also shows that there is no purely agricultural labourer's category in the village. The part-agricultural labourers constitute only 10.3% of the total households in the village. In fact the agricultural labourers were till 1930's not an important sector in the hill areas (Roy Burman 1961: 211).

It may be mentioned here that no separate category of the service and business people has been made in the above classification. As a matter of fact, to put them in a separate category seems quite superficial because excepting the 2 Bihari households the rest of the villagers are somehow linked with agriculture. Moreover, this aspect shall be clearly manifested while discussing the relationship between class and occupation.

The agrarian structure of Purbong may be expected to be slightly different from that of Tanak though these two villages are adjacent. The change, if any, is due to a higher altitude and a slightly convenient location. The following table (Table 10) shows the broad picture of the agrarian class structure in Purbong.

Table 10

Class	Categories	No. of Households	Percentage
I Pattadar 41 (65.1)	Non-cultivating owner	6	9.5
	Non-cultivating cum cultivator	3	4.3
	Cultivator	14	22.2
	Cultivator cum adhiawal	2	3.2
	Cultivator cum khotala	13	23.4
II Paharoy 23 (34.9)	Adhiawal	1	1.6
	Adhiawal cum khotala	13	20.6
	Khotala cum coolie	2	3.7
Total		63	100.0

This table may be compared with Table 12. In both Tanek and Purbong the cultivators' category is found among the milkiest (33.3% and 22.2% respectively). But while in Tanek the percentage of cultivator cum khotala is very low (1.7) the same in Purbong is the highest (25.4). This is perhaps due partly to the low productivity of the soil in Purbong. The lower production automatically compels a cultivator to seek other employments including agricultural labour. Again, the percentage of the category of adiwals in Tanek is 15.4 but in Purbong it is only 1.6. This relatively lower percentage of adiwals in the latter may be attributed to the lower production in this village because the sharecroppers are usually more attracted to the more productive areas.

In the following table (Table 20) we find a completely different picture of the agrarian class structure in Rangball. The word 'tenant' has been used here in lieu of 'pakhurey' in the former villages. This is done so because these people stay in the houses built by the landlords and pay rents for their stay but the landless people of other villages build their houses themselves and do not pay rents. Moreover, the landless people are locally referred to as 'pakhureys' in other villages but in Rangball they are not called so.

Table 20

<u>Agrarian Class Structure in Rangball</u>			
Class	Categories	No. of Households	Percentage
I Pattadar 242 (70.1)	Cultivators	137	44.8
	Cultivators cum agril. labourers	71	23.2
	Homestead holders	34	11.1
II Tenant (64) (20.2)	Tenant agril. labourers	13	4.2
	Tenant non-agril. labourers	51	16.7
Total		308	100.0

This table shows that the category of the cultivators has remained consistently the bulkiest (44.8%). It is also seen that the households holding only the homestead is also quite high (11.1). Besides a large percentage (23.2) of the pattadar class work as agricultural labourers in the SPSC. The percentage of purely agricultural labourers is very few (4.2) but the percentage of the landless tenants in the non-agricultural category is quite high (16.7). It may be pointed out here that those who work as agricultural labourers in the SPSC are called 'agricultural labourers' only and not called Khatalag. The wage and status of these labourers are also higher than the same in the villages discussed above. The wage at present is Rs.8.98 per day irrespective of sex.

Another significant aspect of the agrarian structure in Ranghull is the absence of adhiwals or the sharecroppers' category. But in Tanek and Purbong this category is quite prominent. Besides a few factors mentioned above, this may also be partly due to a different agrarian history of the village and the smallness of the landholding size. The landholding size in this village is only 0.32 acre compared to 1.53 acres in Tanek and 1.43 in Purbong. However, not a single family in this village owns more than 3 acres of land while in Tanek and Purbong many own over 15 to 25 acres of land. The very high altitude of the village is definitely a factor in this regard but the percentage of the landowners is also the highest (73.1) in Ranghull compared to 67.1% in Tanek and 65.15 in Purbong.

The Takuthang village of west Sikkim offers an interesting addition to the specificity of the nature of agrarian class structure in the region under study. This village is, as mentioned before, one of the most backward villages of Sikkim with still a very poor communication system and educational development. The following table (Table 21) shows the broad picture of the agrarian class structure in Takuthang village.

Before presenting the table the terms Tanen and Kudd found in this village may be explained here. The word Tanen means a system of tenure in which a family cultivates the land of another family for one year after paying a certain amount of money. This is quite like the masikatta system found in Tenek and Puntong villages. But the difference between the two is that a Tanen has to be renewed every year but a masikatta is paid for more than two years at a time. And the term kudd means a system of tenure in which the financial transactions do not take place. The lessor takes a fixed amount of grain every year and the rest of the produce goes to the lessee.

Table 21

Agrarian Class Structure in Takuthang

Class	Categories	No. of Households	Percentage
I Pattadar 89 (73.4)	Owner cultivator	33	40.4
	Cultivator cum adhiawal	9	9.6
	Cultivator cum Tanen	13	13.8
	Cultivator cum Kudd	4	4.2
	Cultivator cum adhia cum kudd	1	1.1
	Cultivator cum adhia cum tanen	3	3.2
	Cultivator cum tanen cum adhia cum kudd	1	1.1
II Palmuroy 19 (16.2)	Adhiawal	1	1.1
	Kudd	7	7.4
	Tanen	8	8.5
	Rhetala	3	3.2
	Temporary settlements	6 (6.4)	6.4
Total		94	100.0

The above table shows that 73.4% of the villagers are pattadars or landowners, 20.2% are pathareys and 6.4% are outsiders who are government servants. Categorywise, the largest percentage (40.4) goes to the owner cultivators. It is also seen that besides adha system of tenure the systems like tanen and hadd are also existent in this village. Another interesting point the table above is that the pathareys are not involved in more than one tenure, which gives a clue to the understanding of class relations and class exploitation. This aspect has been taken up later for discussion.

Chuchen being an adjacent village of Takuthang has many characteristics in common as amply shown in the Chapters II and III. In the following is presented the agrarian class structure of Chuchen village.

Table 22

Agrarian Class Structure in Chuchen

Class	Categories	No. of Households	Percentage
I Pattadar 73 (57.8)	Non-cultivating cum cultivator	3	3.7
	Owner cultivator	47	57.3
	Cultivator cum adhiwal	7	8.5
	Cultivator cum adha cum hadd	1	1.2
	Cultivator cum tanen	5	6.1
	Cultivator cum tanen cum adha	1	1.2
	Cultivator cum tanen cum hadd	2	2.4
	Cultivator cum hadd	6	7.3
II Patharey 10 (12.2)	Adhiwal	1	1.2
	Adha cum tanen cum hadd	1	1.2
	Tanen	1	1.2
	Hadd	5	6.1
	Khetala	2	2.4
Total		82	100.0

This table shows that the percentage of the pattadar class is 87.8 and of the pakharey 12.2 but in Takuthang the pattadars constitute only 73.4% while the pakhareys constitute 26.6%. This may be partly due to the fact that the total area of this village is larger than that of Takuthang but the number of households is much less (see Chapter II). The owner cultivators' category is found the bulkiest (87.3%) in this village also.

An important difference Chuichen marks from Takuthang is that in this village 2 or 2.4% of the pakharey class are involved in more than one tenure while in Takuthang not a single pakharey is involved in more than one tenure system. This is also probably due to a larger amount of cultivable land under this village and a lesser number of households than in Takuthang.

From the foregoing discussion we find a variation among the five villages studied not only in respect of the relative numerical strength of the pattadars and the pakhareys but also in the tenancy system. There is, however, a variation in one more aspect, i.e., in the average landholding size of the five villages. The average landholding size of the Tanek village is, for example, 1.56 acres, Purbong 1.46 acres, Ranghull 0.33 acre, Takuthang 3.85 acres and of Chuichen 3.32 acres. Thus, the more urbanized and higher altitude villages have a smaller size of landholding than the villages which are less urbanized, in a remoter place and at a lower altitude.

Now it is important to discuss the statistical

foundations of the above agrarian classification. This is important not only from the methodological point of view but also from the point of understanding the class relationship in a more scientific way. An attempt has been made here to find the statistical relationship between the pattadars and the pattureys/tenants with respect of education, occupation and income only.

Class and Education

A table has been presented here to show the differential educational achievements of the two classes - pattadars and the pattureys in Tenek village.

Table 23

Class and Education in Tenek

Category	No. of Inds.	% Pattadar	% Patturey
Illiterates*	423	31.2	42.2
Infants (-5)	205	15.0	17.3
Prim. Educ. (-IV)	235	23.8	23.8
Second. Educ. (V to XII)	323	23.8	11.7
College	13	1.0	-
University	3	0.2	-
Total	1370	-	31.7

* also includes deafe and dumb.

This table shows that the illiterates constitute 31.2%, the infants 15.0, the primary educated 23.8%, the secondary level educated 23.8%, the college educated 1.0% and the University

level 0.84. Classwise, the percentage of illiterates in the pattadar class is 36.2% while it is 42.2% in the pakhurey class. The percentage of the primary level educated among the pattadar as well as the pakhurey classes is the same - 23.8. At the secondary level, the percentage representation of the pattadar class is much higher (20.4) compared to 11.7 among the pakhureys. The pakhureys have not been represented at the College level and above it but the percentage of the pattadars is also very low at the College level and still lower above it. Thus the percentage of the pattadar class at the secondary level and above is higher than that of the pakhurey class.

The relationship which the above figures show between class and education in Tanek village is striking. It indicates that the pakhureys are really backward in respect of education. This may be perhaps due to their low economic position which does not allow them to participate in the educational field equally with the pattadars. Now whether a similar picture exists in Parbang may be shown in the following table (Table 24).

Table 24

Class and Education in Parbang

Category	No. of Inds.	%	Pattadar	%	Pakhurey	%
Illiterates*	99	35.5	64	19.9	45	39.5
Infants (-5)	64	16.6	45	13.6	19	16.2
Prim. Educated (-IV)	112	20.1	77	23.4	36	30.8
Second. Educ. (V-XII)	101	26.0	84	31.0	17	14.5
College	11	2.8	11	4.1	-	-
University	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total	338	100.0	271	69.9	117	30.1

* also includes deaf and dumb.

This table shows that the percentage of illiterates is higher in Tanek (31.2) than in Parbung (25.5). The percentage of college educated is, on the other hand, higher (2.6) in Parbung than in Tanek (1.0). Thus, literacywise, Parbung is more advanced than Tanek.

Classwise, the table shows that the percentage of illiterates is much higher (33.6) among the patharoyas compared to 19.9 among the pattalars. At the primary level education, however, the patharoyas have much higher a percentage (30.8) compared to 23.6 among the pattalars. But at the secondary level and above, the pattalars have a better representation than the patharoyas. The patharoyas have not been represented at the College level at all and at the University level both the classes have not been represented. The absence of University level education in this village is difficult to explain because despite being more backward Tanek has some representation at the University level also. One probable explanation that may be suggested here is the less number of households in Parbung, which reduces the chances of occurring the cases of highly educated people in the village.

Now the following table (Table 25) on Rangbali village may be produced.

Table 25

Class and Education in Rangbali

Category	No. of Indiv.	% Pattadar	% Tengit
Illiterates*	313	17.8	13.7
Infants (-5)	333	12.4	13.1
Prim. Educated(-IV)	506	28.5	24.8
Second. Educated (V-XII)	682	38.4	35.8
College	47	2.7	1.6
University	1	0.1	-
Total	1774	100.0	100.0

* also includes deafe and dumb.

The above table shows that the percentage of illiterates in Rangbali is much lower than in Fatak (31.2) and Purbong (25.5). The percentage of secondary educated people is also quite high in this village (38.4) than in other villages studied. Though the percentage of the College level educated persons is slightly lower than in Purbong (3.3) it is still higher (2.7) than in Fatak (1.0).

This table, however, does not give a very sharp picture of class difference between the two - pattadars and palhareys. The pattadar class has consistently a higher percentage of representation in categories above the primary level but the degree of difference in percentage is not more than 7.0 in any of the categories. This absence of a very wide class difference

between the two classes is perhaps due to various reasons like the nature of economy, altitude, smallness of landholding, low productivity of the soil and other such reasons.

Takthang has been already described to be educationally a backward village. There is one Junior High school but the attendance of the students is very thin and becomes even thinner during the peak agricultural seasons and the hot days at Bashi. The following table (Table 36) has, however, been furnished here to show the educational difference, if any, between the two classes.

Table 36

Class and Education in Takthang

Category	No. of Inds.	%	Pattadar	%	Pokhurey	%
Illiterates*	231	51.7	221	53.6	40	43.0
Infants (-5)	80	16.8	54	13.1	28	28.0
Prty. Educated (-IV)	112	22.2	91	22.1	21	22.6
Second. Educated	46	9.1	40	9.7	6	6.4
College	6	1.2	6	1.5	-	-
Total	505	-	412	81.6	93	18.4

* also includes deaf and dumb.

This table shows a high percentage of illiterates (51.7) in Takthang. This high percentage of illiteracy is mainly because of the remoteness of the village and the spatial distribution of the households in the village. Yet, it is also partly due to mismanagement. The Report of the Committee on Estimates of the Government of Sikkim (1978-79 : 15-17) says

that despite the availability of funds the students had to sit on the floor, large stocks of books had been lying unused and the value of condemned books was estimated at Rs. 1.63 lakhs.

Classwise, surprisingly the percentage of the illiterates in Takuthang is higher (53.6) among the Pattadars than among the pathureys (43.0). The percentage of the primary level educated persons is, however, slightly higher (22.6) among the pathureys than among the pattadars (22.1). However, in the categories above secondary level the pattadars have a higher representation than the pathurey class.

Most expectedly, the Chuchen village also offers a similar picture because most of the conditions in this village are found the same. The following table (Table 27) may be worthwhile here.

Table 27

Class and Education in Chuchen

Category	No. of Inds.	%	Pattadar	%	Pathurey	%
Illiterates*	235	50.8	183	49.1	30	66.2
Infants (-5)	56	13.2	50	13.2	6	13.0
Prim. Educated (IV)	105	24.7	85	25.1	10	21.7
Secund. Educated (V-XII)	45	10.6	45	11.9	-	-
College	3	0.7	3	0.8	-	-
Total	425	100.0	370	83.2	45	10.2

* also includes deafs and dumb.

This table shows a slightly different picture from the one offered by Takuthang. Here the percentage of illiterates

among the pattadar class is found to be much less (49.1) than among the pakhureys (65.3). The percentage of literates at and above the primary level education is also consistently higher among the pattadars than among the pakhureys. In this village, the pakhureys have not at all been represented at the secondary level and above.

Class and Occupation

The above discussion on class and education in the different villages of the region gives a sufficient clue to the relationship between class and occupation also. The class which has a higher percentage of higher educated people is a particular village is also expected to have a higher representation in the better-off jobs. Anyway the data on class and occupation have been presented here on each village to see if it is really so. The following table gives the data on class and occupation in Tanek.

Table 22

Class and Occupation in Tanek

Occupations	No. of Households	%	Pattadar	%	Pakhurey	%
Service	35	15.0	23	13.5	6	7.8
Business	7	3.0	6	3.8	1	1.3
Agriculture	107	45.7	67	42.7	40	51.9
Coolie	30	12.8	17	10.8	13	16.9
Khetala	3	1.4	3	1.9	5	6.5
Household	23	12.0	22	14.0	6	7.8
Others*	10	4.1	13	8.3	6	7.8
Total	234	100.0	167	67.1	77	32.9

* fitter, ironsmithy, driving, ^{fire-}woodselling, basket-making, etc.

This table shows that the pattadars' representation in service, business, household and other occupations is higher than that of the pakhuroys. But in occupations like agriculture, cobble and khotala they have a higher percentage compared to the percentage of the pattadars. This shows that despite being all landowners the pattadars have a lower engagement in agricultural occupation. Moreover, the landowning class has a better access over the three top ranking occupations including agriculture. Though their percentage in agriculture is slightly lower than that of the pakhuroys the income from the same goes almost wholly to the pattadars because the land which is the basic source of income belongs to them. The higher percentage of the pattadars in the household category also indicates their affluence. Though the very old heads of the households are usually engaged in the household work only the relatively richer people can afford to abstain from outside work even before they should retire from manual jobs.

A few reservations on the above should, however, be incorporated here. First, this table includes only the heads of the households and not the total number of each household. An inclusion of all the members of a family, however, had certain difficulties because the members of the same family could be distributed in a number of occupations. But the agrarian classification has been made here keeping 'family' as the basic unit. Moreover, the status of a family is more important than the status of a single member of the family though at times the status of a single member also determines the status of the

whole family. Second, the occupational hierarchy is based on 'income' and not necessarily on the 'social status'. For instance, the status of a khetala is higher than that of a coolie but the income of the latter is higher. Finally, the household category is an off-category which cannot be properly included in the occupational hierarchy but has been done so as it also reflects the class differences to some extent.

The above reservations are applicable on all the villages to be discussed here. The following table has been furnished here to show the relationship between class and occupation in Parbang.

Table 22

Class and Occupation in Parbang

Category	No. of Households	%	Pattadar	%	Pakhurey	%
Service	3	12.7	6	14.6	2	9.1
Business	2	3.2	1	2.4	1	4.5
Agriculture	24	33.1	13	43.9	6	27.3
Coolie	7	11.1	2	4.9	5	22.7
Khetala	7	11.1	4	9.8	3	13.6
Household	9	14.3	6	14.6	3	13.6
Others*	6	9.6	4	9.8	2	9.1
Total	63	-	41	66.1	22	34.9

* driving, litter, basket-making and bag-making.

The above table shows that the percentage of the heads of the households engaged in agriculture is lower in Parbang (33.1) than in Tanak (45.7). But the percentage of khetalas is much higher (11.1) in Parbang than in Tanak (3.4). Classwise,

the pattadars have a higher percentage of representation in categories like service, agriculture, household and others. The pakhureys, on the other hand, have a higher percentage in occupational categories like business, coolie and khotala.

The higher percentage of the pakhureys in business category should not, however, mislead one because the only one family engaged in business has a small shop with articles like sweets, bidis, match-boxes and hotel-rate and the daily turnover does never exceed Rs. 10. On the other hand, the landowning businessman owns a radio-repairing shop in town and earns much more than his landless counterpart. The high percentage of the pakhureys in the coolie category is primarily due to the low capacity of the village economy to absorb them. The higher percentage of the pattadars in the household category may also be taken partially as an index of their relative affluence.

In Rangbail, it is not improbable to find a lack of clear difference between the two classes regarding occupations also. Since there is no tenancy or land under sharecropping the pattadars alone are engaged in this occupation. But as already mentioned the village stands at a high altitude (6400'-7100' a.s.l.) and the landholding also being very small (0.33) the production from the land is very little and, in general, the land does not have much economic value. The following table has been furnished here to show the relationship between class and occupation.

Table 30Class and Occupation in Rangbali

Category	No. of Households	% Pattadar	% Pattadar	% Pattadar	% Pattadar	% Pattadar
Service	70	25.5	60	24.8	13	23.1
Business	60	19.6	44	18.2	16	25.0
Agriculture	56	18.3	56	23.1	-	-
Agricultural Labour	7	2.3	6	2.5	1	1.6
Coolie	21	6.9	12	7.4	3	4.7
Household	60	19.6	44	18.2	16	25.0
Others*	24	7.8	14	5.8	10	15.6
Total	306	-	242	79.1	64	20.9

* driving, fitter, radio-mechanic, knitting, bag-making, ironsmithy and tailoring.

This table shows that in Rangbali the heads of the households engaged in agriculture is much lower (18.3) compared to Tenek (45.7) and Purbong (23.1). But the percentage of the heads of households engaged in service and business occupations is very high in this village compared to the figures on Tenek and Purbong. This is mainly due to a larger number of business communities in this village (see Chapter II).

Classwise, the pattadars have a higher representation in categories like agriculture, agricultural labour and coolie. On the other hand, the tenants have a higher representation in categories like service, business, household and other occupations. This is partly because of the Biharis and the Bhatias most of whom are businessmen but at the same time mostly landless. In any case,

the difference between the two classes is not much in respect of occupation. Due to a greater density of population and a limited source of income quite a number of the heads of the pattadar families is also engaged in agricultural labour and coolie works. The relatively higher percentage of the household category in the tenant class itself explains a satisfactory class position of the tenants.

Taluthang, being a very remote village has a very limited occupational diversification. But still some amount of difference may be expected in the occupational distribution between the two classes. The following table has been presented to show this.

Table 31

Class and Occupation in Taluthang

Category	No. of Households*	% Pattadar	% Palthurey
Service	5	5.7	5.3
Business	-	-	-
Agriculture	68	77.3	68.4
Coolie	2	2.3	5.3
Rhetala	3	3.4	10.5
Household	6	6.8	5.3
Others**	4	4.5	4.4
Total	83	100.0	73.4

* 5 or 6.4% are

* / outsiders and are all servicemen

** Ironsmithy and firewood selling.

The above table shows that this village has a very high percentage (77.7) of the heads of the households

engaged in agriculture. The business occupation is also followed by some people but none of the heads of the household are engaged in it. Classwise, the pattadars have a higher representation in occupations like agriculture, household, and slightly higher in service while the pokhureys have a slightly higher percentage in rest of the occupations. Therefore, it is clear that the pattadars have a higher representation in better jobs while the pokhureys have lower representation in the same.

A more or less similar picture may be expected in Chuchen also. However, the following table may be presented here.

Table 30

Class and Occupation in Chuchen

Category	No. of Households	%	Pattadar	%	Pokhurey	%
Service	2	2.4	2	2.6	-	-
Business	-	-	-	-	-	-
Agriculture	72	87.8	64	83.9	8	80.0
Khetala	-	-	-	-	-	-
Household	4	4.9	3	4.2	1	10.0
Others*	4	4.9	3	4.2	1	10.0
Total	82	-	78	87.8	10	12.2

* ironsmithy and firewood-selling.

This table shows that the percentage of the heads of the households engaged in agriculture is higher (87.8) than in Takthang (77.3). But there is not a single head of household engaged in occupations like business and khetala. Classwise, the pattadars have a higher representation in occupations like

service and agriculture but a lower representation in other occupations also. Thus, in this village also the class difference in respect of occupations is positive.

Class and Income

Land is still the major source of income for the majority of villagers in the region. The cultivators collect the total production from their land while the non-cultivating owners and the adhiwala get 50% each. But while the adhiwala bear the total cost of production excepting the seeds which is equally shared, the share of production they get is only half. Actually the net share of the adhiwala becomes even less than 50%. Thus the landowners are expected to have a higher level of income also. The earlier discussion shows that the landowners have a better access over land and occupations. The following tables have been prepared to show the relationship between class and income in the different villages of the region.

Table 33.

Class and Income* in Pothohar

Category	Pothohar	%	Pothohar	%
Total No. of Households	157	67.1	77	32.9
Total Income in Rs.	715,835.00	75.3	2,23,300.00	24.2
Annual Income per Household	4,559.46	60.6	2,900.05	39.4
Average Monthly Income per Household in Rs.	379.95	60.6	247.17	39.4

* The figures on income are worked out including the income of all the members of a family. The income in kind such as paddy, maize, etc. has been calculated to find the monetary value according to the latest market prices (1982). The same process applies to all villages discussed here.

This table shows that the landowners represent 67.1% of the total number of households and the share of their income is 75.8%. On the other hand, the pattuareys constitute 32.9% of the total number of households but the share of income is only 24.2 of the total income of the village. Similarly the average monthly income of the pattadars is Rs. 370.95 but of the landless only Rs. 247.17. It may be mentioned here that these figures are only gross and if the net income of the two classes is worked out the difference may be found even wider. But such a job needs a detailed statistical programme of calculating the expenditure of the two classes and then subtracting it from the total income. The picture after doing all this may not, however, reflect the reality because of the apparent tendency of the people to exaggerate the expenditure and conceal the income.

The following table shows the relationship between class and income in Purbong.

Table 34

Class and Income in Purbong

Category	Pattadar	%	Pattuarey	%
Total No. of Households	41	65.1	22	4.9
Total Income in Rs.	1,85,613.00	79.4	43,212.00	20.6
Annual Income per Household in Rs.	4,522.43	62.4	2,537.47	37.6
Average Monthly Income per Household in Rs.	351.54	62.4	211.46	37.5

It is seen above that out of the total village income

79.4% belongs to the pattadars and only 20.6% to the pathureys. Thus, the percentage share of income of the pattadars is higher than the percentage of their households but this relationship is reverse in the case of pathureys. Again, while the percentage of income of the pattadars is 79.4 the percentage of annual income per household is only 62.4, which indicates that there is some intra-class variation in income. The average monthly income of the pattadars is much higher (Rs. 351.54) compared to Rs. 211.46 among the pathureys.

In the following is presented the data on class and income in Ranghali. The table (Table 35) shows that the percentage of the pattadars' income is very high in this village (89.0) compared to 78.3 in Tanak and 79.4 in Partong. The average monthly income per household is also very high in this village compared to the above two villages. But while the total income of the pattadar class is 89.0 the average income per household is only 68.1%.

Table 35

Class and Income in Ranghali

Category	Pattadar %		Tenant %	
Total No. of Households	342	79.1	64	20.9
Total Income in Rs.	14,78,092.45	89.0	1,82,733	11.0
Average Income per Household in Rs.	6,099.66	68.1	2,855.20	31.9
Average Monthly Income per Household in Rs.	508.29	68.1	237.93	31.9

The very high level of average monthly income per household in this village is to a great extent due to the income of the Kalayias or Marwaris, 83.0% of whom are landowners and contribute Rs. 4,02,000.00 or 81.5% of the total income of the village. But their percentage of population is only 2.9. The average monthly income per household among them is Rs.3,722.22. This table clearly shows the necessity of considering the caste aspect of society without which the understanding of the agrarian class structure seems incomplete. Thus, the present work devotes the next chapter (Chapter V) to the caste and agrarian class relationship.

A table is now presented to show the nature of class and income relationship in Takathang village.

Table 36

Class and Income in Takathang

Category	Pattadar	%	Paharey	%
Total No. of Households*	69	73.4	19	20.2
Total Income in Rs.	38,521.00	81.5	20,152.00	18.5
Average Income per Household in Rs.	1,232.91	54.7	1,060.63	45.3
Average Monthly Income per Household in Rs.	106.91	54.7	88.38	45.3

* 6 or 6.4% are outsiders.

The above statistics shows that in Takathang the percentage of income of the pattadar class is very high (81.5) compared to 18.5 among the pahareys. The average monthly income of the pattadars is also much higher (Rs.106.91) compared

to more Rs. 28.33 for the pathureya.

The following table gives the figures on class and income in Chuchen.

Table 37

Class and Income in Chuchen

Category	Pattadar	%	Pathureya	%
Total No. of Households	72	27.8	16	12.2
Total Income in Rs.	1,61,230.12	93.4	11,333.00	6.6
Average Income per Household in Rs.	2,239.31	66.3	1,133.30	33.7
Average Monthly Income per Household in Rs.	186.61	66.3	94.86	33.7

This table shows that the percentage of total income of the pattadars is higher (93.4) in Chuchen than in Talathang (81.6). The average monthly income per household is also much higher (Rs. 186.61) in this village than in Talathang (Rs. 106.91). This relatively higher level of income in Chuchen compared to Talathang is basically due to the income of Kazi family. This family is reported to have owned 500 acres of land in different villages. The exact income of this family could not be guessed but the declared income was Rs. 17,800 per year. It is quite expected that the income of this family is much higher as it has 6 totally dependant (bonded) households.

Class Relations and Production

The statistical viability of the two agrarian classes has been amply found on the basis of education, occupation and

income. But a study of the agrarian relations should also incorporate a discussion on production, distribution and consumption - three main economic activities of a social life.

In the Marxian perspective the land forms the basis of production relations in a village. Those who own land form one class and those who do not, another. The class owning the means of production is dominant and the class not owning the same is subordinate. Sharecroppers' class is often considered as an intermediary class in the agrarian studies. However, if any question of class alignment arises the sharecroppers owning the land and those not owning the same may bifurcate themselves and join the landowners and the landless respectively.

In the production process, the study of inter-class relations holds an important place. It is found that the degree of involvement in production is not equal among all the categories of a single class. The non-cultivating category's involvement in the production process, for example, is only to contribute 50% of the needs required. Besides this obligatory involvement their contribution is almost nil. They do not supervise the production process but when the yield is low they give a rebuff to the individuals who may be a landowner or a landless. Feder (1975:89) also found (in Latin America) that the absentee landlords only seldom participated in the rural community and to their involvement in other activities - professional, financial, industrial or business.

It is true that these non-cultivating owners (wholly or partly) often lend money to the needy adhiwals specially during the cultivation period. But this is precisely a loan and has to be repaid mostly in kind at the rate of Rs.60 to 80 per man (about 75.0 kilograms). The same amount of paddy when husked and sold in the market fetches at least Rs.84. Therefore, the moneylending by them cannot perhaps be regarded as a contribution to the production process but as a form of exploitation. Such contributions are also found to be made by the hahais (money lenders), referring to the Kainyas and Biharis mainly. More recently, the different development agencies like the CAMP and the RDO (Rural Development Office) have also started lending the farmers on the security of a landowner. In this context, the following table on Tanak may be cited.

Table 33
Sources of Loan in Tanak (1932)

Source	Total amount of Loan in Rs.	Percentage
Plains moneylender	11,043.00	11.4
Village rich	10,330.00	10.6
Dairy owners	2,050.00	2.1
B.D.O.	7,157.00	7.4
C.A.D.P.	66,312.62	68.5
Total	96,892.62	100.0

This table shows that 68.5% of the loan in the

village is from the CAPP. This is because the loans are given to both the landowners and the landless while the private sources see if they can retrieve their loans. Moreover, the interest from the private sources is much higher than the interest from the governmental or semi-governmental sources. Again this village falls under the CAPP area where the BDO has little scope to function except through the Gram Panchayat. This table also gives a significant percentage of loans from the private money lenders including the dairy owners.

A close observation, however, reveals that the poorest of the poor have not taken any loan amounting to more than Rs.50 even from the private sources. Asked why, their answer was that they had no scope of repaying the loans. The small amount of loans taken by them is repaid by working as daily labourers on the land of the money lenders who are not necessarily all money lenders by profession. Thus, it was mainly the richer section of the society which had taken the major share of the loans.

Now, the picture in Pustong village may be seen with the help of the following table (Table 39). Since this village also falls under the jurisdiction of the CAPP the picture may not be strikingly different from that in Tanoh.

Table 39

Sources of Loan in Purbong (1932)

Sources	Total Amount of Loan in Rs.	%
Plains moneylenders	2308	23.2
Village rich	1402	10.9
Dairy owners	100	0.8
B.D.O.	2300	17.0
CADP	6200	43.1
Total	12300	100.0

The above table shows that in Purbong also the percentage of loans drawn from the CADP is the highest (43.1), followed by 23.2% from the plains moneylenders, 17.0% from B.D.O., 10.9% from the village rich and only 0.8% from dairy owners. Thus in Purbong, the percentage of loan from the CADP is much lower (43.1) than that in Tanak (63.5) but the percentage of loans from the plains moneylenders is much higher (23.2) than in Tanak (11.3). The share of the village rich in this context is almost equal in both the villages but again the percentage of loan from B.D.O. is much higher in Purbong (17.0) than in Tanak (7.4).

The lower percentage of loans from the CADP is compensated partly with a higher percentage of loans from the B.D.O. - another official source with very low rate of interest. But the much higher percentage of loans from the plains moneylenders than in Tanak shows that the villagers of Purbong are less self-reliant which, in turn, could be due to a lower productive

capacity of the land in this village.

The picture in Rangbali may be seen on the basis of the following table (Table 49). Since this village does not fall under the jurisdiction of the GADP the picture is expected to be different from that in Tanak.

Table 49

Sources of Loans in Rangbali (1982)

Source	Total amount of Loan in Rs.	%
Marwari shopkeepers	21620	29.1
Bihari shopkeepers	3760	5.1
Nepali shopkeepers	2744	3.7
Friends and Relatives	4400	5.9
Central Coop. Bank	40456	54.5
State Bank of India	1250	1.7
Total	74204	100.0

The above table clearly shows that more than fifty per cent (54.5%) of the loans in the village is from the Central Cooperative Bank, followed by 29.1% from the Marwari shopkeepers. The percentages of loans from other sources are not very significant. The loans from the Marwari shopkeepers are either repaid at the rate of 3% per month or in the form of kind such as cabbages, pea, potato and plum. At times these loans are taken in kind such as groceries and cloth. In such cases, no interest is to be paid directly. Anyway, the still higher percentage of loans in Rangbali from this source shows a very

low sustenance power of the village economy.

The following table gives the picture in Talathang village.

Table 41

Sources of Loans in Talathang (1932)

Sources	Total Amount of Loan in Rs.	%
Multi-Purpose Cooperative Society (M.P.C.S.)	11315.	27.5
Plains shopkeepers	14000	32.6
Nepali shopkeepers	4257	9.9
Friends and Relatives	12365	30.0
Total	42337	100.0

The above table on Talathang gives quite a different picture from those in Tanak, Purbong and Ranghull. The percentage of loans from the official source is, for example, very low (27.5) compared to the same in the villages discussed above. On the other hand, the percentage of loans from the plains moneylenders is the highest (32.6) in this village and the percentage of loans from the friends and relatives is also very high (30.0).

It appears from the above that the official loan agencies have not been able to make a dent in this village. As a consequence, they have become heavily indebted to the plains moneylenders who provide them with cash, groceries, clo^{er} and so on easily. It is also observed that due to remoteness and a

Lack a proper communication system, there has been a significant proportion of dependence on the friends and relatives for loans.

Now let us see if this picture stands true of Chuchen also.

Table 42

Sources of Loans in Chuchen (1932)

Sources	Amount of Loans in Rs.	%
Multi-purpose Cooperative Society (M.P.C.S.)	15035	39.9
Plains shopkeepers	2220	5.9
Nepali shopkeepers	3258	21.8
Friends & Relatives	12245	32.4
Total	37758	100.0

This table again gives quite a different picture from that in Taktang. The percentage of loan from the official source in this village, for example, is the highest (39.9) though much less compared to other villages excepting Taktang (27.6). Another significant difference this village marks from the rest of the villages studied here is the very low percentage of loans (5.9) from the plains moneylenders. It may be recalled here that this village is located nearer to the Beshi Hat though one side of the village is separated with Taktang by only a stream called 'Kachchu Khola'. Despite this, the indebtedness of the villages^r of Chuchen to the plains moneylenders is very low. Such a situation should have arisen due to a greater self-reliance of this village than other

villages. It has already been noted that the average landholding size is the biggest (6.62 acres) in this village. As the land is plenty and the market nearer than from Takuthang, they have a better access to grow and sell cash crops like ginger, orange and milk than the villagers of Takuthang. All these should have made the villagers of Chuchen more self-reliant. The quite high percentage of loans from the Multi-purpose Cooperative Society is also taken mostly to grow ginger and buy cattle.

In the context of the inter-class relationship regarding production, the most meaningful relationship is between the non-cultivating owners and the adhiwala or pathureys. It does not mean that other categories are insignificant; they are but the relationship between these two is the most direct. The khatalas have a link with all the landholders (own or operational) though a landless khatala is mostly bonded to the household on whose land he is staying. He has to help his malik (landlord) on various household works like repairing the cow-shed, goat-pen or a pig-sty besides other agricultural works. Where their maliks are cultivators they have to attend to their maliks almost throughout the year. The degree of involvement is found to have depended partly on the amount of land held by the malik and partly on his personal nature.

The relationship between a non-cultivating owner and the adhiwala on the one hand is the same and with the pathureys is slightly different. The structural distance

between a non-cultivating owner and a landowning adhiwail is much narrower than the same between a non-cultivating owner and a landless adhiwail or a pakhurey. A non-cultivator has less objection in establishing a marital relationship with an adhiwail than a landless pakhurey.

In so far as the contribution of these two types of adhiwails in production is concerned it is observed that the pakhureys have a slightly more contribution than the owner adhiwails. The security of land and a narrower structural distance between the owner adhiwails and the lessors seem to have resulted into a lower degree of commitment to production among the former. On the other hand, the absence of the same factors among the pakhureys is found to have resulted into a higher degree of commitment. They are always found to be trying their best to produce the maximum and please their maliks.

It should be maintained, however, that all the agrarian categories are interlinked in the production process. Some categories are linked on the basis of land or tenancy, for instance, the non-cultivating owner and the pakhurey, while others are linked on the basis of labour exchange like parma and hogri. Still others are linked on the basis of employment, obligation or bondage. All these factors are indirectly linked with the production process.

The class relations regarding production in Purbong are more or less the same as in Tanak. The non-cultivating owners, for instance, contribute 50% of the seeds required and

some loans during the cultivation and festival periods. The cultivators and the adhiawale basically engage family labour though they at times hire labourers. The systems like panga and haagi described above are found in this village also but the haagi in this village consists of comparatively less number than in Tanek. This is perhaps due to a larger number of people in Purbong partly depending on agricultural labour, coolie works and other forms of non-agricultural engagements.

In Purbong, quite a significant percentage of the heads of the households (11.1) are coolies and 9.5% are in the others occupation (see Table 29). Thus a total of 20.6% does not participate in the production process except very occasionally when they do not get employment outside, specially during the rainy seasons. This does not, however, mean that they are less dependant on the landowners of the village. The socio-economic insecurity is very much among them too and even if the heads of the households work outside the other members work in the house or land of their maliks or other landowners in the village.

It is, however, quite true that the competition among the palharoyes is less in the higher altitude village like Purbong but this is not followed by a lower capacity of the landowners to control them. The newly migrated people who are quite many (10 or 15.9%) in the village have a very high degree of insecurity feeling which is exploited by the landowners by making them do many works without any payment or a very nominal one.

Regarding class relations and production the

two villages of Sildin, Takthang and Chachen, may be discussed together because the nature of class relations regarding production is more or less the same in these two villages. It is true that as in any sharecropping contract the lessors contribute only 50% of the seeds required and do not share the other costs of production in these villages also but still these villages have a distinction from the ones discussed above. While in those villages the lessors do not take any care of their lands once leased it is not so in these villages. Here the lessors supervise the agricultural production at least on the land leased out on garia basis. The lands which are on other forms of tenancy are, however, usually not supervised. But despite an apparent absence of supervision on such lands, they keep a close watch on the production from the land and if they find it upto their satisfaction they often raise the terms of contract.

The relatively greater participation of the landowners in the production process in these villages is perhaps due to the fact that most of the lessors are cultivators themselves with little or no other source of income. Moreover, the irrigated land is also very limited in these villages. Therefore, they try to get the maximum from their dry lands. Leasing out is usually seen only when the family does not have enough manpower to look after the land and specially when the holding is fragmented.

Class Relations and Distribution

The term 'distribution' here not only means the

distribution of agricultural produce but also the distribution of the total income of the village. The present study finds that the system of division of the agricultural produce is still 50% each. As per the recent regulations of the West Bengal Government the adhiwals are entitled to 75% of the share if they bear the total cost of production. It is found that the lessors do not share the cost of production except 50% of the seeds required but the division of the produce is equal.

The division of produce on 50% basis is, however, more apparent than real. A lessee borrows money from different sources to meet the cost of production which is very high but the loans are to be repaid usually in the form of kind. The rate at which the paddy is valued at present has been already mentioned in the course of this chapter. The low rate of the produce, ill-matched by a low rate of production (see Chapter II) ultimately leaves nothing for the adhiwals or pathareys. Many of the moneylenders go to the threshing ground themselves to collect their share while some of them ask the lessees to reach their share at their houses.

The most pitiable part of this distribution system is the fact that many of them cannot repay the loan in the same year it was taken specially when the crops fail. And crop failure is quite a common phenomenon in the recent years due to ecological changes. Thus the debts continue over years and keep growing more and more bulkier. This is true not only of the lessees but many small and poor farmers in the village.

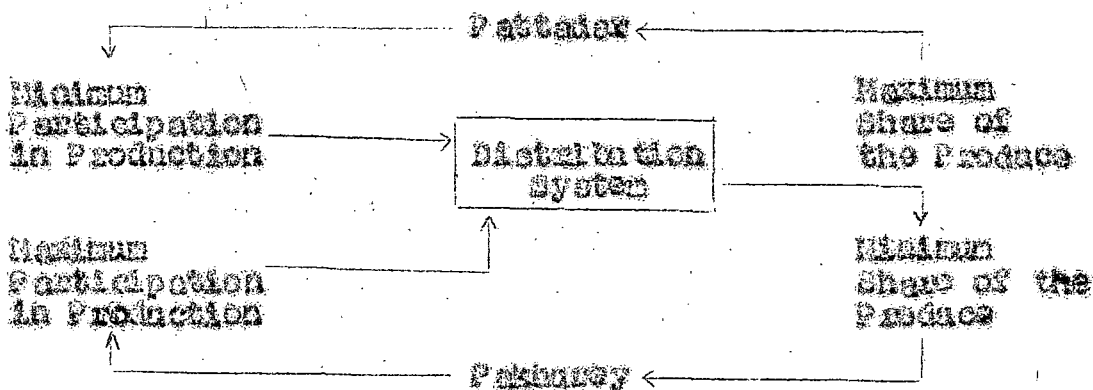
The continuity of the debt or rather the continuously inflating debt is only a partial answer to the sustenance of their living because they have to take more loans again to manage their living. Thus they support their living from many other sources of income such as milk-selling to the nearby dairies, working as daily labourers in the village or outside or selling firewood to the nearby villagers. Milk selling among the different sources of income is an important one. That is perhaps why there are very few villagers who keep bullocks for ploughing the field today though about Rs. 100 per annum has to be spent on the ploughmen every year for one acre of irrigated land. The milch cows not only help them in securing some cash but also give them more manure than the bullocks do. Without milch cows with the leases the landowners usually do not lease their lands. Having milch cows also helps them to get the loans more easily from dairies or groceries or even from the villagers. Thus, the land is cultivated not for an economic gain by them but as a kind of socio-economic security or mere subsistence.

The hardest hit people are the shetelias. Earlier they used to be paid in kind. This facilitated some amount of downward ⁱⁿ flow of the agricultural produce. But the recent years the labourers are paid mostly in cash which thus blocks the distribution of agricultural produce in the villages. There is some amount of distribution in the form of cash, which is inevitable, but while the value of money has gone down considerably the wages have not increased proportionately in the village. The wages in the villages are still Rs. 2-3 for females per day and Rs. 4-5 for

sales per day excluding the food and drinks provided during the work. However, there are some special types of work like ploughing, sowing and other such works for which the labourers are to be paid higher. Thus the downward flow of the cash income is also very limited.

In the following is given a chart showing the distribution system of one of the villages studied for the present work.

Chart 8. Class Relations and Distribution in Tanak.



This chart shows the paradox of the distribution system. The pattadar class has minimum contribution to the production process but gets the maximum share of the same. The paharaya, on the other hand, contributes maximum to the production process but their share of the same is minimum. The most regrettable part of the story is that in some villages like Tanak, the landowners like King Tshoring Lepcha, Leozip Lepcha and Dhan Bahadur Thapa (Mangar) are there who are

reported to have forbidden their adhiwals or pakhureys to cultivate the high yielding variety seeds and the cash crops nor are they allowed to invest on the fertilizers.

This 'low participation-high share' phenomenon in the case of the landowners does not hold much importance regarding the distribution of agricultural produce if the land under operational holding is not much. But where the amount of land under such holding is significant it may help considerably in understanding the reasons for rural poverty and underdevelopment*. An example may here be cited of Tanek village on the pattern of landholding. In this village, it is found that more than one third (33.9%) of the total cultivable land in the village (303.51 acres) is under operational holding. Taken the irrigated land only, the percentage of land under operational holding is even more (54.3). The percentage of non-irrigated land under operational holding is also not much less (23.6).

The study of Tanek village also shows that the adhiwals are more interested to cultivate the irrigated land than the non-irrigated. This preference for irrigated land to non-irrigated may partly be due to the following : (1) the net production of the irrigated land is higher than that of the non-irrigated land - the approximate income from an acre of irrigated land is usually triple the amount of income from the same amount of non-irrigated land, (2) irrigated land has a higher capacity to employ the agricultural population and also

* I have dealt with the problem and prospects of agricultural development on the basis of data on Tanek village in a separate article (1983a).

for a longer period of time, and (3) a person cultivating an irrigated land gets loans more easily than one cultivating the non-irrigated land.

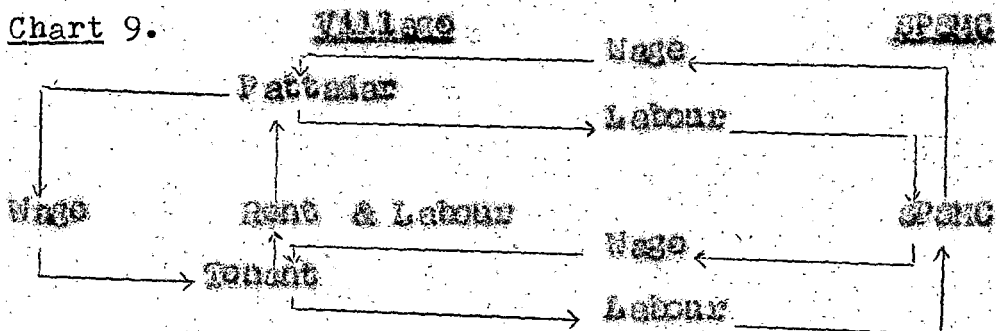
Whatever may be the reasons, the more interesting point to note is the differential degree of inter-class and intra-class constraints and competition in the irrigated areas as a consequence of the factors mentioned above. More the competition among the adhiwals more is the scope for the landowners to exploit them. Thus, logically, there is more of exploitation in the irrigated areas than in the non-irrigated ones. By the same yardstick, the villages having less of irrigated areas have less of exploitation than the villages having more of it. But in such villages, the basis of exploitation or the mode of it is found to be different as it will be seen in the course of discussion. However, in general, the degree of exploitation is less in the villages where the competition among the lower class people is less.

The distribution of agricultural produce in Purbong is more inclined towards the pattadar class than in Tanek. In Tanek, the percentage of the adhiwals is quite high and the gross share of the produce is also higher among them in this village. The khotalas are paid the wages in cash in this village also. Thus, even the gross share of the produce becomes less among the patharey class. There is a division of work according to sex - the females do not plough - but the division of work along class lines is more clear in Tanek than in Purbong. The majority of the pattadars are actively involved in the agricultural operation

and there is nothing like one class works in the field and the other class does not which of course is true of Tanek village also to a great extent. The only category which does not work in the field is the category of the non-cultivating owners.

The distribution of agricultural produce is found to be slightly different in these two villages. It is comparatively less in favour of the pattadar class in Purbong than in Tanek because the cost of production in both the villages is the same but the amount of produce per acre is less in Purbong. The amount of time taken by a crop to ripe is also more in this village than in Tanek.

The distribution system in Rangbali is still different. Since there is no land on sharecropping there is practically no scope for the agricultural produce to flow down. What flows down is the cash income in the form of wages but this is also limited. The agricultural produce is also distributed but through the market and not just between the landowning and the landless classes. The only source from which the villagers get a significant amount of cash is the SPSC where the villagers get Rs. 8.93 per day as mentioned above already. The distribution system in Rangbali may be shown in the following chart (Chart 9).



This chart shows that the tenants supply rent and labour to the pattadars but get only wages in return. But both the pattadars and tenants supply labour to the SPANC on wage. There is but a difference between the wages from the pattadars and from the SPANC. The wage in the village is Rs. 2-3 per day for females and Rs. 4-5 per day for males with tiffin and tea but in the SPANC it is Rs. 8.98 per day without any tiffin or tea. The chances of earning wage from the pattadars are very slim but the same from the SPANC are quite high.

It may be added here that the agricultural labourers have a Labour Union and are well organised in the SPANC. They have been fighting for the enhancement of their wages since as early as the British days. The wages during 1948-1953 was Rs. 1.25 per day for males, Rs. 0.85 per day for females and Rs. 0.50 per day for the children (between 14-18). During 1956-61 the wages increased to Rs. 1.75 per day for males, Rs. 1.40 per day for females and Rs. 0.60 per day for the children. In 1964-71 the wages further increased to Rs. 6.70 per day for both the males and the females and the children's category was abolished. Again during 1973-81 the wages increased to Rs. 8.98 per day irrespective of sex differences. This wage has remained in vogue till date. Such an increase in their wages has been possible mainly due to their united effort through their Union which is but absent in the village as such.

The absence of an organised movement in the village as such to raise their wages may be due to mainly three reasons : one, the labourers are drawn from both the pattadar and the

tenant classes - with the majority being from the pattadars; two, these labourers have developed a fellow-feeling while working in the SPSC together for years, which makes it difficult for the tenant labourers to go against the pattadar labourers; and three, if the wages in the village are increased the chances of their being employed become still narrow because as such the need of hired labourers is minimal in the village. Should such conditions arise, the use of family labour may become more extensive.

In Talukthang and Chachen, on the other hand, the agricultural production was found to have a better distribution. Most of the labourers are still paid in kind, the rate of payment being 1 pathi (3 kilograms) per day irrespective of sex. Moreover, the lands on Tang or Bod are also plenty. The lessees are found to have a higher initiative to produce more on lands other than on pathi system. This is perhaps due to the fact that under such systems more they produce more they are benefitted but in an pathi system whatever amount they produce is divided equally.

Class Relations and Consumption

The word 'consumption' has a very wide connotation and embraces the whole range of activities regarding the utilization of one's income. Such investments may simply be on domestic affairs or for constructive purposes like education but since it was difficult for me to cover all these aspects in this study this word has been used here in a very narrow

sense - to refer to the 'styles of life' only.

It has to be remembered that consumption has a very close relationship with production and distribution. A higher production generally means a higher consumption power. It cannot always be so because the distribution system is partial to a particular section of the society thereby depriving it to consume as much as it produces. The data on class and education show that the pattadar class has a higher capacity of consumption than the patharey class. If education serves as an index to show a differential consumption pattern, the styles of life also does the same. But since the system of distribution slightly differs in the villages discussed above the nature of consumption relations between the two classes may also be different. The following table shows the consumption pattern with regards to the 'styles of life' in Tanek village.

Table 43

Class and Styles of Life in Tanek

Items	Total No.	Pattadar (67.1)	Patharey (32.9)
Stereo-cassette	3	3	-
Radio	51	43	6
Clocks	19	16	3
Matches	94	65	29
Thatched House	178	80	98
GI sheet roof	56	56	-

This table shows that the stereo-cassettes and the corrugated sheet houses are exclusive characteristics of the pattadar class. Regarding other items also the pattadar class

has a higher representation excepting the thatched houses. Though quite a large percentage (41.9) of the pattadar class also has thatched houses it is predominantly the lot of the pakhareys (55.1) who are poor and cannot afford to purchase the corrugated sheets nor can they do it for the insecurity of tenure. Even regarding the thatched houses of a pattadar and a pakharay a difference is found. The house of a pattadar is usually bigger in size, often walled with stones or wooden planks but the house of a pakharay is mostly small in size, made of bamboo splits and mud.

It will perhaps be an exaggeration to remark that the class relations distinctly follow the styles of life. A large number of the pattadar class people are otherwise very poor and have almost no difference with the pakhareys. A class difference is clear only between the most affluent pattadars and the poorest pakhareys. The people in the middle rank - pattadar or pakharay - do not have clear class distinction regarding the styles of life. Moreover, it is found, as Moncher did (1974a), that such relationships are often disturbed by caste and cultural relationship like pit which means a cultural bond between two persons of the same or different castes regarded as sacred and no marriage takes place among their offsprings upto the third generation. Under such circumstances, the distinction in class relations between a landowner and a landless is often overshadowed.

The consumption pattern in Purbong does not differ much from that of Tanek. The corrugated sheet roofs are

invariably found among the pattadaras though many of them also have thatched houses. But as in Tonak, the thatched houses are smaller in size and more poorly built in the case of the pakharays. The modern household and transport equipments like radio, clock, watch and motor vehicles belong mostly to the pattadar class. J.H. Pattison, a non-cultivating landowner owns a car, stereo-cassette etc. and another Lepcha landowner (Bilon Foning) owns a second hand Tata truck. The wrist watches are quite common in both the classes but more frequently seen among the members of the pattadar class.

In Rangbali, the consumption pattern is apparently the same in both the pattadar and the tenant classes. There is not a single house which is thatched and more than 50% of the houses are electrified. The absence of a thatched house is, however, probably due to a lack of the thatching material called giri or khay meaning wild grass in the surrounding forests. While in Tonak and Purbong this material is still available though with an increasing difficulty, it is not at all available in Rangbali. Despite such a similarity in the house-patterns between the two classes the basic fact remains that one class owns the houses and other does not. The difference can also be found in respect of modern household and transport equipments as shown in the following table.

Table 44

Class and Modern Household and Transport Equipments in Ranchhill

Item	Total No.	Pattadar (65.1)	Tenant (34.9)
Tata truck	4	4	0
Jeep	3	3	0
Telephone	6	6	0
Stereo-cassette	13	8	5
Radio	133	76	57
Clocks	42	24	18
Watches	223	121	102

It is clear from above that the three equipments - Tata truck, jeeps and telephones - are the exclusive properties of the pattadars but regarding other items except watches the tenants have slightly higher percentage compared to percentage of their households. Therefore, the difference between the two classes is not very sharp in this village. The three items which are exclusively owned by the pattadars belong to the Kalyans mostly - 100% telephones, 75% trucks and 83.3% jeeps belong to them. Barring this special feature the rest of the villagers do not have a clear consumptory difference.

This does not, however, mean that the social (marital) status of both the classes is more or less the same. A tenant may be quite well off but his lack of landholding puts him at a disadvantageous position regarding a negotiated marriage. A richer tenant has a greater difficulty in getting a spouse than a poorer landowner. The symbolic value of land is, therefore, still a major mechanism in affecting the class relations in the

villages.

Takuthang and Chuchon villages offer an interesting contrast to the situation in Rangbali. In these villages also the class differences regarding styles of life are apparently almost non-existent. The only houses which are not thatched are either the government service centres or the schools. There are very few houses in the village which have corrugated sheet roofs but these invariably belong to the pattadars. The radios are also owned by a few villagers but the wrist watches are quite common. All these articles are more frequently seen among the pattadars than among the pakturays of these two villages.

Before concluding this chapter, a few case studies of paktaray and khetala may be furnished here to show the interpersonal relationship between maliks and tenants and how the latter are bound to their masters.

Mr. Bahadur Pradhan (Nevan), 55, born in Sikkim, is a landless sharecropper of Tanek village. His malik is Iswamen Thecker (Tanang) who stays in 7th Mile village. He has been cultivating Thecker's land since 1971 and Harka Haya Chhetri's land since 1977. He was a bullock-cart driver on the Nechi Road before he took up sharecropping.

The land he cultivates is semi khet and quite fertile though he is occasionally pestered by monkeys. He seems a hard-working person and would probably be much better off than he is now if he had a land of his own. He feels that the system of division on a 50% basis discourages him to produce more because whatever amount is produced has to be divided equally. He is interested to cultivate high yielding variety seeds but his landowners do not allow him to do so because he says that they do not like the taste of these crops. He also wants to use fertilizers and pesticides but the costs are high and his maliks do not share them. He believes that cultivation of cash crops is more profitable despite the need for more time and labour but he has not been permitted to grow them as yet.

Unlike the case of many other peltureys, he does not have to attend to his maliks everyday or, for that matter, even every month. He goes to them occasionally and offers them whatever he can such as milk, banana and vegetables. During festivals, however, he does not fail to visit them. His maliks do not visit his home or lands even once a year but get all the informations about him. Once Hari Prasad Pradhan, his eldest son, used to mix up with other boys of Cpi(n) in the village. For this Hari Bahadur Pradhan (called Hari Bahu in the village) was called by Iswarnan Thacker and asked the details about his activities. He had to swear before him (malik) that no such involvement was there.

Kharaga Bahadur Singhavry (Kani), 57, (also known as Jangey Kani) is also a landless sharecropper of Tenek village. He is the only Kani in the village who has continued ironmithy though as a part-time occupation. Previously it was a full-time work but since the time the charcoal price went up (about 20 years ago) he made it a part-time occupation. At present, he is primarily a sharecropper, cultivating about 1,00 acre of pori land belonging to Nima Tshering Lepcha.

Kharaga Bahadur is a poor man with six children out of which four are deaf and dumb. Fortunately, they are quite clever and help their father in almost every type of work. He has to go to his malik's house (about 3 minutes' walk) everyday and work for about an hour or so for no payment. If he is sick he has to send his children to his malik to work there. His maliks are an old couple with their children working outside the village - one is a Sub-Divisional Officer and another an Engineer in Bhutan. The third one is a businessman. They had a daughter working as a lecturer in Kalimpong College but she was married off.

Kharaga Bahadur has been tending a milch cow under the compulsion of his malik. He believes that keeping a milch cow is expensive - with Rs.1 per kg.(milk) and Rs.1.75 per kg. of mustard cake (locally called pinu) but the maximum price of the milk is only Rs.1.25p. He proposed to cultivate high yielding variety seeds but was denied. He is not allowed to grow even the ginger (which is one of the most popular cash crops in the hills today) nor is he allowed to keep a small kitchen-garden. His malik is reported to have asked him to grow millet instead of vegetables or ginger. He further says that only the landowners are distributed the fertilizers at government rate and he cannot buy them from the open market.

Ram Moti Rai, 55, is a landless sharecropper cum agricultural labourer of Tamsithang village. She is a widow but has two grown up sons to look after her if she is sick. She is staying on the land of the Mandal of Tamsithang-Chuchen Block. She has been cultivating 1.50 acre of sukha khet on Tamra paying Rs.60 per year but says that the term might increase from the next year (1982).

She came to Tamsithang ten years before from Nepal. she had come to meet her maternal uncle but fell sick and eventually settled down. At first she settled on the land of Chaprasi Malla or Chindey Bhutia of Pareng Gaon. She stayed on his land for seven years cultivating 1.50 acres of land on hadd, paying 75.0 kilogram of maize per year. She was asked to leave by him after seven years. She then settled on the land of Harka Bahadur Rai of Matang village for 3 years and after that she was asked to leave his land also. There she was cultivating 1.00 acre of sukha khet on hadd giving 75.0 kilogram of maize per year. The excuse to evict her was that Harka Bahadur Rai wanted to keep his second wife separately at her house. But actually, the settlement work was going on and her malik was afraid that she would get his land.

The present malik who is the Mandal of Tamsithang-Chuchen Block has been asking her to increase the terms of hadd but has verbally assured her that she could stay for an indefinite period of time. She is engaged in a hama relationship with her malik also but she often has to offer free manual labour to him who owns about 20 acres of dry land. Her sons usually work outside the village and earn about Rs.60 per week each for about four months a year. She usually works as a khetala within the village and gets Rs.3/- per day. She has to work at least two days a week on her malik's land, for which, however, she is paid. At times, her malik also calls upon her sons to render their physical labour.

Ram Bahadur Rai, 41, is also a landless sharecropper cum agricultural labourer of Chuchen village. His family consists of seven members but all of them excepting two daughters studying in a local primary school, are illiterates.

He came from Nepal before twenty nine years. He had relatives at Pareng Gaon but after he married he stayed in the house of his father-in-law in Chuchen. He cultivated 2.50 acres of land belonging to Rin Champungey Gurung for four years. He had to leave his land after four years. Then he cultivated 2.50 acres of puril khet and 2.50 acres of sukha khet at Magarhang village but the land belonged to the kazi of Chuchen village. He had to give 18 manis or 975 kilogram of

paddy per year as kudd. In 1972, the monkey spoiled his crop and he could not complete the kudd by about 55 kilograms. So he was asked by the kazi to leave his land.

From 1973-'79 he cultivated 2.00 acres of Sakha Khat belonging to Khar Singh Kani (Mandal of Kamling Block) on kudd paying 4 muris or 300 kg. of maize per year. He was asked to leave after five years but he did not because he had made the land fertile and terraced to a good extent. When he declined to leave Khar Singh Kani came and sowed on the land prepared by him. Litigation started and he had to frequent the High Court of Sikkim at Gangtokh for three years. He was finally compelled by the policeman bribed by Khar Singh and the Panchayat President, Namdir Rai, to sign a Milapatra (bond of agreement) with just Rs. 200/- whereas he deserved Rs. 2000/-. Now that land is given to Cheptey Kani's son - a member of his own caste.

At present he is staying on the land of Nar Bahadur Rai who happens to be his own jotha meaning wife's older brother. He is cultivating .75 acre of dry land belonging to his jotha and gives one doko or about 20 kg. of maize per year as kudd. Very recently, he has been asked to pay Rs. 25/- instead of one doko of maize per year. He is also cultivating .25 acre of dry land belonging to Bhagiman Rai on Tenon (Rs. 25 per year) from last year (1980) and 1.50 acre of dry land belonging to Gethalay Tamang on achis since this year (1981). He says that he does not have to be as submissive to his present malik as he had to be earlier. He works as agricultural labourer and gets Rs. 4/- per day but when he goes for skilled works he is paid higher - upto Rs. 12/-.

Summary and Conclusion

The observations and findings on different villages may now be summarised. This summary of the discussion on the agrarian class relations in different villages highlights both the specificities and the universalities of the same.

To summarise the specificities first, the five villages discussed above have considerable amount of variation in respect of education, occupation and income. The percentage of illiterates in Takathang and Chachen is very high (61.7 in Takathang and 53.8 in Chachen) while it is 31.2% in Tenek, 25.5%

in Purbong and 17.9% in Rangball. Similarly, the percentage of the heads of the households engaged in agriculture is 77.7 in Takathang, 87.8 in Chuchen, 45.7 in Tanek, 33.1 in Purbong and only 18.3 in Rangball. Again, the percentage of pattadars is 73.4 in Takathang, 87.8 in Chuchen, 79.1 in Rangball, 67.1 in Tanek and 65.1 in Purbong. Moreover, the percentage of the sharecroppers is relatively very high (49.6) in Tanek but only 35.4 in Purbong and none in Rangball.* In Takathang and Chuchen, however, there are bi-tenancy and tri-tenancy also.

such differences can be found in respect of production, distribution and consumption also. The contribution of the non-cultivators to the production process is more in Takathang and Chuchen villages and so is the distribution of agricultural produce in these villages compared to other villages discussed here. In Tanek and Purbong, the participation of the non-cultivators in the production process is the same but the distribution is slightly different. The pathways or adhiawals get less with the same cost of production in Purbong. In Rangball the landless tenants have an insignificant contribution to the production process in the absence of scope for the same. In the SPMS, however, the contribution of both the pattadar and the tenant classes to the production process is significant. The distribution in the form of cash is also worthwhile from the SPMS. The consumption pattern is not very clearly defined in some villages

* This feature supports one of the 3 hypotheses proposed by Raj (1930:133) that the percentage of area under tenancy is higher in areas where land improvement factor is larger.

such as Rangbali, Takuthang and Chuchen but more closely defined in the villages like Tanak and Parbung.

Such a variation is largely due to the forces of production such as altitude, land conditions and the human factor. The relatively lower altitude villages have more of irrigated land, more of sharecroppers and the average landholding size is also bigger. The village which has a relatively bigger average landholding size has more than one form of tenancy, e.g., Takuthang or Chuchen.

In the villages where irrigated lands are there the abhiwals are found more interested to cultivate the irrigated lands than the non-irrigated lands. This has been found mainly due to two reasons : one, the landowner wants to get the maximum but at the same time cannot cultivate the land himself due mainly to his engagement in non-agricultural occupations and; two, the sharecroppers themselves are not willing to cultivate a dry land because the total days employed and the production are much lower in such lands than on irrigated lands. Other facilities are the chances of getting the loans more easily and the possibility of intercropping specially in the summer.

The present study also finds a wide variation in respect of average landholding size per household : 1.56 acres in Tanak, 1.46 acres in Parbung, 0.33 in Rangbali, 3.35 acres in Takuthang and 5.32 acres in Chuchen. This shows that the pressure on land is maximum in Rangbali, relatively less in

Purbong and Tanok and still less in Takuthang and Chachen villages.* These differences have resulted into various forms of tenancies in different villages. Thus the observation of Nehru (1932:1-2) that the tenure systems are not based on the understructure of caste system seems quite true. The most common system of tenure known as edhia in this region differs from the same in Nepal. In Nepal, an edhia system is of two types - Chinkhang and Chandun Thoti - the former paid in lieu of wheat crop and the latter on the renewal of the lease (see Nepal 1971:86). In this region only a kegoli (gift of chicken, liquor etc.) is given to the landowners on opening and renewal of the lease and all the crops are divided equally.

The tenancies, however, differ considerably within a limited area also. Such differentiations are partly due to the uneven impact of the urbanization and modernisation also. The more urbanised and modernized villages have a higher density of population and the class distinctions are also less clear. For instance, Rangbali which is a highly urbanized village is very densely populated while Takuthang and Chachen are very sparsely populated. The variation can also be found in respect of the level of agricultural development. It is found as Zageria (op. cit:43) observed that due to the proximity of market the more densely populated Rangbali village is more receptive than other villages studied.

* This does not mean that the villages having a lower pressure on land have a greater tenurial security. The case studies presented above amply shows that tenurial insecurity is very high even in such villages.

If we try further we can find still minute variations both at the village and the class levels. But simply finding the variations is not sufficient : the similarities are also very important and should be taken into consideration. The variations are one aspect of the social facts; the similarities another.

One of the most striking similarities of the villages studied is the larger percentage of the pattadars vis-a-vis the pakhureys. Again, the cultivators' category has uniformly a very high percentage though the degree of variation in percentage may be found among the villages. Similarly the statistical data on education, occupation and income show invariably a higher position of the pattadar class.

Another very interesting common factor regarding agrarian class structure of the five villages is migration. The historical background of the landless households show in all the villages that they are first or second generation migrants from either Bengal, Bihar or other surrounding areas. There is a possibility of expansion of this class in view of the continued migration both at the inter-village and inter-region levels; the international migration being insignificant these days. Patel (1962 : 12-16) notices an increasing trend of this class all over India.

The class relations concerning production, distribution and consumption slightly vary from village to village but the basic rules of the game are the same. The non-cultivators

contribute 50% of the seeds required and do not share the cost of production. The division of agricultural production is still 50% each. The pakhureys are invariably less benefited from the distributive mechanism whether in cash or in kind. This automatically results in a differential consumption pattern between the two classes. The pattadar class, therefore, has a better consumption pattern in every village though the degree of difference between these two classes may vary.

The market involvement of the different categories or classes is also not uniform in all the villages. But on the whole, it is observed in line with the contention of Bhardwaj (1974:1) that less the monopoly of a class in the agrarian society more the competition. The relatively backward villages have less competition among the classes within them as the monopoly of the landowning class is more there. Such a monopoly can be seen manifested in the power structure at village and block levels also (Sinha, 1982b).

It may be added that in the variations of altitude and urbanization an abstract law seems to operate. For example, it was found that higher the altitude or more urbanized a village the smaller the size of landholding per household. This is witnessed not only in the villages studied but also in the villages around them. For instance, the surrounding villages of Ranghill like Upper Jhansshatta, Ramitay, Dalasari, Plangdung, Bataasia and Ghoom Jungle Basti where occasional visits were made the landholding size was found to be very small.

One of the reasons why the agrarian society of

Darjeeling and Siliguri have not been able to polarise is perhaps due to a large number of small holders who are socially with the bigger landowners but economically with the landless class. These people serve as the bridge between the bigger landowners and the landless. The polarization has not been smooth even in a village like Tanak which is one of the oldest CPI(M) (Communist Party of India (Marxist)) politicized villages. Such a slow polarization has also been partly because of the geographical factors in the hill areas, which do not allow a very smooth organisation in the absence of proper communication facilities or other media of organization. Whatever amount of polarization has taken place so far has been a political polarization and not a class polarization in the truest sense of the term. For example, out of 57 members of the Kishan Sabha (CPI(M) wing) in Tanak 41 or 71.9% belong to the pattadar class and only 16 or 28.1% belong to the pakharay class. The leaders of it like Dhan Mang Subba, Anai Mukhia and Nar Mang Subba are relatively quite educated and economically quite well off.

Unlike the two-tier agrarian classification adopted in the present study the usual classification has been a three-tier one. Dasgupta (1980:36-43) probably following Thorner and Beteille, classified the agrarian society into landless labourer, tenant farmer and owner cultivator. She believes that land is the basis of class relations but does not recommend a land reform lest it should hamper the economic growth. She is aware of the increasing number of the agricultural labourers which is a major problem for the Indian planners and social

scientists today. This aspect of the agrarian problem has been duly emphasized by Khare (1962:114), Dandekar (1972:2-4), Banerjee (1977:40-43), Driver (1943:87) and many others. To them the most important reason for this is the inability of the non-agricultural sector to absorb the agricultural population.

In Darjeeling and Sikkim, the agricultural labourers as a pure and separate class has not shaped itself properly until today. The single cropping, abundance of dry and uncultivable lands, scanty and unfavourable soil and other such factors act jointly to reduce the scope for the growth of this class. However, according to the recent Census of India figures the percentage of this class has been on the steady rise and has gone above 14% now while until 1941 this class was not recorded at all in the Census figures.

The present study has been predominantly village based and its relation with market has not been much discussed as suggested by many social scientists (Clayton 1964:146, Bhardenaj 1974:2). For its unit of study has been beyond the village as suggested by Frank (1971:11), Sharma (1980) etc. I share the feeling with that group of sociologists who believe in concrete village based studies than a superficial macro study. Nevertheless, I have always remained alert in observing the macro-level data also.

Now, the different suggestions for the solution of agrarian problem may be briefly reviewed. Frank (1970:252, 253) suggests two solutions - redistribution of land from large to

small farmers and the 'participation popular', of which the former seems less significant in the region under study specially in Darjeeling where the landholding size per household is very small and much below what the economists call 'uneconomic holding'. In Tanak, Takuthang and Puzhong, however, quite a number of households have bigger plots of land also. But land concentration cannot be regarded as a universal feature of the region under study, which automatically follows that the land redistribution cannot be universally accepted or applied.

Schickale (1969:177) also advocates land redistribution but adds that it should be accompanied by production-credit, technical advice, extension service and market facilities. But here the problems related with land redistribution as pointed out by Rao (1943:14) quite early but still true of this region now should not be ignored. The main problems related with land redistribution according to him are : varying fertility of soil and convenience of location, suited to particular crops, no uniform population density, unequal efficiency of the farmers, etc.

Allen's observation (Hunt et al. 1977) which corroborates Bottomore's contention (1975:22-23) that there is an increasing differentiation among the working class seems quite corresponding with the present findings. This is a pattern rather contrary to the Marxist theoretical formulation (1975) that the classes

gradually become homogeneous. The working class which includes the small cultivators is one of the bulkiest classes, which according to Naon (1967:231) and Schickale (1969:163) is the main reason for the low production because they cannot make the best use of capital. Mukherjee (1929:viii) had much earlier pointed out this factor along with caste as the main depressants of agricultural production. Cohen (1973:1) regards this phase of low agricultural production, fragmentation of land etc. as a manifestation of transition from agriculture to industry.

The study of Latifundia and agricultural labour in Latin America by Feder (Shanin ed. 1975:39) shows that a lack of agricultural development is due to a lack of participation by the absentee landlord. Thorner and Thorner (1962:3) also record that the landholders not only suppress the poor but also refrain from participating in the agricultural development. These are certainly important but other factors like inadequacy of infra-structural facilities and other natural calamities pointed out by Arora (1976:1-2) and Hunter (1970) are also important. Khosre (1973:vi) adds that the decay in tenurial relations and the low use of inputs are the major factors for a lack of agricultural production or development. Ladefensky (1977:336-37) talks, besides tenurial arrangements, of the faulty legislation and the negative attitude of the government officials at all levels as some of the reasons for agricultural stagnation. Field (1965:834) had also blamed the well meaning but faulty legislation for a lack of agricultural development long time ago.

The scholars are thus found divided not only regarding

their emphasis on different factors responsible for the lack of agricultural development but also regarding the solutions. While the earlier approach to development in India had been the use of more inputs - probably an impact of the green revolution - some of the more recent scholars (Vyas 1969: 82, Wharton 1973: 107, Shenoi 1975, Gough 1979: 84) are increasingly emphasizing on the human and organisational aspects of development. To yet on another group (Montgomery 1973: 147, Bantwale 1983: 542, Sarant 1971: 145, Singh 1977: 105-6) education is very important while to scholars like Kembridge (1969), Maddison (1971), Jacoby (1971) and Gupta and Singh (1979) a change in the tenurial relations or land reform is an important condition for agricultural development.

The comparative study of China and India by Kalyani Banerjopadhyaya (1978) is interesting to note here. She finds that the agricultural production is not necessarily linked with a structural change. Vyas (1980: 131) also contends that structural changes are not relevant in all cases; organizational changes and policy measures are more important. In the context of India, the more important issue is distribution rather than the production itself. It is also to be noted that the tenurial arrangements are usually spontaneous developments suited to a particular locality and all such arrangements may not be exploitative. Thus the study of Haiti by Luddahl (1979: 43-50) finds the sharecropping system locally known as se mitie prevalent there but no exploitation is recorded. Robertson (1980) is also very much against the view that sharecropping is an

uneconomic tenurial arrangement. He argues (ibid:413-14) that the very persistence of this system over centuries itself explains its functional utility. Ramp (1973:213) also says that there is no absolute scale to measure the land tenure system and a reform of it may be 'a step forward to a step backward'.

The present study finds that the adhiya system specially is rather discouraging to the sharecroppers to produce more. It has been found that the other forms of tenancies like tanah, maghinta^{and} hadd are more preferred by the sharecroppers to the adhiya system, the reason for which has been found to be the simple fact that in an adhiya system whatever is produced is divided into two halves while in other forms of tenancies, more the sharecropper produces more goes to his share. Neither the contention of Khurze (1973:22) that sharecropping is a lucrative arrangement for the landlord seems true because the production as such is very low in the region under study and the share which is given by the sharecropper cannot support the household for the whole year even if it has about 15 acres of land. In a large number of cases even a landowner having 4 acres of land has leased out due to paucity of family manpower. Thus sharecropping is not always exploitative of the tenants as commented by Ojha (1979:233) but also an inevitable development out of occupational changes.

In any study of agrarian structure, the study of the agrarian revolution becomes an integral part of it because the

Sare is believed (Gough 1973:12) to be based on the agrarian structure mainly. The peasants are usually pitched against the landlord though many of the scholars (Wolf 1971:269-70, Alavi 1973:714-15) recognize a class difference within the peasants also. Wolf's idea of a peasant revolution is due to an interaction of demographic, ecological and power and authority crises. But Roxborough (1973:93) points out that these factors have not resulted into a peasant revolution in many cases. Fouchepeaux (1980) also refutes the concepts of peasant revolution forwarded by Wolf and Alavi.

There are again some scholars (Choudhury 1971:357, Migdal 1974:21, Mencher 1974a and Zageria 1974:55-58) who believe that the peasants' movements have become more smooth where there are politicizations of the Communist parties. This is true of this region to a great extent. Still others (Sherma 1973, Griffin 1974, Sen 1974) regard the green revolution as the cause of the agrarian unrest. There are, again, some who blame the imperialism for ossifying the class structure and finally resulting into a revolution (Jacoby 1961, Gough 1973, Stokes 1973).

In the region under study the political consciousness has quite widely spread recently under the influence of the Communist parties* but the agrarian movement for the overthrow of one class by another is not still there. Rather Migdal's

* and still recently under the leadership of some 'secessionists' for the demand of 'Gorkha Land' (see my article "Darjeeling and Statehood", Sikkim Express, Vol.6, No.4, Oct.1981) for further details.

observation (op cit, 21) that the peasant participation in politics is in return for material inducements and of Pande (1974:93) or Hoxborough (1979:95) that such struggles are often designed to convey their grievances to the high class or the authorities and not to upset the system itself seem quite true of this region. The example of the agricultural labourers discussed above is a case in point. Really it seems that the society is not going to experience a class struggle till the lower classes get the minimum for subsistence. This subsistence seems to be more attractive a bird than the hypothetical two in the bush promised by the leftists.

The absence of class revolution in Darjeeling and Sikkim is perhaps due largely to the nature of the agrarian structure itself. Seneker (1966: 119-21) regards 'uneven structural change' as one of the major reasons for social unrest. If this is accepted it automatically follows that in Darjeeling and Sikkim the class differences are not very wide. However, it should be remembered that the spatial distribution of the households, lack of proper infra-structural facilities etc. have also been instrumental in inhibiting the political or social consciousness among the lower classes. Moreover, the presence of a large number of small cultivators who are socially among the landowners and economically among the landless only makes it difficult for the society to move forward towards an agrarian revolution.

The best chance for the growth of a class consciousness

is between a lessor and a lessee but the present study finds that such cases are numerically few and more so in the higher altitudes. Moreover, they are quite often linked closely through lineage, caste or religion. All these factors make it difficult for the classes to polarize.

Finally, the most important contention in this chapter may be underlined. The study shows that the agrarian class structure in the hill areas cannot be understood in a simplistic two-or three-tier classification. Each village has developed its own agrarian character depending on its ecological features, migration and settlement history. With these factors laying the basis of the agrarian structure each village has adapted differently to the forces of modernization (education, technology, urbanization, etc.)
