

Understanding the Willingness of Farmers for Cultivation in Kultali Block of Sundarbans with a Case Study of Maipith Binodpur Village

Pritilata Halder

(Geography Researcher, Calcutta University, India)

Abstract: Agriculture is conceived as mainstay of Indian economy. According to 2001 census 69% of Indian depend on agriculture. But, socio-economic census of 2011 reveals the fact only 30% Indian depend on cultivation. This paper aims to understand, the reasons of declining involvement of Indian people into agriculture with a case study of Maipith coastal police station in Kultali block of Sundarbans. The study shows this sector (cultivation) suffers from multi-organal ails. Also this sector is failing to support sufficient earning necessary to sustain the livelihood.

Keyword: Employability; Aagam; Migrate income; Toto;

I. INTRODUCTION

In India, major people engage in agriculture. Cultivation is backbone of India. As, agriculture sector plays a significant role in the development of Indian economy as more than 60% of population draws sustenance from it. However, its contribution to the GDP has been on decline. It is nearly 25% of the GDP. Cultivation has been enabled in 17.51 crore hectre land among 18.10 crore hectre cultivated land. In this paper, mainly paddy cultivation has been shown. Indian income from agriculture is reducing. West Bengal is first position to produce rice. In Sundarbans of West Bengal, where civilization rises on the basis of cultivation, there is low dearth of willingness in the part of the people to engage in cultivation.

Aims

Agriculture is the base of development. Specially, in remote area or coastal area, where agriculture is the main weapon for living. There is dis-interest to agriculture. This remote area that is disrupted from main land, any other economic activities will not develop without agriculture. So, the main aim is, to find out the probable reasons of turning face or willingness of farmers for cultivation.

Objectives

The paper has the following objectives:

- i) To study the land tenure system.
- ii) To identify the optimum holding size that can create an employability at present cultivational practice and farmers position.
- iii) To analysis hurdles, faced by the farmers to achieve the economic holding size.

II. METHODS OF ENQUIRY

The present study is primarily descriptive, interpretative and evaluative in nature because data were collected through interview schedule. To analyse the present willingness of farmers for cultivation, 124 cultivators (house holds) out of 1245 house holds (according to Maipith Baikunthapur Gram Panchayat) of Binodpur village in Kultali block was interrogated with a specific question schedule to explore the farmers experiences regarding problems related to cultivation. The survey was carried out during the month December, 2018, following random sampling method.

Selection of the study area

'Binodpur' village is under 'Maipith Baikunthapur Gram Panchayat' which is located in Kultali CD block. This block is situated southern part of south 24 parganas along the coast line of Bay of Bengal. Binodpur village is a remote island, disrupted from the main land and about 121 km away from main city (Kolkata). Latitudinal extension of the study area is 21°53'55" N to 21°51'10" N and longitudinal extension is 88°32'54"E to 88°29'27"E. Boundary of the village is the Thakuran river to the south and east, Maipith Nagenabad village to the north and Orian-Nalar Channel to the west. Here cultivation is the main source of income. So, this area is suitable for find out the probable reasons of turning face of farmers from cultivation.

BINODPUR

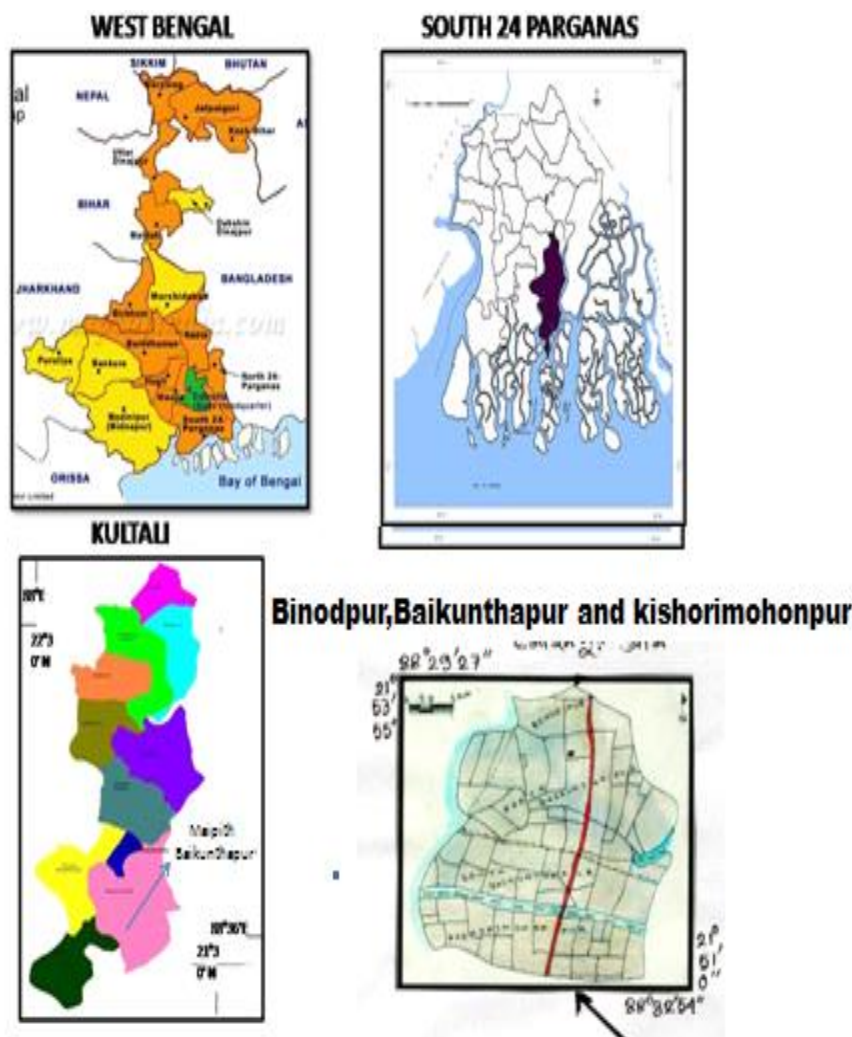


Fig.1 Location Map of the study area

Physical setup

Kultali block is one of the large island in the Sundarbans of south 24 parganas in West Bengal. In Kultali block, Binod pur mouza is bounded on the north by Maipith Nagenabad village, east and west by Thakuran river and south by the Baikunthapur village. This village lies in the Gangetic delta and physical features are common to deltaic land, little raised above flood level. This village belongs in tropical monsoon climate. The average rainfall during the last five years was 291 c.m and the average monthly temperature was about 26°C. This mouza is mainly composed by alluvium soil by Ganges-Brahmaputra rivers. The range of salinity and pH are 4.93-5.58 ppt and 8-8.3. The mangrove forest (goran, geoa, hogla etc mangrove tree) is situated to the east and west, tropical deciduous trees (mango, jackfruit, coconut etc.) are situated to the north and south.

Demographic structure

According to census of India 2011, in Binodpur mouza, there is low female than male (male-2840, female-2569). Gradually, the number of population increase rate increases about 2%-3%. There is mainly three caste like- General caste, schedule caste and schedule tribe. Though, there is only 0.4% people OBC-A i.e., muslim community. General caste is predominant and schedule tribe is low. Percentage of higher education is not noticeable. According to primary survey, 'mid-day-meal' attracts to going to primary and secondary school and 'kanyashree' inspires the girl only to pass higher secondary but do not eager to avail higher education because there is only one college in kultali block that is very far from this area and communication is disrupted by wretched condition of road. Cultivation is the only way of livelihood because there is abundance of fertilized alluvial land. 85% people depend on primary economic activities like farming and fishing, rest 15% people engage in business, service and work in another state.

Briefly agricultural history of Sundarbans

The Sundarbans where civilization rises and falls centering on agriculture. For example, 'TEVAGA' movement spreads out under the leadership of Kongsari Halder in 1948-50 regarding distribution of the

dividend of crops. It has been found from the history of Sundarbans that before the forming of the island people, from Midnapore, Orissa and Chhotanagpur strated to inhabit clearing the dense forest. Then cultivation was the only way to livelihood. In British regime, they enhanced the agricultural land by reforming forest in different times and enriched by collecting resources from Sundarbans. Yet, at present peoples of Sundarbans are unwilling to engage themselves in agriculture. In the changing cenario it has been seen that there are degrading number of farmers, migration from earning and changing habitat to the nearby city.

III. DATA AND ANALYSIS

On the basis of 124 household survey, the data are described of Binod pur village in Kultali block, south 24 parganas, Sundarbans, West-Bengal.

Table-1 : Working and dependant population.

Total No. of members	Population in working age (15-65)	% of working age population	Dependant population	% of dependant population
615	508	83%	107	17%

Table-2 Cultivator and non- cultivator

Population in working age (15-65)	Cultivator		% of cultivator	Non-cultivator	% of non - cultivator
	Male	Female			
508	269	101	73%	138	27%

Table-3 : Farmers types

Farmers types	Land amount (hectre)	% of farmers
Land less	0	3%
Marginal (≤ 1 hec.)	47.34	89%
Small (1-2 hec.)	6.83	6%
Medium (2-8 hec)	5.23	2%
Big (≥ 8 hec.)	0	0%

Table-4 : Paddy cultivation nature.

Cultivation nature(paddy)	Land amount(hectre)	% of land
Mono cropped	42.75	86.42%
Double cropped	16.08	33.72%
Fallow land	0.4	0.81%

Table-5 : Occupations of villagers.

Occupations		Male	Female	Total	% of occupations
Cultivator	Own hold land	116	69	185	36%
	Without own hold land	153	32	185	36%
Fishing		13	-	13	3%
Labours in other sector		69	9	78	15%
Business		9	-	9	2%
Services		8	4	12	2%
On migration		29	-	29	6%
Students		4	6	10	2%

N.B.-Above all data are tabulised on the basis of primary survey.

- i) In this area, paddy is the main crop of earning. In the past, 100% habitation developed only on the basis of agriculture. But now about 73% people depend on cultivation. Among the total population (615), 83% people are workable and 17% are dependent. Only 73% people are engaged in cultivation sector, among the 83% workable age and rest 10% people are in other sector.
- ii) Total agriculture land is 58.83 hectre. In which 42.75 hectre is mono-cropped and 16.08 hectre is double cropped. There is 0.4 hectre land fallow.

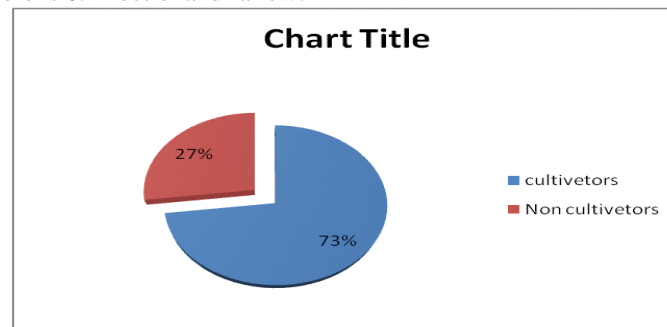


Fig.2 Percentage of cultivators and non cultivators

- iii) In this village marginal farmer family is high (89%) and 3% family have no cultivation land. There is no big farmer.
- iv) From occupational structure, it is observed that there is only 73% people engaged in cultivation, 15% people are in other sectors i.e., construction, job-card worker, 100 days worker, 6% earned from migration in another state (Kolkata, Kerala etc.), only 2% people are in government service, 3% from fishing, 2% from business and 2% are students.
- v) According to the survey, the agricultural density of this area is-

$$\text{Agricultural Density} = \frac{\text{Total cultivators}}{\text{Cultivation area}} = \frac{370}{59.43 \text{ hectre}} = 6.2 / \text{hectre}$$

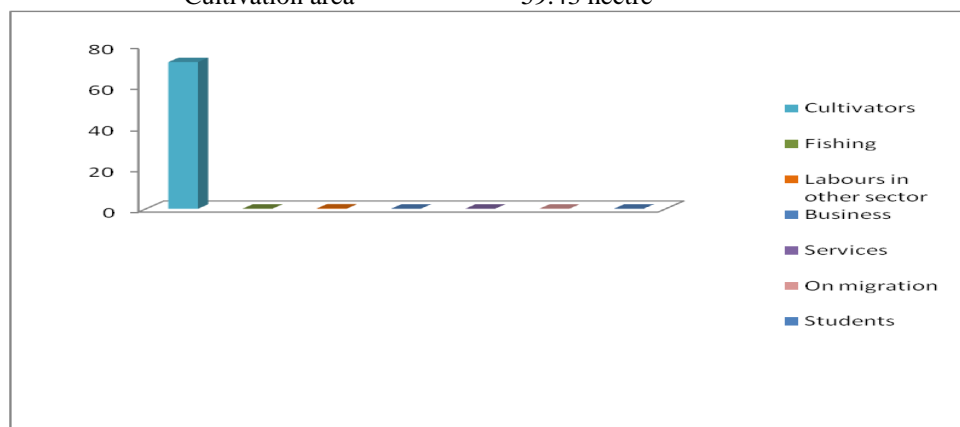


Fig.3 Percentage of occupation

- vi) As, most of the cultivation land is used for mono-cropped. So, at a particular time in a year mainly November to December (after the accumulating the paddy) most of the cultivators look forward to another state for additional income which is known as 'on migration' income.

Reasons for unwillingness of cultivation

- i) There is scarcity of agricultural labour. Wages of the labour becomes high (350/day with two times meal), as a result of those who have minimum land, they give their land for family by taking advance money which is called 'Aagam'. Though about 6 persons belong in per hectre cultivable area. Only the family which has minimum labour are interested in cultivation.
- ii) Agriculture demands a skillful learned farmer. But here people think that only an uneducated person will continue this work in future. They are engaged in cultivation without the concept of soil, seeds, pesticides, weather-climatic condition etc.
- iii) In some families, in spite of having able labour they don't engage themselves in cultivation instead of eager to do private job or tuition. As a result those family needs to pay extra money hiring labour and this gradually grows disinterest in cultivation.
- iv) 2% people aimed at education, later they disregard cultivation and attracts to urban.

- v) Cultivation in summer i.e., 'khoru-cultivation' is less due to scarcity of water. In that time many farmers sail to rivers(Matla,Thakuran, Orian-nalar channel etc.) for fishing. Even ,they sail to the Bay of Bengal,in the local language this is known as 'bar-gang'.
- vi) In the time of khoru cultivation ,farmers compell to buy water per hour from shallow machine, as it cost to much.
- vii) Farmers don't gate adequate cost from cultivated paddy for the wretched communication. Wholeseller purchases the crops at low rate. Farmers don't get more profit from cultivation.

Necessary steps

- i) Mono-cropped should be double cropped.
- ii) Fallow land (0.4 hectre) should be turned into farming land.
- iii) Raise consciousness among the educated youth about modern agriculture.
- iv) Irrigation system should be modified.
- v) Scientific ways of cultivation should be adopted.
- vi) Use of bio-pesticide instead of chemical.

IV. CONCLUSION

It is concluded by analyzing from the above data that inspite of having cultivable lands, farmers show their disinterest in cultivation. 'Unwillingness in agriculture is not only the problem of Binodpur village but also the problem of India and whole world. Though man is intended to post-modern technologies, servives on primary occupation. And cultivation is the on of the important part of primary activities. If natural resources is not treated in adequate way, standard of living will surely fall down. The world tending to industry have abundance of money but the main food is rice(varied upon place). If the people gradually turn their faces of to the agriculture, villages rather the cities and whole country will colfront starvation in future.

V. REFERENCES

- [1] Abul Fazal Muhammad Abdul Jalil (1916); 'History of Sundarban', Khulna.
- [2] Ascoli,F.D.(1921), 'A Revenue History of The Sundarbans',vol-II(1870-1920),West Bengal District Gazetteers,Kolkata.
- [3] 'Agriculture and Community Development',part-III,Government of India,Planning Commission.
- [4] Frederic Eden Pargiter (1934),'A Revenue History of The Sundarbans',vol-I(1765-1870),West Bengal District Gazetteers,Kolkata.
- [5] Guha,J.L. and Chatteraj,P.R.(2005),'Economic Geography',Kolkata-73.