LAND TRANSFERS AND PEASANT MOBILITY:

Evidence from Four Villages of Thrissur District, Kerala

Thesis Submitted
to the Cochin University of Science and Technology
for the award of the Degree of
Doctor of Philosophy in Economics
under the Faculty of Social Sciences

By

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September 1994

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Certified that the thesis "Land Transfers and Peasant Mobility: Evidence from Four Villages of Thrissur District, Kerala", is the record of bonafide research carried out by P.T. Thomas, under my supervision. The thesis is worth submitting for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Economics.

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29.9.1994.

C O N T E N T S

LIST OF TABLES

CHARTS

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Agrarian societies of underdeveloped countries are marked by great inequalities of wealth, power and status. In these societies, the most important material basis of inequality is the distribution of land[1]. According to Myrdal, in the South Asian rural setting, inequality is mainly a question of land ownership with which are associated leisure, enjoyment of status and authority. Income differences are considered as less significant[2].

Land transfers by influencing ownership of land among the peasant households affect significantly their vertical mobility, the changing position in the class structure and the rural inequalities in the distribution of land over time. While there is substantial agreement on these points among the scholars, there is no such unanimity on the processes of land transfers, the factors influencing these processes and their impact. In fact, all these issues had been subject matters of great debate among scholars of agrarian systems. These debates had their genesis in

the pre-revolutionary Russia. The major participants had been the Marxist scholars led by Lenin and Neo-Populists led by Chaynov. The debate continues to this day in the context of third world agrarian systems including that of India(For details, see the survey of literature in chapter 2). Regarding the processes of change in the distribution of land and the consequent upward or downward mobility of peasant households, Marxist scholars emphasised competition in the land market while Neo-Populists highlighted partitioning and demographic factors[3]. Indian writers, on the other hand, placed more emphasis on the legislative or institutional factors[4].

The process of land transfers is influenced by a number of socio-economic, demographic and institutional forces. Here again, scholars are not unanimous about the relative importance of the various factors influencing land transfers and consequently peasant mobility. In the context of the capitalist agrarian economy, Marxist scholars, especially Lenin gave primacy to the socio-economic factors paritcularly the initial size of a farm in determining its fate in economic competition for land[5]. Chaynov and other neo-populists like Shanin in the context of pre-capitalist Russia, had emphasised the primary role of demographic factors like family size in the expansion and contraction of peasant farms over time[6].

On the consequences of land transfers on the agrarian structure also, there is no agreement among scholars. Lenin argued that the long term consequence of competition in the land market would be the polarisation of communities and the eventual development of two classes - landless labourers and capitalist farmers[7]. As against this view, Neo-Populists held that the family labour farm has a higher degree of stability and viability than the capitalist farm because the former can absorb unfavourable price fluctuations, unlike the capitalist farm which would go out of business[8]. Family size, in particular, the number of adult male workers is the variable that brings about this stability. According to this view, in pre-capitalist agrarian societies, farm size adapts to family size in the long run; bigger families gaining land and smaller ones losing it. Shanin, extending the Chayanovian views on demographic differentiation and mobility, hypothesised that rich families are becoming poor over time by partitioning and other demographic processes and poor families are becoming rich as their family size increases[9].

The process by which family size influences the size of owned land in a regime in which private property rights in land, as against communal property rights are firmly established, however, was never explicitly stated by the Neo-Populists. It appears that there can be many causal influences of family size on farm size in a system where private property exists. Firstly, big

family and large number of adult males in it may create the motivation for acquiring more land to provide inheritance to members who form nuclear families. Secondly, bigger families enjoy considerable advantages in saving due to scale economies and complementarity in consumption. Specialisation and division of labour in farming and other household duties may be another advantage[10]. Negative consequences of family size on accumulation ability are also possible; consumption pressures and high rates of partitioning generated by bigger family size can ruin many small owners resulting ultimately in the sale of their land. However, higher initial resource endowments in terms of land and labour may tend to reduce the chances of this alienation process.

In addition to the above factors emphasised by well-known theories, peasants in traditional societies like that of India, may also be forced to sell land due to various social reasons like ceremonial expenditure on birth, death, marriage etc. Accumulated debt inherited from the parent units may be another reason. The unprofitability of cultivation in times of rising wages[11] and ceiling laws enacted by the state(as in Kerala)[12] may force the rich peasants to sell part of their land and invest the funds so accumulated in other activities. Thus, a survey of literature on differentitation and mobility among the peasantry reveals the operation of various social,economic and demographic factors.

The micro level studies on land market transactions and partitioning in different regions of India are not unanimous about the effects of these transfers on peasant mobility. Diverse directions of change such as 'concentration', 'levelling', 'peasantization', 'depeasantization', 'persistence', of small peasantry and 'cyclical' mobility have been noted by these studies[13]. But only very few of these studies have paid attention to the processes of growth and decay of peasant farms over a period of time. As for Kerala, there has been no comprehensive study on the dynamics of land transfers and their effects on peasant mobility.

It is in the above context that our study makes a modest attempt to gain an understanding of the different processes of land transfers, factors leading to such transfers and their consequences on mobility of peasant households. The study was conducted in four villages of Thrissur District in the central part of Kerala covering the period, 1957-90. The study was based on 328 sample housholds, which were personally interviewed using a pre-tested questionnaire(Details of methodology are given in chapter 3).

Objectives of the Study

The overall objective of the study is to assess the dimensions and directons of land market transfers and partitioning

with a view to find out (a) the intra-generational economic mobility among the agricultural households, b) the changes in the concentration or diffusion of ownership of land and (c) the relative significance of social, economic and demographic factors influencing the vertical mobility of households. Intra-generational mobility is taken to mean the shifting position of the households with respect to the size class of operational holdings during the life time of the head of the households.

The specific objectives of the study are:

1. To determine the magnitude of land market transfers and partitioning and their impact on the land distribution among different size classes and castes.
2. To capture the endogenous and exogenous factors including land reforms that determine the land market transfers and partitioning of family property.
3. To pursue the relationship between partitioning and alienation of land among the peasant households.

Significance of the Study

It is hoped that the present study by analysing the dynamics of agrarian change and peasant mobility may contribute to the on-going debate on this issue in India and other developing countries. It may also help to throw light on the validity of some

of the theories formulated on the basis of experience in different regions and at different times. The study is likely to be of special importance as it covers an area which has one of the highest densities of population. The area has also witnessed sweeping changes in agrarian structure as a result of the most radical land reforms among the Indian states.

Limitations of the Study

The scope of the study is limited to intra-generational mobility and not inter-generational mobility. Secondly, only vertical mobility has been studied. Spatial (horizontal) mobility has been considered only in so far as it contributed to vertical mobility as in the case of peasant households improving their position in land ownership as a result of extra income from other non-agricultural sources[14]. Thirdly,for measurement of mobility we used only changes in ownership of land. This is partly because of the difficulties in quantifying other variables like income, marketable surplus, labour exploitation etc., over long periods of time.

In literature peasants are defined in terms of family farm, which do not hire outside labour. The complete absence of wage labour(as stressed by Chaynov and others) is too much an abstraction in the context of the present third world peasantry[15]. Even the poor agrarian households in Kerala are found to employ

hired labour during peak seasons. Peasants in this situation cannot be defined only in terms of their hiring of labour. We therefore, have extended the definition of peasant households to include even those who hire outside labour, provided land is their main means of production and the principal asset.

Chapter Scheme

The study is divided into nine chapters including the present introductory chapter. Chapter 2 surveys critically the vast literature on land transfers and peasant mobility. Chapter 3 gives details of the criteria for selection of the district, villages and households and the analytical procedures used for the study. Chapter 4 presents a brief account of the agro-economic background of the district, as also its population profile. A historical account of the agrarian changes, partly as a result of the land reform legislations, both before and after independence is also given in this chapter. In chapter 5, the nature and magnitude of land market transfers and the factors leading to such transfers are discussed. The consequences of accumulation and alienation of land on the various socio- economic groups are analysed in chapter 6. Chapter 7 focusses on the nature of partitioning and its impact on the alienation of land among the peasant households. Chapter 8 seeks to capture the dynamics of land ownership and peasant mobility in its totality. Chapter 9 gives our major findings.

Notes and References

1. According to Rural debt and Investment Survey (1971-72) the value of land was 66 per cent in the value of total productive assets in the rural areas. See Reserve Bank of India, All India Debt and Investment Survey (1971-72). Bombay,1976,p 85. According to the 1981-82 Survey, average value of land per household in Kerala was Rs. 52,517 which was one of the highest among the states in India. It ranged from Rs.69,392 for Punjab, Rs.58133 for Haryana and Rs.9776 for Tamil Nadu. The value of land formed 68.4 percent of the assets of cultivating households in 1981-82. See Reserve Bank of India,All India Debt and Investment Survey(1981-82), Bombay,1987.

2. See Myrdal.G, Asian Drama: An Enquiry into the Poverty of Nations, Penguin, Harmondsworth,1969, P 568.

3. For details of this Marxian line of thinking see Lenin.V.I, The Development of Capitalism in Russia, collected works, Vol.3, Progress Publishers, Moscow,1977.

   For details of Neo-Populist argument See Shanin,Teodar, The Awkard class: Political Sociology of Peasantry in Developing society, Russia 1910-25, Oxford University Press, London,1972.

4. This is the conclusion based on the survey of literature on agrarian change and agrarian structure in India. For details see P.C.Joshi,Land Reforms in India: Trends and Perspectives, Allied Publishers, New Delhi,1982.

5. Lenin(1977, Op.cit.

6. Chayanov.A.V, The Theory of Peasant Economy, Translated by D.Thorner, B.Kerbaly and R.E.F.Smith, Richard, C.Irwin for the American Economic Association, Homewood,1966.

7. Lenin(1977),Op.cit.

8. Chaynov(1966),Op.cit.

9. Shanin(1972),Op.cit.

10. For Example and discussion Lazear. E.P. and Michael R.T, "Family size and Distribution of Real per Capita Income", The American Economic Review, Vol.70. No.1.March,1980.

11. Cost of cultivation studies in Kerala since mid-1970's shows that cultivation of wet land in Kerala is highly unprofitable due to increase in wage costs. For details See Jeemol Unni, An Analysis of Change in the Cropping Pattern in Kerala with Particular Reference to Substitution of Coconut for Rice, 1960-61 -1978-79, M.Phil Thesis, Centre for Development Studies, Thiruvananthapuram, 1981.

12. For details See Land Reforms Survey(1966-67),Report, Bureau of Economic and Statistics, Thiruvananthapuram,1968.

13. For details see chapter 2.

14. Generally, there is a distintion between 'Vertical mobility' involving a change in social or economic rank, and horizontal mobility involving a change of occupation or place of work(migration) but no change in rank.

15. For such an argument see Thorner, Daniel, "Peasantry" in D.L.Sills (ed), International Encyclopaedia of the Social Science, Vol.II, The Macmillan Company and the Free Press, 1968, p.508.

CHAPTER 2

SURVEY OF LITERATURE

The broad objective of the present chapter is to survey the theoretical and empirical literature on the causes and consequences of land transfers, which intensify the process of differentiation of the peasantry in an agrarian economy. Our review of literature is divided into three sections; i) The Russian debate on peasant differentiation; ii) Later versions of this debate and the recent studies on agrarian structure and differentiation in underdeveloped agrarian economies and iii) Studies on land transfers and differentiation in the Indian context.

Section I

The Russian Differentiation Debate

The question of whether or not socio-economic mobility and more specifically differentiation was occuring amongst the peasantry was at the heart of the theoretical and policy debates in Russia around the beginning of this century. According to Shanin (1972) the issues which were involved remain relevant "for the majority of mankind in the so-called developing societies of today"[1]. The main participants in this debate were the Marxists and the Neo-Populists. The Marxists held that the accumulation

process is associated with concentration of land and the development of capitalist relations in agriculture. The Neo-Populists led by Chaynov denied this possibility and emphasised the persistence and viability of the family labour farm.

Development of Capitalism in Agriculture - Marxist View.

The Marxist writers equating accumulation with class differentiation base their arguments primarily on Marx's sketch of the development process of agrarian capitalism.[2] For Marx, drawing on the experience of England, the main feature of capitalist farmers is the extraction of surplus value through the employment of 'free labour' which was being created by the expropriation of the land of the rural peasants and their subordination to capitalists[3]. As a part of this process, agricultural production has been getting reorganised so that it becomes less and less like peasant production geared to simple reproduction and subsistence, and increasingly come to resemble capitalist production in general, oriented to expanded reproduction, with the re-investment of profits into further accumulation. He believed that the capitalist relations would ultimately engulf agriculture with concentration of property in land, proletarianisation of peasants, large productivity gains of capitalist agriculture and displacement of working capital and labour previously engaged in small holdings. His approach seemed

to imply that, with the growth of commodity production, the growth of capitalist agriculture would inevitably follow, involving the differentiation of the peasantry and the employment of wage labour by capitalist owners or tenants[4]. Although this is the way in which Marx has often been understood, a number of qualifications in Marx's discussion should be noted.

Firstly, Marx thought that there were ways in which capitalism would allow the persistence of peasant agriculture, with peasants retaining control over at least some of their main means of production. These take the form of share-cropping[5] and independent peasant farming, which in certain conditions, could actually compete with capitalist farming. This is especially because the peasants in the absence of profit motive, might be prepared to pay more for land than capitalist farmers, and charge less for their produce[6].

Despite such qualifications,. Marx thought that small peasant agriculture was basically unstable and would not be able to resist capitalist penetration. In his view, peasant farming was a 'necessary transitional stage for the development of agriculture itself[7]. The factors that would contribute to its downfall, apart from the direct state repression of small peasants, include the removal of the main subsidiary and supporting economic activities that go along with peasant farming

(i.e., rural domestic industry and common grazing) and competition from large scale and technically more advanced forms of agriculture[8]. According to Marx, in the long run, under conditions of a growing commodity economy, independent peasant agriculture must be unstable and would dissolve into capitalist mode of production.

As noted earlier, Marx's original treatment of the differentiation of peasantry and primitive accumulation was based on the English experience, where the forcible expropriation of peasant property (e.g., through enclosure movement) served as the mechanism of dispossession. This, however, could only be a special case because such outright dispossession is possible only if the affected peasant classes lack the necessary juridical property rights and or the political power to resist. Where this was not the case, forcible dispossession could not serve as a primary mechanism of differentiation. Under such conditions, market forces provide an alternative mechanism of differentiation. Both Kautsky and Lenin extended Marx's model on these lines.

Kautsky - Lenin laws.

The theoretical literature in recent times contains a lot of discussion on Kautsky-Lenin" laws" of development of capitalism in agriculture[9]. Nirmal Chandra(1974) put these laws in the following words [10].

a) " the law of increasing returns to scale operates as much in agriculture as in industry, so that large scale farms are superior to small scale ones.

b) As a consequence, there is continuous differentiation among the peasantry, i.e., i) land gets increasingly concentrated in the hands of fewer and fewer persons; and ii) the ranks of agricultural workers get swelled so that they form an even larger proportion of the total agricultural population.

c) The extent of share-cropping declines over time. For, this kind of tenancy is pre-capitalist in nature and obviously does not suit the interests of the big farmers.

d) Alongside (b) agricultural production is increasingly oriented not towards the cultivators' self consumption but towards outside market, whether in the form of food or cash crops."

This Kautsky-Lenin perception of the agrarian question is the one which is most widely accepted today, in those poor countries where the capitalist path is being attempted.

For Lenin, market based differentiation appeared to be a unilinear process, leading inexorably to the eventual polarisation of the peasantry. It was not a category of producers that interested him, but the process of capitalist differentiation of small producers, a process whose source was the existence of commodities and the sale or purchase of labour power.

Kautsky presents his argument in the context of accumulation of capital rather than in the context of differentiation of the peasantry. He draws the important inference that unlike in industry, accumulation of capital in agriculture must proceed via prior concentration of capital (in terms of consolidating land) rather than vice versa.

The arguments that Kautsky (1899)present have two points of departure from that of Lenin. Kautsky's analysis was basically an analysis of the penetration of capitalist production into agriculture based on German experience. He demonstrated that the concepts for the investigation of capitalism that Marx presents in 'Capital' are applicable to agricultural production[11].He was countering the argument of Sombrat who contended that Marx's thesis of the tendency of capitalist concentration was disproved in agriculture, where small enterprises either survived or advanced in the face of large ones. Futhermore, the increase in productivity that Sombrat believed to be crucial for capitalism (following improved processes and rational organisation) was absent in agriculture[12]. Such arguments were advanced in Germany at the close of the nineteenth century in an attempt to deny that capitalist production and in particular the account of it provided by Marx had any relevance for agriculture. Kautsky rejected such propositions vigorously and presented his task as follows :

> If one wishes to study the agrarian question in a Marxist fashion, then it is not simply sufficient to pose the problem as the future of small enterprises in agriculture; we must rather investigate all the variations underlying the capitalist mode of production in agriculture. We must investigate if and how capital dominates agriculture, transform it, renders old production and property forms unworkable, and leads to the constitution of new forms[13].

For, Kautsky, differentiation of the peasantry, to be conducive to capitalist development, requires a distribution of the pre-existing stock of land in favour of actual or potential capitalists (in so far as incremental additions to stock of land is not possible)[14]. It is precisely the limited and pre-occupied 'production-space' of agriculture which can become a critical barrier to possibilities of change. Capitalist development, therefore, is not simply a matter of having access to land through displacement of its direct owners or occupants. Rather, what is involved is the displacement and or 'self-transformation' of the entire hierarchy of classes who have interwoven interests in maintaining the existing forms of property, inclusive of those who appropriate surplus on that basis (e.g., landlords, merchant-usurers or even agents of the state). Kautsky noted that given bourgeois property rights, expropriation of land by direct coercion was not possible. Under such historical conditions, only the mechanism of debt -default in mortgage contracts (the credit-land interlocked market) provided the legally recognized basis of land alienation.[15]. In particular, the compulsion of cash needs

provided the entry point for market based contracts by merchant-usurers - the dynamics of which, eventually led to the dispossession of land. In effect, what is involved is a view of differentiation through the market which is much more complex than product market competition (leading to the elimination of less efficient producers)[16].

Lenin, on the other hand, faced with a 'Populist' concept that denied the possibility of capitalist development in agriculture, argued that Russian agriculture 'was already capitalist and that capitalist relations were extending in the countryside at a fast rate[17]. For Lenin, inequality in the concentration of means of production among Russian peasants at the turn of the century was evidence of capitalist class formation. As a result, households with insufficient means to produce their own subsistence were being proletarianised, while those with surplus means were increasingly employing wage labour. Therefore, Lenin predicted that under competitive market conditions, economic advantages and disadvantages would develop cumulatively and that peasantry would eventually be polarized into two distinct groups of unequal size. The peasantry would then be characterised by all major contradictions which are inherent in every commodity economy like:- "competition, the struggle for economic independence, the grabbing of land (purchasable and rentable), the concentration of production in the hands of a minority, the

forcing of the majority into the ranks of the proletariat, their exploitation by a minority through the medium of merchant capital and the hiring of farm labourers"[18]. The sum total of all these contradictions among the peasantry, according to Lenin, is the differentiation. Depeasantization is almost synonymous with this term.

Lenin used the concept of social differentiation to argue that the Russian peasantry was being rapidly eliminated and abandoned into the essential classes of capitalist mode of production. Undoubtedly, the emergence of property inequality is the starting point of the whole process but the process is not at all confined to property differentiation. Differentiation signified much more. More important, "the old peasantry is not only differentiating, it is being completely dissolved, it is ceasing to exist, it is being ousted by absolutely new types of rural inhabitants - types that are the basis of a society in which commodity economy and capitalist production prevail. These types are the rural bourgeoisie (chiefly petty burgeoisie) and the rural workers"[19]. As per Lenin's stratification of peasantry, rural bourgeoisie or well to do peasants constituted those farms which were economically strong, completely independent, engaged in commercial agriculture and exceeded the family labour norm (i.e., the amount of land that a family can cultivate by its own labour), forcing them to resort to the hiring of workers. They would

employ a farming techinique much above the average: "that is to say, the well-to-do peasants do their sowing faster, make better use of favourable weather, sow the seed in humid soil and reap their harvest in proper time, they thresh their grain as it is carted in from the field etc"[20]. Therefore, "it is also natural that the expenditure on the production of agricultural produce diminished per unit of output as the size of farm increases"[21]. "The spare cash obtained by these peasants in the shape of net income is either directed towards commercial operations or usury which are so excessively developed in our rural districts or under favourable conditions, is invested in the purchase of land, farm improvements etc"[22]. Thus, the concentration of land and the differentiation of the peasantry would increase.

On the other extreme were the rural proletariat, the class of hired workers with small plots of land allotments[23]. The poor peasants, day labourers, building workers or other allotment holding workers are included in this category. The features of this class were "insignifant farming on a patch of land with a farm in a state of utter ruin (particularly evidenced by the leasing out of land), inability to exist without the sale of labour power (= industries of the indigent peasants), an extremely low standard of living (probably lower than that of the worker without an allotment) - such are the distinguishing features of this type"[24]. Since Lenin argued that capitalism penetrated into

agriculture very slowly, the agricultural proletariat with small allotment of land was compatible with capitalism. This was true not only of Russian agriculture but also of other capitalistic countries of Europe.

The middle peasantry constituted the third stratum from which the ranks of the above two types were recruited. This was a dying stratum occupying an extremely vulnerable position, the most unstable group and their economic independence was just a myth. As Lenin noted: "the peasant bourgeoisie oust not only the bottom group, but also the middle group of the peasantry. Thus, a process, specifically characteristic of capitalistic economy takes place, the middle members are swept away and the extremes are re-inforced - the process of de-peasantising"[25].

Viability of Peasant Family Farms: Neo-Populist View

Lenin's views on social differntiation, i.e., differentiation along clear class lines, were contrary to the views of the Narodnik or Populist intellectuals who saw no class formation taking place within the Russian peasantry[26]. Therefore, there was no social differentiation and no development of capitalism. They saw the continuing reproduction of an archetypal pristine peasantry, which might be the basis for successful development in Russia: not capitalist development but one might say, development along a populist path[27]. There soon developed a new school of

such scholars, with similar, but more sophisticated ideas, who would attempt to measure differentiation with refined techniques and using specially gathered data: a school which would eventually attract the description Neo-Populists, led by Chaynov. In direct opposition to the Marxist view of social differentiation, he postulated a continuing process of demographic differentiation. According to Chaynov, there was difference between farms but this could be satisfactorily explained in terms of the demographic cycle[28]. More specifically, he argued that the ratio of workers to consumers in a household determine both its consumption needs and its productive capacity, the level of production and the extent of sown area. In his review of the evidence from the Dynamic Surveys[29], Chaynov suggested that although it could not account entirely for all the patterns of mobility discovered, the main factor determining them was the composition of the household:-

> " Farms may increase and decline with unchanged family composition due to purely economic causes. Apart from this, favourable and unfavourable market situations as regards the general economy can make it considerably easier or more difficult for the family to develop its activity in accordance with its own growth. There is, nevertheless, no doubt at all that demographic causes play the leading part in these movements"[30].

The way in which family composition could explain social mobility would become clear if the ratio of its labour and consumer units were charted over the years of the family's

generational cycle. A family would start off as a married couple and gradually grow. With the birth of each child and with children growing up and able to help with work on the farm, the labour-consumer ratio would regularly change. In a rather abbreviated form, these changes can be divided into three stages. At first, the household grows in size as children are born, raising the minimum consumption level, and raising the consumer worker ratio up to a maximum when children are small and their work contribution is low. At the second stage, children grow up and contribute increasingly to the work of the household, causing the consumer worker ratio to fall from its peak. The number of person-days of labour available to the household rises. During this period, it would be possible to expand production and build up a surplus. However, this situation would not last. Lastly, as a result of marriages of children, the family would either split up, thus weakening the position of the various resulting smaller families, or the inclusion of more pregnant wives and children into an extended family, possibly with the grand parents becoming less able to work, would again cause the consumer-worker ratio to grow, placing more burdens on the family's resources[31].

As a result of such demographic factors, as Chaynov chose to call them, the peasantry was seen not as permanently polarising but as experiencing cycles of mobility. "The peasant economy was able to win out capitalist farming in intensive cultivation at a

time of falling prices, a fall in economic activity caused an intensification of peasant labour,whereas a capitalist farm, on the contrary, reduced its production when the market was unfavourable. A peasant economy does not take interest rates into consideration when making its decision to invest in land impovements or machines"[32]. This is because the income from cultivation based on family labour will be much greater than the interest cost of capital invested in land. For this reason Chaynov considered the possibility of the intensity of capital to be greater in a peasant economy than in a capitalist economy. "At the same time, this capital intensification is usually accompanied by and causes an even greater labour intensification in agriculture"[33]. Therefore, Chaynov saw little sense in applying capitalist profit calculations to peasant economy where there is no motive of profit maximisation. He felt that the dynamics of changes in farm areas was not a sufficient criterion to detect a process of proletarianisation or of capitalist development in the country. These changes are rather to be seen in the analysis of the type of agricultural organisation - for example the percentage of wage labour employed.

The Chaynovian ideas did not go unchallenged in the past and even in the present. While Chaynov was defending homogeneous peasantry, a group of Agrarian Marxists led by L.N.Kritsman felt strongly that the urgent task of research in post revolution

Russia was the study of economic stratification of peasantry. Kriteman, attacked Chaynov for ignoring the role of the material productive forces as a factor in the development of the peasant economy.[34]. The Marxist scholars were also disturbed by Chaynov's argument that differentiation in peasant economies was a demographically determined process. In their own research, they stressed the hiring-in and hiring-out of the means of production(land, labour and capital) as the main criteria of rural stratification into proletarian and capitalist farms[35]. It was also argued that the populist theory had committed a fundamental logical error, by assuming the co-existence of family-labour based holdings with capitalist holdings with identical production functions[36]. To Patnaik (1979), this was impossible because "the same output cost can give profit in one case(the capitalist farm) and not give a profit in other (the family farm)"[37]. Harrison (1975) has subjected Chaynov to the closest scrutiny. Harrison has not only opposed the Chaynovian views on the demographic differentiation but has recalculated and re-analysed the Chaynovian data in order to question the empirical validity of his assertions. He reached the conclusion that the proportion of dependents in a family was relatively an insignificant factor in economic inequality, and that farm size and family income per head are related to other factors in much more important ways[38]. Both Harrison and Patnaik raise doubts

about the adjusting power of the dependency ratio which determines the homogeneity in the peasantry. To Harrison, family labour on the family farm does not in itself constitute a social relation.

Section II

Later Version of the Debate

After 1930, the flood of collectivisation and the great purge in Russia swept away the differentiation debate. However, in recent years, many of these issues which were so fiercely contested by Russian scholars between 1900 and 1930 have again become the subject of controversy[39].

Schumpeter(1951) has warned against assuming any 'automatism of accumulation' in big family enterprises as suggested by the Marxists thinkers and has suggested that there may rather be a tendency towards 'automatic decline'[40]. In his view 'initial big size' in itself does not guarantee the expansion of a family enterprise, notwithstanding the usual advantages accruing from the already elevated economic position of such a unit. Bigger production surpluses do not get translated into successful investment automatically, but must be deliberately and wisely invested, and must not be squandered in consumption. Schumpeter has rather emphasised the primary role of subjective factors in the success/failure of family enterprises in economic

competition. It is the differences in disposition to save, quality of management and leadership of enterprise, capacity to do prolonged hard work and renounce other pleasure of life, and the sheer hard-headedness and drive to expand the enterprise at any cost, that distinguish the successful families from the not so successful. He discounts the role of 'chance' in success/failure of family enterprises by the argument that what matters is not 'chance' in itself, but rather how a family adapts to or exploits its consequences.

An influential modern exponent of the Neo-Populist view has been Georgescu Roegen (1960) who attacked the validity of the law of concentration in agriculture[41]. In his paper, the author stressed the relevance of agrarian economies under conditions of over-population where acute population density makes the marginal product zero and will maximize total output per unit of land.

Daniel Thorner, besides publishing Chaynov's book in English in 1966, made an attempt to redefine the Chaynovian category of peasant family farm to make it applicable in a third world economy[42]. Thorner thought complete absence of wage labour(as stressed by Chaynov) was too much of an abstraction in the context of third world peasantry. He, therefore, extended the Chaynovian definition to include peasant households which do hire-in outside labour, provided the extent of such hiring is less than the number of days worked by family workers.

Shanin has emerged as the most prominent of those who have been profoundly influenced by Chaynovian ideas. Shanin's particular aim was to dispute the usual Marxist view of the nature of peasantry during capitalist development being split into three groups. Shanin(1972) conducted a massive re-analysis of the 'zemstvo' statistics[43] used by Lenin and Chaynov and developed a model of differentiation which reflected both centrifugal and centripetal trends[44]. Substantive changes in household composition and farm enterprise figured among the determinants of centripetal trends. According to Shanin, centrifugal tendencies are the result of the partitioning of big farms, merging of small farmers and the redivision of land administered by peasant communes in Russia on the basis of egalitarian principle of family size.

In his famous Dynamic Mobility study of the Russian peasantry, Shanin examines the dynamic studies carried out by N.Chernenkov, G.Kuschchenko, (also mentioned in Chayanov's works) and all such works carried out in Russia during the last decade of the 19th and first two decades of the 20th centuries. A re-analysis of the evidence gathered in these decades of 'dynamic studies' proved that a complex multi-directional mobility, invloving both centripetal and centrifugal tendencies simultaneously operating among peasant households, is at work and underlines the gross differentiation process in peasant society[45].

The anti-Lenin hypothesis of centripetal mobility was the key premise of all of Shanin's later arguments. Thus, Shanin carefully tries to substantiate this tendency by discovering certain stable forces working behind such a process. Shanin identified those causal forces as follows [46].

(i) Through partitioning, the big farms were moving downward. This enhanced the process of equalization or levelling.

(ii) The disappearance or migration of the small farmers were relatively greater.

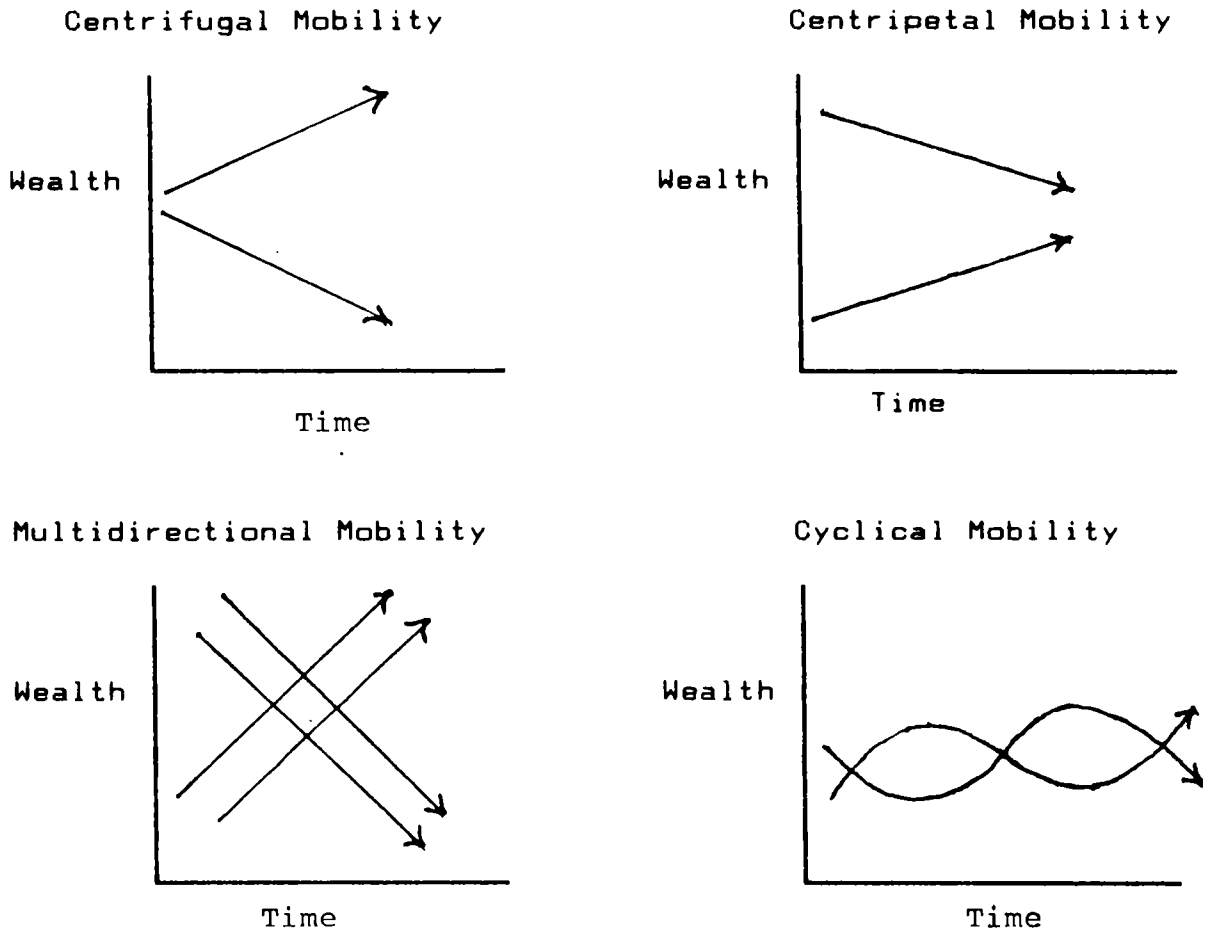
(iii) Sometimes, small farmers merged together and moved upward. This also strengthened the levelling mechanism.

(iv) Redivision of the land administered by the peasant commune on the basis of an egalitarian prinicple of family size also enhanced the levelling mechanism.

(v) The natural growth of the young peasant family put the pressure of increased consumption needs on the male workers of the family. The degree of self-exploitation and the pooling in of further factors of production are made in response to such pressures. Thus, the young and poor families experience upward mobility. At a certain stage, consumers turn into workers and the consumer/worker ratio decreases and thereby also decreases the drive for economic expansion. Moreover, partitioning of such matured families causes a downward mobility again; thus this biological life cycle also naturally

enchance the centripetal mobility. But side by side, the economic mechanism of centrifugal mobility also works. According to Shanin, these two opposing trends ultimately result in cyclical mobility. The pattern of this cyclical mobility can be seen from the following diagrams.

Figure 2.1



See Shanin, Teodar (1972), The Awkward Class: Political Sciology of Peasantry in a Developing Society: Russia 1910-1925, Oxford Clarendon press, 1972, p.76.

One can clearly observe from the above diagrams that a cyclical mobility model may really conceal the class differences that exist in peasantry. The model puts more emphasis on the non-economic factors (such as partition, inheritance, migration, merger, extinction etc) which diffuse class differentiation. Among the above sub-processes, partitioning is more important. According to Shanin, the pulverizing effect of partitioning was strongest among the wealthier strata[47]. Hence, he considered that it is the only factor which clearly worked for the creation of centripetal tendencies among wealthier households. On the other hand, Krishnaji(1980), based on changes in the distribution of land in Kerala hypothesised that rates of partitioning will be high among agricultural labourers and poor peasant households and low among rich peasants and capitalist farmer households. Since middle peasantry is not a homogeneous category as far as market involvement is concerned and it contains some who resemble small peasants and some who resemble rich peasants, he expected that rates of partitioning among middle peasants to lie between those of rich and poor peasants[48].

In a later contribution to this discussion, Dandekar(1970) had examined theoretically the dynamic process through which size distribution of farms adjusted to growing population pressure. He pointed out that " ....thanks to the very unequal distribution of land among the people dependent on it, the pressure of population

in traditional agriculture is very unevenly distributed. At one extreme, there are a very few large farms owned by a few people and where therefore the pressure of population is very light. Naturally, these farmers produce a surplus over the subsistence of the population they support. At the other extreme, there are numerous small farms owned by a large majority of the population. Hence, the pressure of population is excessive. The farms fail to produce enough for the subsistence of this population and capital consumption is inevitable[49]". Over time, as population increases, more farms will join the second category of small farms.

Other empirical research from Africa and Asia expands the debate. Hunt (1979) in her study of peasant households in Kenya investigated Chayanovian hypothesis about peasant households resource allocation. She finds some support for Chaynov's ideas, for example, farm size varies directly with size of household[50]. The central thrust of her findings is that a substantial and even the chief component of economic inequality is demographically induced. Sivakumar (1976) analyses data on twelve villages in Tamil Nadu[51]. Each village was studied once during the years, 1955 and 1976. He asserts that Chaynov's contentions about a demographically influenced peasant economy appear to be less valid than Lenin's contention that it is social differentiation that determines consumption, income and operational holding.

In a recent theoretical contribution to this discussion, Bhaduri (1983) has rejected the possibility of polarisation or instability among the peasantry in a backward agrarian economy[52]. Bhaduri et al (1986) provide empirical support to the above theoretical observation from south-Eastern Bangladesh[53] They argue that the process of social differentiation and polarisation generated contradictory processes which stabilised small holders and impeded proletarianisation. Whether this process could be interpreted as the persistence of small farms was challenged on both theoretical and methodological grounds by Feldman and McCarthy (1987). Among the important issues they raise is the time frame necessary to measure and study differentiation.[54]

To sum up, the authors we have been citing have each predicted a different process of differentiation as well as its outcome(whether it results in the survival or non-survival of small-holders in agriculture?). In fact, when we examine the empirical evidence on land transfers, we may find that each of these theories had some validity in particular regions at particular times, but none can be said to have had the status of a universal law.

Section III

Land Transfers and Peasant Differentiation - Evidence from India.

The working of the land market has been investigated by many research scholars in India on the basis of the records provided by the Registrar of Land Transactions. Some of these studies were influenced by the Russian debate. But, only very few attempted to examine the underlying farm-family level forces of accumulation and alienation of land over a period of time.

The question whether the selling of land constitutes a dynamic aspect of peasant behaviour in Third-World countries is debated by various authors. Vyas(1976), Sau (1981) and Dutt(1984) believe that land market is frozen in a typical third world country, like India[55]. Bliss and Stern (1982), while admitting that land sales are unusual events, claim that they have very important effects on the time series movements of land ownership[56]. Rudra(1978), Bhaduri(1983) Bardhan(1984) and Basu(1986) stress the the fact that peasants sell land only under extremely difficult circumstances, since for many peasants, land is the only secure asset[57].

The functioning of land market during the Second World War period had been analysed by Sayana and Shah . Sayana (1952) had analysed the distribution of land and land transfers between 1929

and 1947 in Dharwar district of the Bombay province and four Telugu speaking districts of Madras Presidency. He had noticed that the trading and business people were acquiring land at a rate which was more than double the rate at which they were disposing off their land[58]. Shah's (1952) study of land transfers in Gujarat observed that during the war period, the number of transactions tended to increase. Besides, the land market also became more organised as the proportion of unrecorded oral sales to the total transactions declined[59]. It was further noted that buyers among agriculturists were mainly medium or big cultivators and sellers were mainly small holders.

Bose (1970) had attempted to study the land sales market and trends in land values between 1937 and 1962 in Bihar[60]. He observed an increase in the total number of sales during the entire period. However, the area involved tended to decline. Between 1936 and 1962, land prices showed a persistent increase, the increase being over ten times. The total sales at no time exceeded one percent of the total land. Mukerjee (1971) studied the problem of land transfers in the unidivided Bengal[61]. He covered the period from 1920 to 1944 investigating the different forms of land transfers which included among others, sales and mortgages. In Bengal, land transfers over a period of 25 years resulted in a net decline in the land held by farmers with an increased concentration of holdings with relatively few big

Zamindars and a steep rise in the proportion of landless families.

Rao(1972) focussed on land transfers between 1956 and 1965 in 28 sample villages situated in the Ryotwari region of Maharashtra[62]. The study noted that land market tended to work along the lines desired by the land reforms i.e., land to the tenant and to the small owner rather than against them. Landless and small owners had a noticeably larger share in land purchased as compared to land sold. Thus, during the period, the land market worked to lessen the concentration of land ownership in the area under study.

Joshi and Hiramoney Dhar (1984) had studied the pattern of land transfers in three districts of Uttar Pradesh, covering a more recent period, 1971-1981[63]. The study observed that land was being transferred among the large and medium farmers and therefore, concentration of land ownership remains unchanged. Rajasekhar (1985) tried to trace the nature and causes of land transfers in a village in the Rayalaseema region of Andhra Pradesh between 1891 and 1984[64]. The following are the important conclusions emerging from the study: 1) Inequalities in land ownership have increased only marginally between 1891 and 1948; ii) Most of the land alienated during the period, 1948-61 was from rich farmers to rich farmers and concentration of land ownership therefore remain unchanged; iii) Inequalities of land ownership in

the village had declined between the period 1948-84; iv) Overall economic power balance has been gradually moving away from the dominant cultivating caste of the village and v) The alienation of land and partitioning processes were positively correlated among the farm households.

Shergill(1986) focussed on the trends in land sales and land prices between 1952-53 and 1978-79 in the 14 villages of Sangur district of Punjab[65].The study asserted that "the role of land market transactions in the evolution of land ownership structure is more complex and the naive belief that small owners lose land to big farmers via. market transfers needs critical re-examination if not outright rejection". The study observed that there is a decline in the area sold annually since 1966/67. The introduction of bio-chemical technology tended to stabilise the financial position of chronically deficit farmers who were selling land and consequently, the process of their dispossession and degeneration into the ranks of the landless has been slowed down.

Chaudhary's (1987) study in a Bihar village focussed on the nature and causes of land transfers among the different castes[66]. The study observed that in most cases, the upper castes sold their land to meet day to day needs and to arrange the marriage of their sisters and daughters. Backward castes sold their land in order to buy land in their own locality. The net losers of land in the

village were the upper castes, lower backward castes and scheduled castes; whereas the net gainers of land were the upper backward castes, the principal money-lenders of the area. Kripa Sanker (1988) had attempted to study the process of land transfers between 1952-53 to 1982-83 in Uttar Pradesh[67]. The study came to the conclusion that a process of proletaranisation seem to be going on in the rural areas as significant portion of the land was sold by those who subsequently became landless. The study noted that the landless were the greatest losers of land and the medium and large farmers were the largest gainers. The gain of semi-medium and small farmers were also substantial while marginal farmers were the losers, albeit marginally.

An alternative approach, conceptualy and empirically more satisfying was developed by Shergill(1985) to study the causes of the growth or decay of the farms in Punjab[68]. To determine the fate of the peasant farms, he selected an equal number of(30 each) growing, decaying and static farms and compared their key characteristics relating to their economic structure, resource endowments, demographic characteristics, adoption of modern technology and economic performance. The comparison of the characteristics of the farms yielded little support for the traditional Marxist view that it is the initial area owned by a family that matters in economic competition and in determinig its

chances of gaining or losing land via market. The study also did not lend support to the Chayonvian hypothesis that it is the family size that matters in determining the chances of a family gaining or losing land via market. On the contrary, the study observed that "it is the complex interplay of factors like growth of family and males, adult members in it over time, size of owned land per male at the time of birth of the households, education of male family workers and their ability to adopt new technology quickly, employ large number of hired workers, attains high levels of economic efficiency and their success in keeping the growing family in tact in a single extended unit, that determine the chances of peasant family gaining or losing land via. the market"[69]. The focus of the study,however, was limited to the observation and analysis of the factors that determine the fate of the households in the competition for land. The focus was relatively less on consequences of the process. Besides, the study lumps together growing, decaying and static farms and ignores the process of differentiation within the growing and decaying farms. Lastly, the study did not examine the structure of partitioning of the farms which is also important in any analysis of the dynamics of accumulation and alienation.

In Kerala, study of land transfers are few and far between. T.C.Varghese(1970) tried to trace the contours of land transfers between 1900 and 1958 in the regions of Travancore, Cochin and

Malabar[70]. The study observed that the extent of land transfer was lower in areas in which land ownership was concentrated than in areas where it was more dispersed. Sale of land was an important means of alienation of land in Travancore and Cochin. It was much less so in Malabar.

Land Reform survey (1967-68) conducted by the Bureau of Economics and Statistics, concludes that "the trends in the transfer of ownership of land, both in respect of number of cases and area transferred show close correlation with the political changes and land legislations in the state"[71]. T.A.Varghese(1987) who studied land market in three villages in the Travancore region of Kerala concentrated on the direction of land transactions among the different groups of land owners[72]. The study found that the participation of small land owners in the land market (especially as buyers) was less mainly due to the smaller size of their holdings. Smaller sizes of holdings restricted their sales, though sales due to indebtedness were reported by a large number of sellers. Demand for land from the small land owners was found to be affected by the lower levels of both farm and non-farm incomes particularly when significant increase in land prices was observed in all the three villages.

The impact of land reforms on the distribution of land in Kerala has been analysed by many scholars. Panikar et al(1978)

have examined the impact of land reforms and changes in the distribution of land between 1961-62 and 1971-72[73]. They pointed out that large skewness, the basic character of the distribution has remained unchanged. But the proportion of households cultivating small bits of land has significantly increased during the period. Therefore, the analysis tentatively concludes that land reforms have not altered the basic character of the distribution of land ownership, viz a pronounced skewness, although, some change is noticeable at the extreme ends of the distribution and could be attributed to legislative measures.

Krishnaji(1979) focussed on the reasons for the growth of the small farms and agricultural labourers in the agrarian scene of Kerala[74]. The distribution of land between 1961-62 and 1971-72 revealed the growth of agricultural labourers. A vast mass of pauperised peasants, not totally dispossessed of land, constitute a significant part of the labouring poor in agriculture. With the persistence of gross inequalities in the distribution of land, the proportion of households cultivating no more than an acre grew from 60 percent to 68 percent during the decade.

Raj and Michael(1987) analysed the changes in the distribution of land between 1960-61 and 1976-77. Their study presents clear evidence of reduction in land ownership, particularly at the extremities(i.e in holdings below one acre and

above 25 acres) and medium owner households strengthened their position in the course of this period[75].

Oommen(1990) has examined the impact of land reforms on the changes in agrarian relations and the causes of the emerging structure of land distribution between 1970-71 and 1986-87[76]. According to him, conferment of ownership rights to the former tenants does not mean that land has passed to a class of self-cultivating peasantry. The legislative measures did not succeed in rendering land to the tiller. The tenants were replaced by supervising peasants who directly hired labour in agricultural operations. He also pointed out that ceiling provisions have not produced any substantial impact on the pattern of distribution of holdings.

The foregoing review indicates that studies on land transfers were on diverse lines and their findings varied widely depending upon the socio-economic conditions of the regions and the periods studied. As for Kerala, there have been very few comprehensive studies,at the micro level, discussing all the factors leading to land transfers, and their consequences on peasant mobility and agrarian structure. It is hoped that the present study will fill this crucial gap.

Notes and References

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2. Marx did not undertake any detailed analyeis of land market. His priority was in conetructing a theory of ground rent because thie was where he conaidered, the real theoretical challenge lay. Marx's terminology of landed property ie not alwaye conaietent. He variouely refere to the land as a condition of production; an element within which production takes place, an inetrument or meane of production. See Marx,Karl, Theories of Surplue-Value, Part II, Progreee publiehere, Moecow,1978, pp. 43-48;245 and Marx,Karl, Capital vol.III, Progreee Publiehere, Moecow,1984, p.774.

3. Marx,Karl (1984) Capital, Vol.III Op.cit pp.614-15.

4. Marx often implied the inevitability of the proceee he waa deecribing, for example eee Marx, Karl (1984).Op.cit p 799.

5. Marx, Karl (1984). Capital Vol. III, Op. cit.p 803.

6. Ibid.pp 804-7

7. Ibid p 807.

8. Marx, Karl, Capital, Vol.I, Progreee publiehere, Moecow,1961, Che 26- 28.

9. Neither Kautaky nor Lenin claime to have developed euch laee. What we find in their worke are concrete etudiee of the proceee within the epecific hietorical contexte they were examining.

10. Chandra, Nirmal, K, " Farm Efficiency Under Semi-feudaliem; A Critique of Marginaliet Theoriee and Some Marxiet Formulatione" Economic and Political Weekly, vol.9 Special Number, Auguet,1974.

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12.Sombart.W, Socialism and the Social Movement, Translated from the 6th German Edition. J.M. Dent., London,1909,pp.75-78.

13.Kautsky,(1976) op.cit.

14.Ibid. pp. 38-39.

15.Ibid p.31

16.In the Indian context, this is precisely the thesis which has been advanced and extended by Bhaduri - namely, that it is 'forced commercialization' developed in the land market for debt settlement which has been the prime mechanism of the differentiation of the peasantry. See Bhaduri, Amit, The Economic Structure of Backward Agriculture, Macmillan, London,1983.

17.Lenins's early works on the agrarian economy are contained in Volume 1 -6 of the Collected Works. His Development of Capitalism in Russia, Progress Publishers, summarises much of this material.

18.Lenin (1977) op.cit p 175

19.Ibid.p 177.

20.Ibid.p. 75.

21.Ibid p 75.

22.Ibid p 180.

23.In Russia prior to the abolition of serfedom (in 1861) the mir(the council of elders) exercised the power of allocation and re-division of land tilled by peasant households for their subsistence. These powers were exercised by the council to keep landholdings in accord with family needs.

24.Lenin(1977) Op.cit. p. 180

25.Ibid.p 184

26.The Russian debate on differentiation of the peasantry had its roots in the exchanges between Narodinks or Populists during the later part of the nineteenth century. The Narodinks formulated, arguments in support of moderate, reformist method of resolving the agrarian question. They mystified the real

situation in the Russian countryside and idealized the old patriarchal life. On the other side, the Marxists saw the emergence of class antagonisms and consequent disintegration amongst the peasantry. Two prominent economic theorists of Russian Populism in 1880's were V P Voronstov and N Daniel son. They conceded that capitalism had commenced in Russia and at the same time argued that the nature of that capitalist development was artificial in the face of an insignificant home market and therefore no future there. Populism embraces thinking of all thoee, since the beginning of the industrialisation of the late nineteenth century, have offered an alternative of "small scale individual enterprisee". The basic assumption behind all Populist assertions was a homogenous self sufficient peasantry.

Neo-Populism is not exactly ba new version of Populism. It goes much beyond. It is not a purely anti-capitalist doctrine, but rather oppose all forms of large industrialization including socialism. The term got prominence in the context of Russia in the early twentieth century. In the specific context of Russia, Neo-Populist put forward, for the first time, the coherent economic argument that small ecale peasant production might have certain advantages over large scale capital intensive agriculture.

For further details see a) F.Venturi, Roots of Revolution: A History of the Populist and the Socialist Movements in Nineteenth Century Russia, Groseet and Dunlop,1966, pp. 147-167.(b) Gavin Kitching, Development and Underdevelopment in Historical Perspective, Methuen, New York,1982.

27.For details see foot note number 26.

28.Chaynov,A,V, Thoery of Peasant Economy, Translated by Daniel Thorner et al, for American Economic Association, Homewood, New York,1966.

29. They were given 'Dynamic' because unlike most surveys, they did not simply record the extent of inequality at a given point in time, but attempted to follow through a further survey of the same sample some years later to find out what changes had taken place in the position of each household. It also involved tracing the individual histories of peasant households and analysing them statistically as mass data. It permitted the identification of socio-economic mobility within peasant societies by comparing peasant differentiation in consecutive years.

30.Chayanov (1966) .op.cit 249

31.Ibid. p.249.

32.Ibid. p.67

33.Ibid p238.

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43.The Russian research included a variety of different types of approaches including a strong tradition of descriptive monographs on aspects of rural social conditions and ways of life. However, as far as the question of differentiation is concerned the most significant and most used forms of research were surveys and census of various kinds especially those

carried out under the auspices of the Zemstvo (local government) statistical bureau. The Zemstvo surveys were usually carried out at the local level. On the whole their distribution across the country was very uneven, so that generalisation from their results was very difficult. Nevertheless, they were to be the main source of information in the debate on the differentiation of the peasantry.

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45.Ibid. p 74.

46.Ibid. p 81.

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CHAPTER 3.

METHODOLOGY

It comes out from the studies discussed in chapter 2 that, in view of the differences in the socio-economic background of the regions, specific studies are necessary to understand the phenomenon of peasant mobility and to formulate policies suitable for each region.

As was noted in chapter 1, four villages in Thrissur district from the central part of Kerala are chosen for the present study of land transfers and their impact on peasant mobility. This chapter explains the rationale for the selection of the district,the criteria for selection of the villages, sampling techniques used for identifying the households and the analytical procedures used in the study.

Before we go into the rationale for the selection of Thrissur district for study, it will be useful to have some background knowledge of the transformation in agrarian structure taking place in the state. As is well known, the demographic pressure on land in Kerala have been much more than in the country. With a population density 2.9 times that of India as a whole, Kerala is not only the most densly populated state in India but also one of the most crowded areas of the world. The availability of land per household is the lowest among the states

in India. The general problem of land scarcity is compounded by the uneven distribution of land, though the unevenness which is much less in the state, is getting reduced over the last few decades as may be seen from table 3.1.

Table 3.1

Trends in the Percentage Distribution of the Number of Holdings and Area Operated by Major Size Group of Holdings in Kerala for 1966-67,1970-71, 1976-77, 1980-81,1986-87 and 1990-91.

Size of Holdings (Hectares)	No holdings (percentages)						Area owned (percentages)					
	1966-67	1970-71	1976-77	1980-81	1986-87	1990-91	1966-67	1970-71	1976-77	1980-81	1986-87	1990-91
0 --1.00 (1.24-2.48 Acres)	81.8	84.9	87.7	89.2	91.5	92.5	31.1	34.4	40.0	41.6	46.1	48.8
1.00-2.00 (2.48-4.96 Acres)	10.1	9.5	8.0	6.9	5.7	5.2	19.6	22.7	23.2	22.0	21.5	21.2
2.00-4.00 (4.96-9.92 Acres)	5.6	4.5	3.2	2.9	2.1	1.8	21.2	21.1	17.9	18.4	15.3	14.1
4.00+ Approx: 10 Acres and above)	2.5	1.1	1.1	1.0	1.3	0.5	28.1	21.8	18.9	18.0	17.1	15.9
All	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100

Source: Agriculture Census reports,1966-67,1970-71,1976-77,1980-81, 1986-87,1990-91, Bureau of Economics and Statistics, Thiruvananthapuram.

Despite the welcome reduction in skewness in land distribution, the not so welcome fact remains that the already low

average size of agricultural holdings declined from 0.29 hectare in 1966-67 to 0.23 hectare in 1990-91. Marginalisation is thus a distressing trend in the state. The causes and consequences of these changes in agrarian structure is of fundamental importance not only from the theoretical point of view, but also from the policy point. These changes will have wide implications for the state's economy and society.

Selection of the District

The state of Kerala was formed in 1956, by merging three political units, viz., the Princely States of Travancore and Cochin and the Malabar district of British India. Cochin state located between Travancore and Malabar was in an intermediate position with regard to the nature of land ownership and other land rights as evolved from the state policy[1]. Therefore, an area from this part of Kerala, may represent the evolving agrarian relations in Kerala better than any other part of the state. The former Cochin state at present comprises of two districts viz. Thrissur and Ernakulam. Ernakulam is more industrially advanced and Thrissur is still an agrarian economy.

Thrissur district is one of the districts in Kerala, where the agrarian transformation has taken place rapidly in recent decades. The changes in the agrarian structure of the

district(see chapter 4) and the state show more or less a similar pattern. The pattern of concentration and diffusion of land ownership before and after the eighties noted for the state of Kerala earlier is more or less similar in the district also (for details see chapter 4).

As already noted, Thrissur district extending from the Western Ghats in the east to the Arabian sea in the west is demarcated into three faunistic areas into which the land of Kerala as a whole falls i.e.,low-land region, mid-land region and high-land region. This together with author's familiarity with the region and the personal influence with the households surveyed is yet another reason for selecting the district.

Selection of Villages

The district at present consists of 5 taluks viz. Thalappilli,Thrissur,Mukundapuram, Kodungalloor and Chavakkad with 25 towns and 213 villages. With 213 villages and approximately 2.7 lakh population, the district presents a picture of varied socio-economic conditions. One has to keep in mind this diversity while making the selection of villages for investigation. As already noted, Thrissur district extending from the Western Ghats in the east to the Arabian sea in the west is demarcated into the three faunistic areas. The high lands of the eastern portion are

the thinly populated regions in the district, where land market transfers were relatively low. The sea board tract between Kodungalloor and Chavakkad taluks is the low land region in the district. The major portion of the villages are water logged and in the remaining area, ground water is not suitable for household and agricultural purposes(due to the content of salt). Therefore, it is noted that number of transfers in the land market is comparatively less in the region than in the mid-land region. The mid-land region is the most thickly populated area as a result of which agrarian transformation is expected to be higher in this region. Besides, about 80 per cent of the total area of the district is coming under this region. Therefore, we selected the villages only from this region.

Field trips and verifications of village records of transfers of land were done to select the villages, where substantial changes in the agrarian structure had taken place during the recent period. Discussions with village officials were also made. On the basis of these field trips and discussions, we decided to study four villages viz. Thekkumkara, Kolazhy, Pallipuram, and Thirumukulam from Thalappilli, Thrissur, Kodungalloor and Mukundapuram taluks respectively. We deliberately left out villages from Chavakkad Taluk because a number of studies have noted that remittances from foreign countries have made considerable impact on land market transfers

and mobility among households[2]. Therefore, to minimize the influence of this external factor on mobility among the agricultural households we purposely excluded the villages from Chavakkad taluk.

Although only one village is selected from each taluk, each represents certain physiographic conditions of the district. In Pallipuram village, 43 per cent of the total area is wet land; the major portion of this land is water logged, mainly utilized for pawn fishing. Therefore, it possess some characteristics of a low land village though it does not fall under the low-land region. The proportion of wet land in Kolazhy and Thirumukulam is higher than that of dry land. But they do not possess the characteristics of a low land region. Thekkumkara village from Thalappilli taluk, with more than 67 per cent of the total area coming under forest and public land, possess the characteristics of a high land village though it does not fall within the high-land region. The population in the village comprises mostly of migrants, from the Travancore region as also from within the district. This is yet another reason for selecting this village (so as to get the impact of migration on land transfers and mobility among the households). Thirumukulam village from Mukudapuram taluk is on the boundary of the Thrissur district in the south and the river Chalakudy, flowing through the village, separates it from the Ernakulam district. The major portion of

the village is irrigated by lift irrigation. Thirumukulam village is selected to take into account irrigation as a factor in land market transfers in the district. During the course of investigation about the villages in Thrissur taluk, we have noted that a large number of transfers were taking place in Kolazhy compared to other villages during the period 1957-90. It is a backward agrarian village with no scope for employment other than in agriculture. The major portion of the village land was owned by a single family before 1956. The land owned by this family was sold to the villagers during the period 1957-90. Kolazhy village is selected to understand the dynamics of this process and its consequences on agrarian structure and mobility.

Familiarity with the officials of the villages, panchayats, registration department and the villagers was yet another reason to select the above villages. This helped a great deal in getting the voluminous information of a historical and personal nature. We were also able to get the help from local knowledgeable persons to accompany us during the course of investigation. The investigator's association with one of the famous colleges in the district, helped a great deal in overcoming some of the suspicions and resistance of our respondents.

The total geographical area of the four villages (10815 acres) constitute 1.44 per cent of the total area of the

district(for details, see table 3.2). These villages accounted for 1.34 percent of the total population.

Table 3.2

Classification of Area in the Selected Villages,1990.
(area in acres)

Villages	Wet Land	Dry Land	Others*	Total
Thekkumkara	712 (13.58)	932 (17.77)	3601 (68.65)	5245 (100)
Kolazhy	663 (46.65)	661 (46.52)	97 (6.83)	1421 (100)
Pallipuram	668 (43.24)	558 (36.12)	319 (20.64)	1545 (100)
Thirumukulam	1528 (58.67)	883 (33.91)	193 (7.42)	2604 (100)
Total	3571 (33.02)	3034 (28.05)	4210 (38.93)	10815 (100)

Source: Records of the respective villages
Notes: * others include public land and waste.

Selection of Households and Collection of Data

Households from each village were selected in three stages. In the first stage, information on number of sales, area sold, survey numbers of area sold, names and addresses of the buyers and sellers and the details of partitioning were collected

from the Index Register [3] of sub-registrar offices of the respective villages for the years, 1967 to 1990. Though we intended to collect this information from 1957-58 onwards, we were able to collect it only from 1967-68 because some of the documents of the earlier years were misplaced and could not be traced . On the basis of the extent of area transferred for each transaction, the total number of transfers were classified into four groups as given in table 3.3.

Table 3.3

Selected Sample of Households Based on the Area Transferred.

Size of area transferred (Acres)	No. of transfers	No. of sample households
0-0.25	5983 (46.26)	151 (46.03)
0.25-0.50	3782 (29.24)	96 (29.27)
0.50-1.00	2386 (18.45)	61 (18.60)
1.00 +	782 (6.05)	20 (6.10)
	12933 (100)	328 (100)

Figures in brackets are the percentages to the total.

In order to identify the rate of participation of the households in the land market, we conducted a preliminary survey

among 130 selected households. The survey showed that 73 households(i.e 56 per cent) actually entered the land market. Thus, it was found that we could obtain more than 10 per cent of the actual participants in the land market by selecting about 5 per cent of the total number of households. The proportion of households selected from each strata was based on their proportion in the number of transfers. The households so selected numbered 328(see table 3.3).

Collection of information from a larger sample was not attempted as the participants in the land market selected at random were spread far in the villages. Due to the peculiar settlement pattern in the district, it was found difficult and time consuming to reach more households. This was more so in the case of Thekkumkara village with houses situated on hill sides. Also, distance of houses from one another was more here. The distribution of households selected from each village is given in table 3.4.

In the second stage, the above sample of households were directly visited to get data that will throw light on the nature and magnitude of land market transfers and the socio-economic factors underlying these transfers. Information regarding the extent of area sold and purchased during the period 1957-90, initial and current ownership of land, actual price

Table 3.4

Total Number of Households and Population in the Selected Villages-1960-61,1970-71, 1980-81 and 1990-91.

Villages	Number of Households					Sample of households
	1960-61	1970-71	1980-81	1990	1990-91	
Thekkumkara	1278	1592	1959	2349	2558	118
Kolazhy	590	758	953	1301	1405	66
Pallipuram	703	916	1083	1213	1318	60
Thirumukulam	1095	1250	1458	1684	1753	84
Total	3666	4516	5453	6547	7034	328

Source: Census of India, Kerala Series, 1961,1971,1981,1991.
Data of 1990 is from the Records of Panchayat Office.

received and paid, reasons for sale and sources of the funds for purchase and other related information were collected from these households. As the information on land prices reported in sale deeds is notoriously unreliable due to under-reporting for evading registration fees and stamp duty, sellers and purchasers were approached personally to cross check information obtained from public records. Sales of house sites and landed property, other than agricultural land, are excluded in compiling the figures of land price. We were able to verify 1489 transactions (i.e 595 sales and 884 purchases) to get actual prices of land over the period. Through this procedure, we prepared our own time series data on land prices in the sample villges during 1967-68 to

1989-90. In this process, we also weeded out the intra-family transfers, concealed as sales, from the data on number of sales and area sold, copied from the index registers. The actual size class and caste- wise distribution of the sample households is given in table 3.5.

Table 3.5

Size-Class and Caste-Wise Participation in the Land Market According to the Participants' Initial Possession of Land.

Size Class (Acres)	Christians	Brahmins	OHCH	OBC	SC	Muslims	Total
0-0.50	44 [37.92] (30.14)	4 [3.44] (19.05)	9 [7.78] (25.00)	18 [15.28] (31.58)	28 [24.14] (93.34)	13 [11.20] (34.21)	116 [100] (35.36)
0.50-1.25	35 [53.02] (23.97)	3 [4.55] (14.28)	7 [10.61] (19.44)	7 [16.66] (19.30)	1 [1.52] (3.33)	9 [13.64] (23.68)	66 [100] (20.12)
1.25-2.50	21 [42.85] (14.39)	4 [8.16] (19.05)	3 [6.12] (8.34)	13 [26.53] (22.81)	1 [2.05] (3.33)	7 [14.29] (18.43)	49 [100] (14.94)
2.50-5.00	32 [50.79] (21.92)	4 [6.36] (19.05)	9 [14.28] (25.00)	10 [15.87] (17.54)	--	8 [12.70] (21.05)	63 [100] (19.21)
5.00+	14 [41.18] (9.58)	6 [17.64] (25.57)	8 [23.52] (22.22)	5 [14.72] (8.77)	--	1 [2.94] (2.63)	34 [100] (10.37)
Total	146[44.51] (100)	21[6.40] (100)	36[10.98] (100)	57[17.38] (100)	30[9.15] (100)	38[11.58] (100)	328[100] (100)

Figures in brackets are the (%) to the sample households in each caste.

Figures in square brackets are the % of each caste in a class.

OHCH - Other High Caste Hindus; OBC - Other Backward Caste; SC - Scheduled Caste. There is no household belonging to the Scheduled Tribes in our Sample

In the third stage, on the basis of information given by the sample of 328 housholds, we divided the participants into growing and decaying farms depending on whether their owned land base had expanded or contracted as a result of purchase and sale of land during the period,1957 to 1990. Such a procedure was adopted to understand the intra-generational farm and family level dynamics of land market transfers and peasant mobility. These growing and decaying farms are classified according to their initial and current possession of land(See table 3.6 and 3.7).

Selection of these households was based on their relation with land. Non-cultivating participants were excluded as our focus was on growing and decaying farms. Only the heads of households, with cultivation as the primary occupation in 1957 were selected. Again, only those households that existed in 1957 as well as in 1990 as independent socio-economic units with either the mother or the father living with the other members of the household were selected. Out of the total sample of 328 households, only 103 households met the above criteria. Of this, 46 were decaying and 57 growing farm households. We selected an equal number of the households (46 each)from each category.

Table 3.6

Distribution of Growing and Decaying Farm Households of Participants According to Their Initial Holdings of Land.

Size-Class (Acres)	Christians	Brahmins	OMCH	OBC	SC	Muslims	Total
0-0.50							
Growing	32 (21.91)	4 (19.04)	3 (8.33)	12 (21.05)	15 (50.00)	9 (23.68)	75 (22.86)
Decaying	12 (8.22)	---	6 (16.67)	6 (10.53)	13 (43.33)	4 (10.33)	41 (12.50)
0.50-1.25							
Growing	13 (8.90)	1 (4.76)	1 (2.78)	6 (10.53)	1 (3.33)	5 (13.15)	27 (8.23)
Decaying	22 (15.07)	2 (9.52)	6 (16.67)	5 (8.77)	--- ---	4 (10.53)	39 (11.90)
1.25-2.50							
Growing	15 (10.27)	---	1 (2.78)	8 (14.03)	---	3 (7.89)	27 (8.23)
Decaying	6 (4.11)	4 (19.04)	2 (5.55)	5 (8.77)	1 (3.33)	4 (10.53)	22 (6.70)
2.50-5.00							
Growing	24 (16.45)	---	---	6 (10.53)	---	7 (18.42)	37 (11.28)
Decaying	8 (5.48)	4 (19.04)	9 (25.00)	4 (7.02)	---	1 (2.63)	26 (07.93)
5.00+							
Growing	3 (2.06)	---	---	4 (7.02)	---	1 (2.63)	8 (2.44)
Decaying	11 (7.53)	6 (28.58)	8 (22.22)	1 (1.75)	---	---	26 (7.93)
All Classes							
Growing	87 (59.59)	5 (23.81)	5 (13.89)	36 (63.16)	16 (53.33)	25 (65.79)	174 (53.04)
Decaying	59 (40.41)	16 (76.19)	31 (86.11)	21 (36.84)	14 (46.67)	13 (34.21)	154 (46.96)
Total	146 (100)	21 (100)	36 (100)	57 (100)	30 (100)	38 (100)	328 (100)

Figures in brackets are the (%) to the sample households in each Caste.

Table 3.7

Distribution of Growing and Decaying Farm Households According to Their Current Holdings of Land.

Size Class (Acres)	Christians	Brahmins	OHCH	OBC	SC	Muslims	Total
0-0.50							
Growing	15(2)	1	3(1)	8(1)	11(2)	3(1)	41(7)
Decaying	24(3)	4(1)	10(2)	11(3)	13(2)	9(2)	71(13)
0.50-1.25							
Growing	21(5)	3(1)	1	4(1)	4(3)	4(1)	37(11)
Decaying	14(3)	3(3)	7(3)	3(2)	1	2(1)	30(12)
1.25-2.50							
Growing	14(1)	---	---	5(1)	1(1)	9(1)	29(4)
Decaying	6(3)	2(2)	4(1)	4	---	---	18(6)
2.50-5.00							
Growing	17(7)	1(1)	1(1)	11(3)	---	5(2)	35(14)
Decaying	6(1)	4	5(2)	3(2)	---	---	18(5)
5.00+							
Growing	20(7)	---	---	8(2)	----	4(1)	32(10)
Decaying	9(7)	3(1)	5(2)	---	----	---	17(10)
All Classes							
Growing	87(22)	5(2)	5(2)	36(8)	16(6)	25(6)	174(46)
Decaying	59(17)	16(7)	31(10)	21(7)	14(2)	13(3)	154(46)
Total	146(39)	21(9)	36(12	57(15	30(8)	38(9)	328(92)

Figures in brackets is the number of households taken for detailed study.

For reconstructing mobility processes in the past, we started collecting from these households detailed family histories from their inception as independant units, with the help of structured interviews(see appendix I). We interviewed not only the heads of the households but also many other individuals within the household to supplement the information. Most often, eldest household members provided answers to our queries concerning family history of land holding, sales and purchases of land, partitioning etc. In addition to general demographic information such as the name of the household, sex and age of the family members, their occupations etc, we also collected specific information on land ownership, buying and selling of land, number of households partitioned, area partitioned etc.

To confirm some of the information regarding land transfers and ownership, we have verified the land records at the local village offices. But many times, we ended up getting confusing information. Whenever, we found the information incomplete, vague, inconsistent or inadequate, we went back again and again and helped the respondents to recollect the informtion. Here again, familiarity with the villagers helped a great deal to get accurate information.

Analytical Procedure

The main thrust of our analysis is the net gain/loss of land through the land market transfers and partitioning and the resulting intra-generational economic mobility among the various classes and castes during the period 1957-90. Intra-generational economic mobility is taken to mean the vertical mobility (upward or downward) of the household from one size class of operated area to another during the life time of the head of the households.

Our empirical analysis uses economic, social and demographic variables and their impact on the households' mobility over a period of three decades. The basic data, relate to the socio-economic and demographic position of each household at the beginning and at different intermittent points(i.e 1957, 1969, 1979, 1990) and its accumulation/alienation and partitioning, that contributed to the changes in the initial ownership of land. The households are again classified according to their current position in ownership of land. History of land transfers were then traced backward to identify their initial position and the factors that contributed to the upward or downward mobility among them. The principal variables and the indicators used are:

a) Ownership of land:- Ownership of land at the time of inception and at four subsequent points of time i.e in 1957;1969;1979;and 1990.

b) Partitioning : Average area parted per household between intermittent points of time.

c) Accumulation: Average net gain/loss through land market transfers

d) Demographic structure of the family. For understanding the differences in the demographic structure of growing and decaying farms, they were compared in terms (1) family size; (ii) stage in the family life cycle; (iii) male-female ratio (iv) average number of workers (v) average number of consumers and (vi) consumer-worker ratio. We tried to capture the stages in the family life cycle by using the age of households since their inception as a proxy. Consumer-worker ratio is defined as the ratio of standardised consumers to standardised workers in the family. In order to standardise, each household's productive labour capacity and consumer strength, we have assigned weights according to the age of the members of the household. The weights were the same as those adopted by Chaynov(see table 3.8).

Table 3.8

Consumer-worker Strength

	Consumers	Workers
Male Head	1.00	1.00
Female Head	0.80	0.80
Other members		
Age		
0 - 1	0.10	0.00
2 - 8	0.30	0.00
9 - 14	0.50	0.00
15 -19	0.70	0.70
20+	0.90	0.90

Source : A.V.Chaynov, Theory Peasant Economy, Translated by D.Thorner et al,American Economic Association,Homewood, 1966,p: 57

Empirical studies in India, often convert female labour time into three- fourths or one half of male labour time [4]. The conversion is done on an a priori assumption that female labour is less productive than male labour. Sometimes, the fact that women's wages tend to be three-fourth or one-half of men's wages is used to justify the use of these as conversion rates. Chaynov assumed that a woman's labour was equivalent to only 0.8 of the labour of a man. The rationale for the age specific weights to the members of the households is as follows: The children in Kerala in the age brackets of 6-15 are attending school and they

are not inducted into productive activities. Only when the children are in the teenage years i.e in the age bracket of 15-19, they start contributing labour. By this age, girls are assisting their mothers in cooking and often are charged with looking after younger children. Twenty is taken as the cut-off age of adult work capacity since children do not earn an adult's wage till this age.

The question of relative consumption requirements of members is in fact a complex one - related among other factors to the task being performed, the weight, the height and the age. This would require an appropriate yardstick for measuring the varying consumption requirements of the family members. Since such a meaeure is extremely difficult, we were compelled to assign weights according to the age of the members of the households.

Our method of analysis is to compare over time the change in status of peasants , across class and castes. However, farms in a given group are not identical because they face different growth paths. In particular, we try to distinguish the households which experience partitioning, accumulation or alienation and the consequent changes in their growth (or decay) over a period of three decades.

The participants in the land market are grouped into five classes namely, Marginal peasants (owning less than 0.50 acres); Poor peasants (owning between 0.50.-1.25 acres); Lower-middle peasants (owning 1.25-2.50 acres); Upper middle peasants (owning 2.50-5.00 acres) and Rich peasants (owning above 5.00 acres)[5]. The measurement of agrarian differentiation and mobility of peasant households is done on the basis of an analysis of ownership of holdings, since other indicators such as income, marketable surplus or labour exploitation are less amenable for quantitative measurement over a long period of time.

The discussion on class often tends to undermine caste's role in stratification. Therefore, both class and caste should be brought together to understand the entire process of stratification[6]. Taking into consideration the presentposition, we divided all castes into six major categories Viz., 1) The Namboodiri Brahmins, (2) Other High Caste Hindus such as the Nairs, Ambalavasis, Warriers etc., (3) Other Backward Castes such as the Ezhavas, (4) Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes (5) Christians and (6) Muslims.

Notes and References.

1. For details of agrarian relations in the former three regions of Kerala see: Varghese.T,C, Agrarian Change and Economic Consequences: Land Tenures in Kerala,1857-1960, Allied Publishers, Bombay,1970.

2. (a) Prakash, B,A, "Impact of Foreign Remittances, A Case Study of Chowghat Village in Kerala", Economic and Political Weekly,July,1978.

   (b) Ravindran,A,M, Impact of Gulf Money with Particular Reference to Chowghat, Trichur District, Kerala, Ph.D Thesis, Cochin University of Science and Technology, Cochin,1987.

3. Details of transfers (both sales and partitioning) are recorded in the 'Index Registers' in the order of date of transfer,name of buyers/sellers/partitioned households and the relationship between them, survey numbers of plots transferred etc.

4. Sanghvi(1969), in his study of farms in Karnataka State, converts women's labour time to three-fourth's of that of man, since he notes that women are paid three-fourths of what men are paid. See Sanghvi Prafulla, Surplus Manpower in Agriculture and Economic Development with Special Reference to India, Asia Publishing House, Bombay,1969.

5. For our purpose, owned area of land can be considered as a useful indicator, as a proxy for income and wealth but not as the determinant.

6. The dominance of a caste depends upon a number of factors such as the amount of land held by that particular caste in the village and the villages around, their socio-economic position, and the number of families of that caste in the village. Professor Srinivas rightly observes, "A feature of rural life in many parts of India is the existence of dominant land owning castes. For caste to be dominant, it should own a sizeable amount of the arable land that is locally available, should have strength of numbers and should occupy a high place in the local hierarchy. When a caste has all the attributes of dominance, it may be said to enjoy decisive dominance. Occasionally, there may be more than one dominant caste in a

village, and over a period of time one dominant caste may give way to another. This happened occasionally even in pre-British India and has been an important aspect of rural social change in the twentieth century". Therefore, to understand the process of change in an agrarian economy, we must also try to set it in the context of developments in its social history. For details see, Sreenivas,M,N, Social Change in Modern India, University of California Press,1976, pp.10-11.

CHAPTER 4

CHANGING AGRARIAN ECONOMY OF THRISSUR DISTRICT

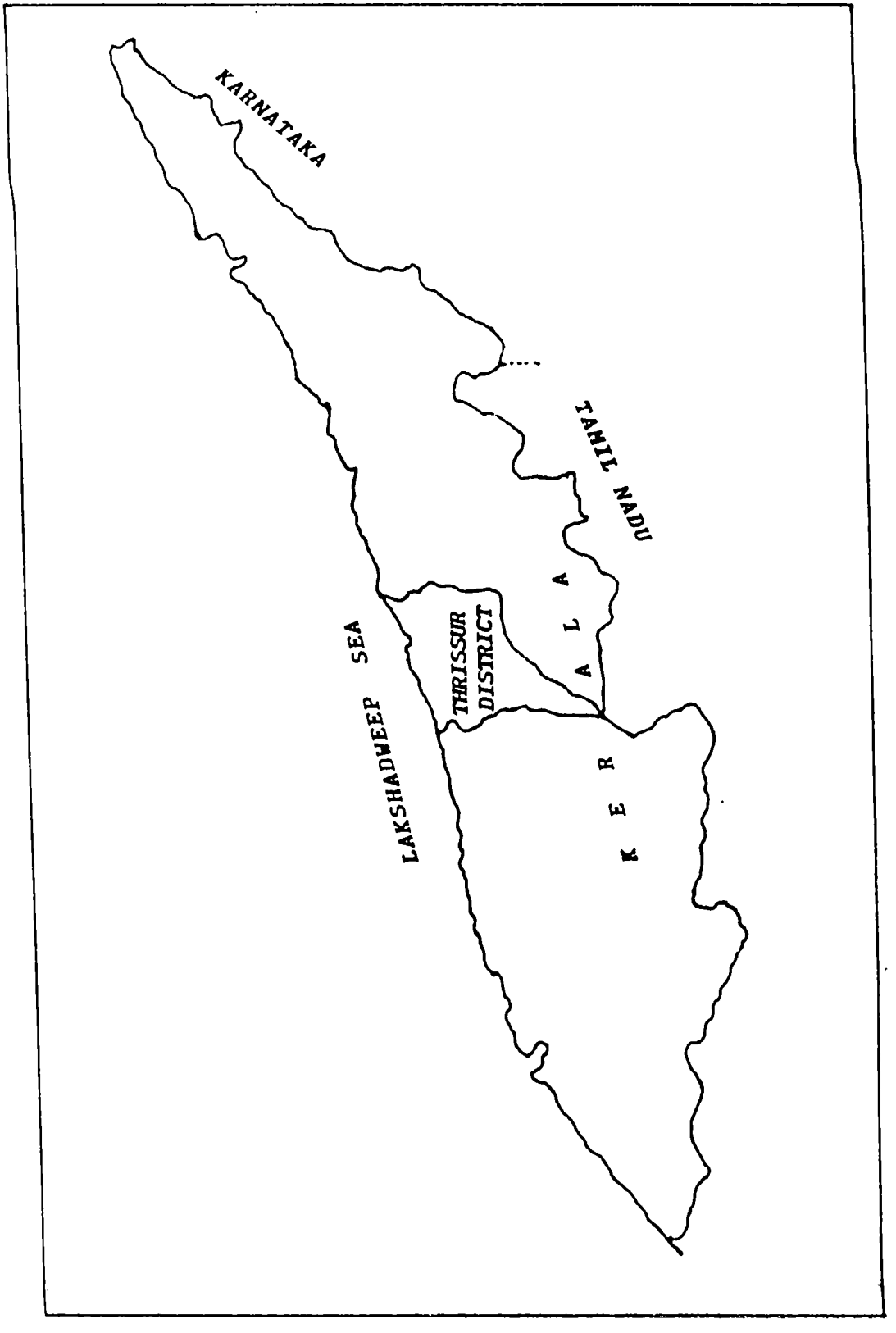
Land transfers in four villages of Thrissur district which is the major concern of our study need to be understood in the context of the agro-economic background of the district. The changes that have been taking place in the agrarian structure of the district have also to be understood in a historical perspective. Legislative measures to restructure agrarian relations initiated by successive governments have led to diffusion of land ownership and speeded up the process of land market transfers and partitioning. To place our study in the proper setting, this chapter seeks to discuss the following aspects of the district(i)agro-economic background,(ii) land tenures and the evolution of the tenurial rights in land, (iii) land reform measures and their impact on land transfers and the agrarian structure and (iv) changes in the distribution of land between 1957 and 1990.

The Agro-Economic Background of The Study Area

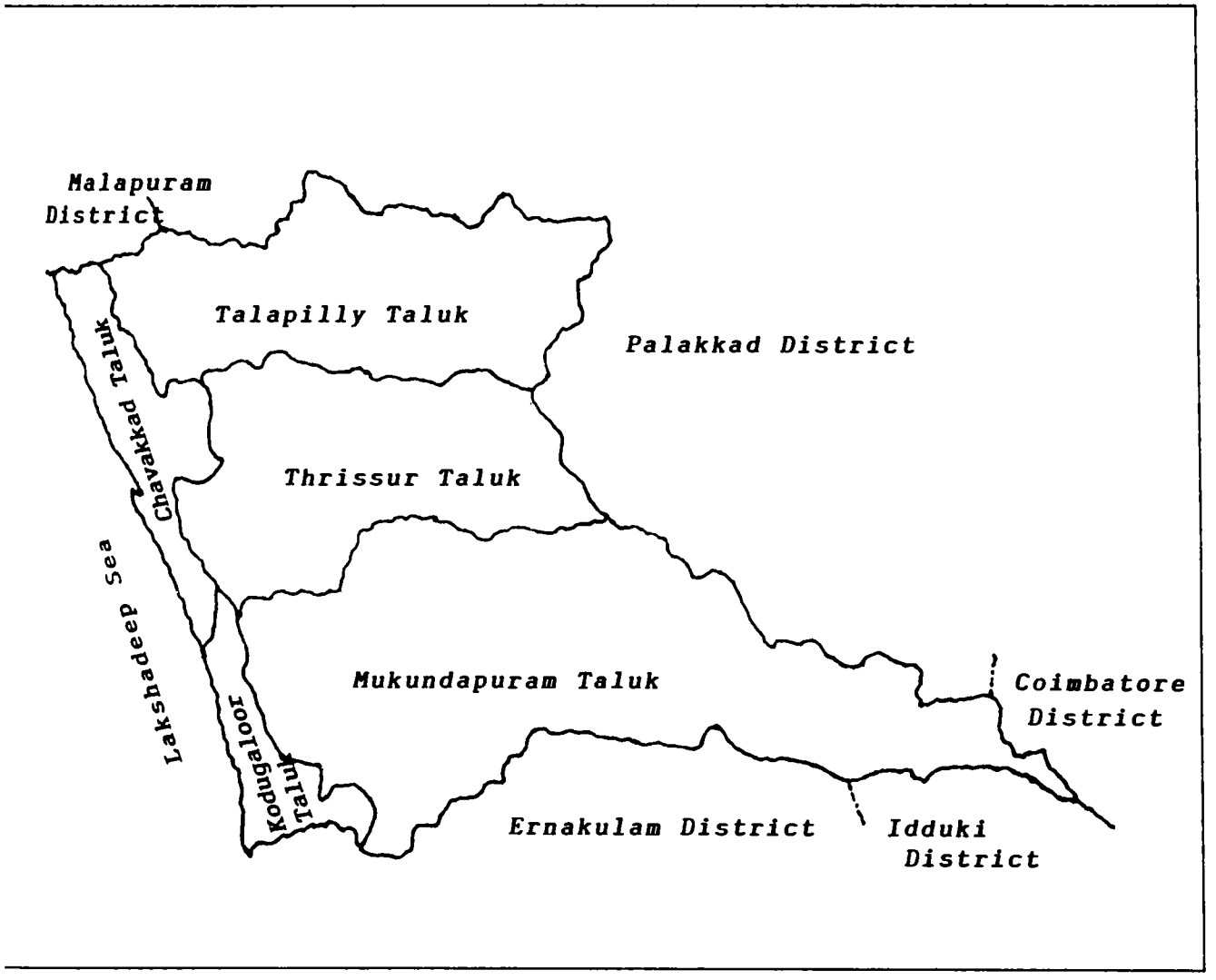
(1) Location and Boundaries.

Thrissur district is a part of the central region of Kerala. It lies between Palakkad and Malapuram Districts in the

Map Showing the Location of Thrissur District
in the State of Kerala



Map Showing Taluks in Thrissur District



north, Palakkad District and Coimbatore District (of Tamil Nadu State) in the east, Ernakulam and Idduki District in the south and the Arabian sea in the west. The total geographical area of the district is 3,032 Square kilometers, accounting for 7.9 percent of the area of the state. The district at present consists of 5 taluks-Thalappilli, Thrissur, Mukundapuram, Kodungaloor and Chavakkad. There are 25 towns and 213 villages in the district.

The present Thrissur district with the exception of Chavakkad taluk formed part of the erstwhile Cochin state. Chavakkad taluk was a part of Malabar district till 1957. From 1957 onwords, Chittur taluk which was part of Thrissur District formed part of Palakkad District.

(2) Physiographic Features

Thrissur District, extending from the Western Ghats in the east to the Arabian Sea in the west includes all three faunistic areas into which the land of Kerala as a whole is divisible viz, low land region, mid-land region and high-land region. The higher slopes of the high lands of the eastern region are under the cultivation of coffee and rubber. In the valleys, coconut, pepper, arecanut are also grown. This region is the most thinly populated region in the district. The mid-land region is the most thickly populated area. A major part of this region is under the

cultivation of crops like paddy, coconut, arecanut, plantains and other vegetables. The sea board tract between Kodungalloor and Chavakkad taluks is the low land region in the district. This area is densly covered with luxuriant coconut palms. Paddy is grown only in places where there are natural or artificial embankments.

(3) Climate and Rainfall.

Thrissur district has a tropical humid climate, with an oppressive hot season and plentiful and fairly assured seasonal rainfall. The hot season from March to May is followed by the south-west monsoon season from June to September. October and November fall during the post-monsoon or retreating monsoon season. The period from December to February is the north-east monsoon season although the rains stop by the end of December and the rest of the period is generally dry. The average annual rainfall was 3387.4 m.m in 1957-58 and 2757 m.m in 1989-90. Although the rainfall generally increases from the coast towards the Western Ghats, the Palakkad gap in the Western Ghats, which is in the north-east of the district, affects the distribution of rainfall in the district, the rainfall increasing from the north east to the south west. The south- west monsoon generally sets in during the last week of May. The rainfall in the south-west monsoon months- June to September-constitutes about 70 percent of the annual rainfall.

(4) Land Utilisation and Cropping Pattern

Of the total geographical area(299 thousand hectares), the net area sown constitutes about 52.1 percent. Among the other classes of land,about 0.76 percent of the total area is reported to be unfit for cultivation while a considerably high proportion(34.6 percent) is covered by forests(see table 4.1).

The land utilisation pattern had undergone drastic changes during the past 30 years, increasing the total cropped area from 63 percent in 1957-58 to 73 percent in 1989-90. The land utilisation pattern in the state as a whole shows similar changes over the period. In the cropping pattern of the district, food crops dominate . The food crops account for 65.4 percent of the total cropped area. Paddy alone comprise 43.5 percent of the total area. Out of the total area under non-food crops(34.6 percent); area under coconuts constitute 27.6 percent. Thus, paddy and coconut are the two major crops under cultivation. The tendency of conversion of paddy land into coconut farming recently led to a substantial decline in area under paddy and an increase in area under coconut (see table 4.2). The unprofitability of paddy cultivation as compared to that of coconut is cited as the important reason for this behaviour among the farmers [1].

Table 4.1

Land Utilisation Pattern in Thrissur District, 1957-58 and 1989-90.

(Area in Hectares)

Sl No		Thrissur district				Kerala			
		Area	Area	Percentage Distribution		Area(000 hectares)		Percentage Distribution	
		1957-58	1989-90	1957-58	1969-90	1957-58	1989-90	1957-58	1989-90
1.	Geographical area	294262	299390	100.00	100.00	3858	3885	100.00	100.00
2.	Forest	132933	103619	45.17	34.61	1018	1082	26.39	27.83
3.	Land put to non-agricultural uses	11984	22653	4.07	7.57	201	279	5.21	7.17
4.	Barren and uncultivable land	6659	2261	2.26	0.76	199	83	5.16	2.14
5.	Permanent pastures and grazing land	2775	136	0.94	0.05	48	4	1.24	0.11
6.	Land under miscellaneous tree crop	1667	1361	0.57	0.45	219	50	5.68	1.29
7.	Cultivable waste land	5458	5503	1.85	1.84	191	126	4.95	3.23
8.	Fallow other than current fallow	1392	3087	0.47	1.03	83	28	2.75	0.72
9.	Current fallow	2303	4891	0.78	1.63	60	43	1.56	1.11
10.	Net area sown	129091	155879	43.87	52.06	1839	2191	47.67	56.39
11.	Area sown more than once	58096	63102	19.74	21.08	2211	676	9.64	17.39
12.	Total cropped area	187187	218981	63.61	73.14	372	2867	57.31	73.78

Government of Kerala, Season and Crop Report of Kerala(various issues), Bureau of Economics and Statistics, Thiruvananthapuram.

Table 4.2

Area under Paddy and Coconut in Thrissur District

(Area in hectares)

Year	Paddy	Percentage* change	coconut	percentage change.
1957-58	98919	--	33092	--
1960-61	102197	+3.31	35977	+8.71
1969-70	113311	+10.87	50451	+40.23
1978-79	115787	+2.18	50690	+0.47
1985-86	95215	-7.76	60366	+19.09
1988-89	78862	-17.17	74198	+22.91

* Percentage change between two intermittent points of time.

Source: Season and Crop Report of Kerala(various issues.), Bureau of Economics and Statistics, Thiruvananthapuram .

A distinctive feature of the cropping pattern in the district as well as the state is the inter-cropping on the dry lands also known as the garden lands. Garden lands cover all the cropped area except wet lands and the area under the plantation crops. Unlike in the wet lands, where one crop, generally paddy, is grown at a time, on the garden lands a variety of perennial trees such as coconut, arecanut, mango and jack-fruit grow side by side with various seasonal crops like tapioca, plantains and other vegetables.

(5) Population and its Composition .

The total population of the district according to the census of 1991 was 27.3 lakhs and the density per square kilometer was 902. It may noted that Thrissur is more densely populated than the state as a whole (see table 4.3). This is more so with regard to both rural and urban density of population(see table 4.4). As a result, pressure on rural resources is more intense in the district. A high percentage of the population is settled in villages - nearly 74 percent, though there was an explosive growth in the urban population between 1971 and 1991.

Table 4.3

Density of Population,1961-1991.

Year	Population Density Per square km.		
	Thrissur	Kerala	India
1961	557	435	134
1971	702	549	177
1981	805	665	216
1991	902	747	256

Source: 1. Census of india (1981) Final Population Totals Series 10, Kerala.
2. Census of India (1991),Series 12, Kerala.

Table 4.4

Rural and Urban Composition of Population , 1991

District/State/ Country	Total	Rural	Urban	Density of Population		% of Urban to total Population			
				Rural	Uraban	1961	1971	1981	1991
Thrissur District	2737311	2017095	720216	739	2391	11.30	11.74	21.10	26.32
Kerala	29098518	21418224	7680294	603	2284	15.11	16.24	18.74	26.44

Source: 1) Census of India(1981) Series 10, Kerala
2) Census of India(1991) Series12, Kerala

(6) Religion and Castes

Thrissur district is truly a land of religious diversity. Hindus constitute 60 percent of the population(see table 4.5). Christians form the second largest community (25.1 percent) and Muslims the third (14.9 percent).

Table 4.5

Religion-wise Population of Thrissur District and Kerala,1981

Religion	Hindus	Christians	Muslims	Others	Total
Thrissur	1463666 (60.00)	612438 (25.10)	363218 (14.89)	221 (0.01)	2439543 (100)
Kerala	14801347 (58.25)	5233865 (19.70)	5409687 (21.97)	8781 (0.08)	25453680 (100)

Census of India (1981), Household Population By Religion of Head of Households, Series 10, Kerala.

As in other parts of India and Kerala, there is some hierarchical gradation of castes among the Hindus in Thrissur district also. It is characterized by a four-fold division into Brahmins, Non-Brahmin upper castes, the Other Backward Castes and Scheduled castes and Scheduled Tribes. Historically, they have occupied different positions in the economic structure with Brahmins as landowners, Non - Brahmin high caste Hindus especially Nairs mainly as superior tenants and soldiers and the Backward castes like the Ezhavas as ordinary tenants and agricultural labourers. These differences continue to exist, though a certain degree of levelling has taken place thanks partly to the land reform measures and the work of social reformers like Sri Narayana Guru, the spread of education and the introduction of temple entry for all castes. The growing political consciousness had also contributed to a great deal to the social revolution of our times.

Those who profess the Christian faith are divided into three broad groupings - Syrian Christians, Latin christians and Newly converted Christians. The Syrian Christians have different legends of their origin. The most frequently quoted is that they are the descendents of Namboodiri Brahmins converted by St.Thomas, the Apostle, after his arrival in Musiris(or Kodungalloor in Thrissur district) in A.D 52.

In the wake of the Portuguese contacts with Kerala, St.Francis Xavier visited Kerala in 1544 and 1549. The missionary endeavours led to the creation of the second major grouping, the Latin Christians.

The third group, the New Christians, is formed of the descendants of those converted in the missionary wave of the 19th and early 20th centuries. The missionaries were inspired and often led by European protestants, for example, the Church Missionary Society and the London Missionary Society concentrated their attentions on the lowest castes.

Though Christanity does not officially recognise castes, the three Christian groupings form part of the total segmentary caste structure of Kerala and are ranked with respect to each other as also with the Hindu castes. Most of the Syrian Christians were largely cultivators and traders. There is some evidence that in the 16th century, there were powerful Christian landlords in certain areas. Some of them controlled a good part of the pepper trade. Many of them were soldiers like the Nairs[2].

The issue of Syrian Christian's position in the caste hierarchy is not settled even among the scholars. Brown (1956) thought that Syrian Christians have generally been ranked equal to Nairs. Both could formerly carry arms; both had similar roles in

the village organization, both had similar rights in land and both observed similar pollution rules[3]. Jeffrey's evidence, however, conflicts with Brown's findings. According to Jeffrey, Nairs had definitely ranked higher in the past, although the gap had narrowed[4]. It may be that in certain areas where Syrians enjoyed a decisive local dominance, they ranked above or equal to Nairs; in most cases they may have ranked lower. As the Latin Christians and New Christians were mostly converted from lower castes, there was no such claim of superiority over other high caste Hindus.

In the Thrissur district, Muslims form the third major community. A majority of them are found in the Chavakkad and Kodungalloor taluks. Many of the Muslims are petty cultivators or traders, but a majority are boatmen, fishermen and labourers of various description.

Land Tenures

As noted earlier, most parts of the present Thrissur district were under the Cochin state, a princely state till 1948[5]. Therefore, the agrarian relations of the district is related largely to the agrarian relations that prevailed in the Cochin state.

Big landlordism known as the Jenmi system was the chief characteristic of the agrarian scene in the pre- colonial period in the region. By the end of the 18th century and at the beginning of the 19th century, well defined landed classes emerged in the region. The basic organisation of land rights was as follows; the temples and Brahmins, held large tracts of land, as a permanent hereditary right. The government also controlled 40 percent of the cultivated land. Such lands were classified as Devaswom, Brahmaswom, and Sircar lands respectively. The whole land was divided into Pandaravaka and Puravaka lands. The state had the right over the Pandaravaka lands or Sircar land, while the Puravaka lands were owned by the private individuals and temples. These lands were given to the tenants for cultivation under different kinds of tenures. The important tenures in the district were Kanom, Verumpattom and Inam[6].

Kanom

The Kanom tenure was created by the state, Devaswom and the individual Jenmies. The conferment of Kanom tenure by the state was known as Pandaravaka Kanom, which was in most cases a reward for military services. The Kanom tenures created by Jenmies were originally leases in which the landlords received a deposit of money or grain from the tenant as security or loan. Whenever a jenmi was in need of money to meet any extra-ordinary expenditure, he raised it as far as possible from his tenant as it

was more profitable. To the tenant also it was a safe and convenient investment for his money. The Kanomdar was entitled to the undisturbed enjoyment of the land for 12 years. At the end of the period, the lease may be terminated by the jenmi paying the Kanom amount and the value of the improvements undertaken by the tenants. Otherwise, the Kanom lease may be renewed and at each renewal, the Kanomdar had to pay his landlord a premium or renewal fee. The right held by tenants was heritable and transferable.

Verumpattom

Verumpattom is a simple lease created both private Jenmies and the state for one year only. According to the old custom of the erstwhile Cochin state, in the case of Verumpattom, the tenant was entitled to one-third of the net produce of the land (after deducting the cost of seed and cultivation). The Verumpattom tenants, in the absence of any stipulations, were liable to surrender their holdings whenever called upon to do so by their landlords. But the actual practice was much more liberal. The tenants were allowed to continue undisturbed possession of the property so long as they regularly paid the rent and made improvements in their holdings. By the proclamation of 1905, the Cochin government conferred full proprietary rights to the tenants in respect of Pandaravaka Verumpattom lands.

Inams

There were two kinds of Inams - personal and service Inams. The former was granted for the support of individuals or families either as reward for the services rendered or as a mark of favour. Service Inams were granted for future performance of services. As the latter was conditional on the performance of future services, they did not carry with them absolute proprietorship. In respect of most of the personal Inams, the grant carried absolute proprietorship with the rights of alienation. In the case of the rest, conditions like prohibition of alienation or resumption after the life time of the Inam-holder are seen incorporated in the grants. Inams were granted by the king and the local Jenmies and they were granted sometimes for life and sometimes in perpetuity.

The table 4.6 shows areas of land under different tenures in the Cochin State in 1945-46. The table shows that the most important tenure of the state was Puravaka Verumpattom followed by Pandaravaka Verumpattom. Kanom was not as important as Verumpattom. The tenurial structure in Thrissur district in 1953-54 also shows a pattern more or less similar to that of the state(table 4.7). The Puravaka Verumpattom accounted for 59.8 percent of the total area. Next in importance was Pandaravaka Verumpattom. The main reason for the growth of Verumpattom tenure

might be the easier terms of eviction. Under this tenure, landlords could evict the tenant on Verumpattam annually as it was a one year lease. But Kanom tenure was a 12 Year lease and therefore it was impossible for the landlord to evict the tenant before 12 Years. Moreover, if the tenant was ready to meet all obligations towards the landlord, he could not be evicted. The Jenmies preferred to lease their land on Verumpattom because the revenues from the verumpattomdars for 12 Years was larger than the Kanom amount.

Table 4.6

Area Under Different Kinds of Tenures in Cochin, 1945-46

(Area in Acres)

Tenure	Wet land	Dry land	Total
Pandaravaka Verumpattom	68457 (33.10)	130711 (43.09)	199168 (39.04)
Pandaravaka Kanom	13178 (6.38)	12641 (4.17)	25819 (5.06)
Total	81635 (39.48)	143352 (47.26)	224987 (44.10)
Puravaka	119457 (57.76)	152368 (50.23)	271825 (53.28)
Inam	5703 (2.76)	7635 (2.51)	13338 (2.62)
Grand Total	206786 (100)	303355 (100)	510141 (100)

Figures in brackets are the percentages to the total.

Source: Administrative report of Cochin for the year 1945-46.

Table 4.7

Area under Different Tenures in Thrissur District, 1953-54.

(Area in Acres)

Taluk/Tenure	Thrissur	Mukundapuram	Thalappilli	Kodugaloor	Total
Pandaravaka Verumpattom	33301 (34.14)	72568 (54.36)	25194 (21.72)	2658 (28.32)	133721 (37.52)
Purvaka Verumpattom	62354 (63.92)	58153 (43.58)	87221 (75.19)	5433 (57.89)	213161 (59.81)
Pandaravaka Kanom	389 (0.40)	565 (0.42)	2626 (2.26)	1136 (12.13)	4717 (1.32)
Inam	1504 (1.54)	2181 (1.64)	953 (0.83)	156 (1.66)	4799 (1.35)
Total	97548 (100)	133472 (100)	115994 (100)	9384 (100)	356398 (100)

Figures in brackets are the percentages to the total.
Source: Jamabandi Report of 1953-54 quoted in Sridhara Menon's District Gazetteers, Thrissur, Government Press, Thiruvananthapuram, 1962. Appendix:1 p 476.

Land Reforms in Cochin State Prior to Independence

The first systematic surveys of the land tenures and the Revenue Settlement began in 1899. The settlement was completed in 1909. With the new Revenue Settlement of 1909, the government of Cochin reduced the number of tenures that existed in the state into four, namely Pandaravaka Verumpattom, Pandaravaka Kanom, Puravaka and Inam. One of the important decisions along with the

settlement was to confer proprietory rights in land on the Pandaravaka Verumpattom and Kanom tenants[7].

In 1909, by a Devaswom Proclamation, all the tenants of the incorporated Devaswom land (covering 5 percent of the total occupied area at that time) were also given fixity of tenure[8]. But the landlord - tenant relationships in the Jenmom lands owned by independent families were then left untouched. However, in the course of the first half of the 20th century, the state implemented a series of tenancy reform meaeures. The important legislations during this period were the Cochin Tenancy Act of 1914, the Cochin Tenancy Act of 1938, the Cochin Verumpattomdars Act of 1943 and the Devaswom Verumpattom Settlement Procalamation of 1943. The significant provision of the 1914 Act was regarding the award of compensation for improvements made by tenants. It also secured fixity of tenure for the Kanom tenants. With the 1938 tenancy act, the definition of Kanom was broadened to include a few more categories of tenancy. The Cochin Verumpattomdars Act(1943) granted permanent occupancy rights to all Verumpattom tenants irrespective of the nature of their tenancy, or duration of their occupation of the land. The Devaswom Verumpattom Proclamation conferred absolute occupancy rights on all tenants, though rent rates prescribed were very high. By these Acts, all tenants legally got permanent occupancy rights. In practice, however, many landlords continued to evade these provisions.

The measures of tenancy reform combined with decline in the matrilineal joint family system (leading to the partitioning of the family property) led to the large scale land transfers. The Cochin Nair Regulation of 1920, Theeya Regulation of 1932 and Cochin Marumakkathayam Act of 1938 permitted the partition of joint family properties. These regulations thus enabled the members of the joint families to sell their shares. This, along with the rapid rise in the price of agricultural produce, made land a valuable asset, to be bought and sold. Therefore,transfers of land by way of sale and mortgage were taking place on a larger scale. Table 4.8 shows the sale and mortgage deeds in the state of Cochin during the period 1934-35 and 1935-36. During this period the number of sale deeds were more than the number of mortgages.

The patrilineal communities particulary Christians and Muslims who had become powerful groups on account of trade and commerce were able to acquire some land from the superior caste Hindu joint families that went through partition.

As a result of land reform measures, family partitions and land market transfers, there was a large increase in the percentage of owner cultivators and a decline in the proportion of tenant classes. This can be seen from Table(4.9). The table shows that between 1911-51, the proportion of cultivating land owners

Table:4.8

The Number of Registrations in Different Registry Offices of Cochin in 1934-35 and 1935-36

Sl. No.	Name of Registry offices	Document presented for registration		Mortgage Deeds		Sales Deeds	
		1934-35	1935-36	1934-35	1935-36	1934-35	1935-36
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)
1.	Mulamthuruthy	1203	1105	341	328	487	442
2.	Trippunnithura	1715	1788	424	456	510	510
3.	Ernakulam	2898	2996	742	760	734	758
4.	Cochin	2141	2317	495	532	623	657
5.	Narakkal	1220	1341	314	412	378	389
6.	Kuzhupilly	1045	1248	199	193	302	267
7.	Vellarapilli	998	1063	287	238	270	279
8.	Cranganoore	2991	3162	721	701	802	814
9.	Mala	1924	1982	508	469	641	721
10.	Vadakkumkara	1917	2050	399	340	652	680
11.	Chalakkudy	2576	2421	690	556	831	840
12.	Irinjalakuda	2599	2394	563	470	695	642
13.	Kattur.	1373	1486	301	263	498	526
14.	Kallettumkara	2076	2242	474	386	706	812
Total		26676	27595	6458	6104	8129	8337

Source : Report of the Adiministration of Cochi for the Year 1935-36, (Cochin,1937),appendix,xx.
Note: Total deeds include partitioning, gift,sale and mortgage.

increased from 10.3 percent to 19.1 percent. The proportion of tenants declined from 44.6 percent to 28.1 percent. However,there was an increase in the proportion of agricultural labourers from 36.1 percent to 48.9 percent, probably due to the high growth of population during the period. During the period from 1911 to 1951, the population registered a geometric rate of growth of 1.63 per annum.

Table 4.9.

Distribution of Population under Different Occupational Groups in 1911 and 1951 in Cochin.

Occupational groups	1911		1951		
	Population (000)	Percentage to the total	Population (000)	Percentage of this total	Percentage change 1911-51
Cultivating land owners	47.5	10.3	149.2	19.1	+214.1
Tenants	206.5	44.6	220.0	28.1	+6.5
Agricultural labourers	167.4	36.1	383.2	48.9	+128.9
Rent receivers	17.0	3.7	30.8	3.9	+81.2
Cultivators of special products	24.7	5.3	---	---	---
Total	463.1	100	783.2	100	+69.2

Source: T.C .Varghese, Agrarian Change and Economic Consequences, Land Tenures in Kerala,Allied Publishers,Bombay, p,129.

The net result of all these tenurial changes was that by 1951, Cochin region developed increasingly into a tract of peasants who either owned land or had fixity of tenures, though tenancy and absentee landlordism still dominated[9]. These peasants had the rights to transfer their ownership/tenancy rights. Land ownership was still concentrated in the hands of superior caste Jenmies and also Hindu temples. But Christians, Muslims and some of the intermediate castes such as Ezhavas, accumulated some land through land reforms and land market transfers.

Land Reforms After Independence.

A better appreciation of the land market transfers calls for a better understanding of the land reform measures introduced in Kerala, especially the Agrarian Relations Act of 1960, Land Reforms Act of 1963 and Land Reforms(Amendment) Act of 1969. These are considered to be the most progressive land reform legislations enacted in India. To assess the overall impact of land reform measures on the redistribution of land (and agrarian relations in general), we need to consider three aspects of the reform: Provision relating to hutment dwellers, tenancy and land ceilings.

For a proper appreciation of Land reform measures introduced in Kerala, one should know the dimensions of the land relations on the eve of the reforms[10]. A comprehensive sample

survey conducted by the Bureau of Economics and Statistics in 1966-67 has provided valid estimates of land held by private individuals and Jenmies under various tenurial relations (see table 4.10 and 4.11).

Table 4.10

District-wise Distribution of Agricultural Households Classified by the Type of Land Relations (1966-1967)

(Figures in percentages)

District	Total	Owner	Tenants	Kudikiddapu	Landlords
Thiruvanan-thapuram	100	88.50	2.00	8.20	1.30
Kollam	100	87.60	4.40	6.20	1.80
Alappuzha	100	56.60	14.60	26.70	2.10
Kottayam	100	50.00	34.60	14.10	1.30
Ernakulam	100	35.70	43.50	17.70	3.10
Thrissur	100	6.30	73.70	16.60	3.40
Palakkad	100	12.50	78.80	6.40	2.30
Kozhikode	100	7.20	86.70	4.00	2.10
Kannur	100	24.10	58.10	13.90	3.90
State	100	40.60	44.90	12.20	2.30

Source: Government of Kerala,: Land Reforms Survey, 1966-67: Report, Bureau of Economics and Statitics, Thiruvananthapuram, 1967.

In 1966-67, owner cultivators formed only 6.3 percent of cultivating households in Thrissur district. This was considerably lower than not only the state average but also all the other

district averages. Tenants constituted 73.7 percent of the agricultural households in Thrissur district. This percentage was considerably higher than the state average and was the third highest among the nine districts of the state. The proportion of Kudikidappukars was the third highest among the districts. Landlords accounted for 3.4 percent. Their proportion in the district was the second highest, second only to Kannur district.

The extent of influence by the different types of Jenmies in the district follows a pattern different from that of other districts. This can be seen from table 4.11.

Table 4.11

District-wise Distribution of Tenancy Lands by Types of Jenmies (1966-67
(Figures in percentages)

District	Devaswoms	Other institutions	Small holders	Others	Total
Thiruvananthapuram	0.30	0.80	29.90	69.00	100
Kollam	21.10	2.40	41.50	35.00	100
Alappuzha	23.10	0.30	34.80	41.80	100
Kottayam	30.00	0.70	5.50	63.80	100
Ernakulam	33.40	2.00	3.40	61.20	100
Thrissur	43.30	2.10	12.40	42.20	100
Palakkad	15.80	0.90	6.50	76.80	100
Kozhikode	3.00	0.10	10.40	86.50	100
Kannur	14.50	0.50	10.70	74.30	100

Sources: Government of Kerala (1968) Op.cit.p.94.

The tenancies coming under Devaswoms were the highest in the district (43.3 percent). The other Jenmies like religious, charitable and educational institutions owned only a small percentage of the area in the district. Next to Devaswom, large holders comprising of royal families, Namboodiris and Nair Cheiftains were the Jenmies of a major portion of the area held by tenants. They accounted for 42.2 percent of the tenancy area held by tenants in Thriseur district.

Kerala Land Reforms Act, 1963, (as amended in 1969 and 1972) gave to Kudikidappukars or hutment dwellers (who were essentially landless agricultural labourers living in huts on pieces of landlords' land) ownership right of their dwelling houses and a few cents of adjacent land. Lands were assigned to those Kudikidappukars who were occupying land prior to 16th August 1968, at the rate of three cents in cities and major municipalities or 10 cents in a panchayat areas. The programme of conferring ownership rights to Kudikidappukars began from January 1970. For the purchase of Kudikidapu rights by November 1990, 4.71 lakh applications had been filed in Kerala. The land tribunals had allowed nearly 2.9 lakh cases. Although, quantitatively the gains of land by the Kudikidappukars might not have been very impressive, the conferment of dejure ownership rights permitted their entry into land market and speeded up land tranefers.

A series of legislative measures in the state led to the total abolition of tenancy by 1969. An amendment to the Kerala Land Reforms Act of 1963 brought about a major restructuring of land tenure relations and laid the foundations for the emergence of a class of owner cultivatiors in the state. It abolished almost all intermediaries between the cultivators and the state, thus bringing the cultivatore into direct relation with the state.

The impact of tenancy reform has been captured by the Third Decennial World Census of Agriculutre, 1970-71(table 4.12). By June 1971, 81 percent of the total agrarian households became owners of land, in the district, whereas in 1966-67, only 6.3 percent were actual owners of land.

Another programme of land reforms sought imposition of ceilings on holdings and distribution of surplus lands. The Kerala Agrarian Relations Act, 1960 was the first Act in the state that imposed ceilings on existing holdings. The Land Reforms Act, 1963 which superseded the Agrarian Relations Act, 1960, diluted some of the provisions, raised the ceiling limit and increased the number of exemptions.

Table 4.12

District-wise Distribution of Number of Operational Holdings and Area According to Tenure (1971 June).

(Figures in percentages)

District	Number of Holdings (percentages)					% of area owned	
	Total	Wholly Owned	Partially Owned	Wholly Leased in	Total	Area Owned	Leased in
Thiruvananthapuram	100	97.60	1.80	0.60	100	98.40	1.60
Kollam	100	98.30	1.10	0.60	100	98.00	2.00
Alappuzha	100	98.10	1.10	0.80	100	97.40	2.60
Kottayam	100	99.00	0.80	0.20	100	99.30	0.70
Idukki	100	95.30	2.80	1.90	100	88.50	11.50
Ernakulam	100	95.40	2.60	2.00	100	96.00	4.00
Thrissur	100	80.90	6.60	12.50	100	78.30	21.70
Palakkad	100	61.10	11.20	27.70	100	67.10	32.90
Malapuram	100	52.50	9.60	37.90	100	58.10	41.90
Kozhikode	100	97.50	0.30	2.20	100	96.20	3.80
Kannur	100	84.60	3.20	12.20	100	88.20	11.80
State	100	88.40	3.40	8.20	100	86.80	13.20

Source: Government of Kerala,: The Third Decennial World Census of Agriculture, 1970-71; Report of the Kerala State Vol:1, 1973, P.213.

The Land reform (Amendment) Act of 1969, altered the limit and basis of ceiling once again. It was brought into force with effect from January 1, 1970. With effect from that date, no person

is entitled to own or hold or to possess lands in excess of the ceiling. In the Land Reform (Amendment) Act, of 1969, a number of exemptions that were included in the 1963 Act had been withdrawn. Exemptions are now confined to rubber, tea and coffee plantations, private forests and non-agricultural lands and land belonging to religious and educational institutions of a public nature. The ceiling provided in the Kerala Act is considerably lower than the limits fixed in other states.

In 1957, when the Agrarian Relations Act was introduced in the Assembly by Communist Ministry, it was estimated by the land reform committee that about 17.5 lakh acres would be available for redistribution. The Official Land Reforms Survey in Kerala(1966-67) revised the estimate and placed the excess land at 1.15 lakh acres (2.5 percent of the operated area). The survey noted that in anticipation of the ceiling provisions, several benami transfers of land had taken place since 1957.

This has reduced the surplus land. Coming to Thrissur district, 3632 acres forming 0.94 percent of the net sown area in 1990 was distributed among 18977 households(see table 4.13). This represented only 5.8 percent of the total area distributed in the state.

Table 4.13

District-wise Distribution of Surplus Land up to 31-11-1990.

	No.of Beneficiaries	Land distributed(acres)
Thiruvanantha-puram	5353	599
Kollam	6627	1596
Pathanamthitta	724	154
Alapuzha	7766	4346
Pathanamthitta	724	68
Kottayam	5261	2527
Idukki	4856	4450
Ernakulam	5877	1129
Thrissur	18977	3632
Palakkad	25147	12566
Malapuram	14364	7113
Kozhikode	8995	2494
Wynad	6736	3311
Kannur	12833	9351
Kasarkode	10735	9405
Total	134251	62673

Government of Kerala, Economic Review, State Planning Board, Thiruvananthapuram . Appendix 10.3, 1990, p.120.

Three findings emerge from the foregoing analysis. Firstly, there is great discrepancy between the original estimates of surplus land and the revised estimates. It is possible that the large land owners have been successfull in evading the provisions of the ceiling law. Secondly, almost all the potentially surplus land has already been declared surplus of which 70 percent have been taken into possession and 67 percent distributed. Thus, the scope for further distribution of land is limited. Thirdly, the new estimate of the total surplus land is so

small in relation to the area of all land holdings in the state that it cannot be expected to have any major impact on the diffusion of land ownership in the state.

Land Reforms and Land Transfers During the Post-independence Period.

The formation of Communist Ministry in Kerala in 1957 and the various land reform legislations undertaken by the successive governments had a positive impact on the development of the land market and land transfers. The survey conducted by the Bureau of Economics and Statitics in 1966-67 refers to this in the following words. "When the communist party came into power in Kerala in 1957, big landlords rightly apprehended that their feudal interest on land would be at stake. This fear paved the way for large scale land transfers in the state even before the Agrarian Relations Act of 1960 was adumbrated. The passing of the Agrarian Relations Act in 1960 also prompted some hectic sales and transfers around these years"[11]. Table 4.14 indicatese the magnitude of land transfers through sales,partitioning and gifts in Kerala during the period 1957-66.

The trends in land transfers during the period both in respect of number of transfers and area tranferred show close association with the political changes and land legislations in the state. The peak years were 1960 and 1963, the years when the

Agrarian Relations Act of 1960 and Kerala Land Reforms Act of 1963 were enacted. There was a decline in the number of transactions and area transferred in 1959, when the Communist Ministry was

Table 4.14

Trends in Land Transfers in Kerala 1957-66.

	Sale		Partitioning		Gift		Total	
Year	No: of cases (.000)	Area sold ('000 Acres)	No.of. cases ('000)	Area ('000 acres)	No.of cases ('000)	Area ('000 acres)	No. of cases '(000)	Area (000 acres)
1957	11.7	10.3	2.70	3.40	--	--	14.4	13.7
1958	13.9	10.7	3.80	1.00	1.4	0.7	19.1	12.4
1959	8.3	9.0	---	---	0.7	0.1	9.0	9.1
1960	24.5	19.8	22.00	31.20	--	--	46.5	51.0
1961	15.5	6.3	0.40	0.70	0.5	1.1	16.4	8.1
1962	31.1	14.6	0.80	3.20	4.4	1.5	36.3	19.3
1963	37.9	38.7	6.40	3.10	7.1	1.6	51.4	43.4
1964	26.8	10.5	23.50	16.40	14.2	2.3	64.5	29.2
1965	26.7	15.4	3.70	1.00	2.7	1.8	33.1	18.2
1966	21.0	11.1	0.60	0.30	0.3	0.0 --	21.9	11.4
Total	217.4	146.4	63.9	60.3	31.3	9.1	312.6	215.8

Figures in brackets are the percentages of the total.
Government of Kerala (1968), Land Reform Survey , Bureau of Economics and Statistics, Thiruvananthapuram , p.98.

dismissed on July 31st 1959. Again, after the hectic transfers in 1960, the year when the Agrarian Relations Act of 1960 was enacted, a sharp decline was noticed in the following year when the Act was declared ultravires of the Constitution. But the keen interest taken by the Congress Ministry in land reforms gave a fillip to the transfers. This is manifested in the rising trend of transfers during the years 1962 to 1964. In terms of number of transfers and area, land market transfers are considerably higher than transfers through partitioning and gifts. However, during the years 1960 and 1964, area transferred through partitioning was much larger than the transfers through land market. There is good reason to believe that a great number of these tranfers through partitioning were made by the landlords and the rich peasants to evade in advance in the ceiling laws proposed in the land reform measures.

Changing Agrarian Structure and Distribution of Land.

Substantial changes had taken place during the post-independence period in the distribution of land among the agrarian households. Land transfers through land reform measures, partitioning and land market acted as catalytic agents in bringing about sweeping changes in agrarian structure. The measures of land reform such as abolition of intermediaries, distribution of surplus land and assignment of Kudikiddappu rights combined with the decline of the matrilineal joint family system(leading to the

partitioning of family property) led to the diffusion of land ownership and large scale land market transfers by the new owners. The land ceiling provision of land reform measures also led to benami transfers of land by the former landlords and the rich farmers. The above aspects along with the rapid rise in the price of agricultural produce and population pressure on land made land a valuable and scarce asset to be brought and sold. Therefore, land market transfers registered considerable increase during the post-land reform period(for details see chapter 5). The changes in agrarian structure and distribution of land among the socio-economic groups are the results of the above factors. Seven agricultural census data are available for comparison over the period i.e. 1956-57, 1966-67, 1970-71,1976-77, 1980-81, 1986-87,1990-91 [12].

The earliest data of land distribution in the district (See table 4.15) for the year 1956-57[13] show a highly skewed distribution of land among the agrarian households. In 1956-57, more than 50 percent of farm households owned only 8 percent of the total land. At the other end, the ownership of land among the large farmers (owning 10 acres and above) shows that with only 5.04 percent of the total number of households, they owned 51.20 percent of the total area.

The subsequent changes in the agrarian structure and distribution of land in the district must be evaluated in the

context of the land reform measures undertaken by the state government during the period 1957-69, discussed earlier. In spite of the series of legislative measures enacted in the sixties, a number of factors slowed down its effective implementation till 1970. As was already noted, the Kerala Land Reforms (Amendment) Act of 1969, enforced from January 1,1970, changed the scope and coverage of earlier Acts and provided a firm basis for effective implementation of various land reform

Table 4.15.
Distribution of Holdings and Area According to Size in Thrissur District- 1956-57.

Size of holding (acres)	No.of HH in '000	Area in 000 acres	Average area per holding (acres)
0 - 100	129.1 (53.30)	56.4 (8.04)	0.44
1.00-2.50	57.9 (23.91)	89.7 (12.77	1.54
2.50-5.00	27.7 (11.43)	94.1 (13.41	3.40
5.00-10.00	15.3 (6.32)	102.3 (14.58	6.69
10.00+	12.2 (5.04)	359.3 (51.20	29.47
All	242.2 (100)	701.8 (100)	2.90

HH --- Households.
Figures in brackets are the percentages to total.
Source : i) Census of landholding and Cultivation, Travancore, Cochin,Part I, Government of Kerala Department of Statistics, Thiruvananthapuram, 1957.

measures. The effects of these measures are reflected in the five rounds of Agricultural Census that have been carried out in the district(1970-71, 1976-77, 1980-81, 1986-87,1990-91). The land distribution given by the Land Reform Survey in 1966-67, an year before the land reform measures were implemented and the subsequent censuses serve to analyse the more recent trends in the distribution of operational holdings. This is given in table 4.16.

Table 4.16

Distribution of Holdings and Area in Thrissur District,1966-67, 1970- 71,1976-77, 1980-81,1986-87,1990-91.

Size of Holdings (Hectares)	No holdings (in 000)						Area owned (000 Hectares)					
	1966-67	1970-71	1976-77	1980-81	1986-87	1990-91	1966-67	1970-71	1976-77	1980-81	1986-87	1990-91
0-0.50 (0-1.24 Acres)	139.1 (75.44)	243.6 (79.34)	279.1 (89.74)	325.0 (82.22)	386.4 (85.16)	443.3 (87.03)	33.5 (19.74)	29.1 (24.41)	59.7 (50.51)	38.8 (32.41)	42.2 (36.10)	47.4 (39.50)
0.50-1.00 (1.24-2.48 Acres)		31.2 (10.15)		41.4 (10.47)	41.1 (9.07)	41.5 (8.15)		21.8 (18.26)		29.3 (24.43)	28.4 (24.29)	29.3 (24.42)
1.00-2.00 (2.48-4.96 Acres)	22.0 (11.93)	21.7 (7.06)	23.7 (7.62)	21.9 (5.54)	20.2 (4.45)	18.9 (3.71)	31.7 (18.68)	29.4 (24.64)	32.9 (27.83)	30.1 (25.09)	26.8 (22.93)	25.5 (21.25)
2.00-4.00 (4.96-9.92 Acres)	15.3 (8.29)	8.7 (2.84)	6.9 (2.22)	6.1 (1.54)	5.2 (1.14)	4.9 (0.96)	41.4 (24.40)	23.5 (19.73)	18.4 (15.57)	16.1 (13.44)	13.4 (13.44)	12.6 (10.50)
4.00+ Approx: 10 Acres and above)	8.0 (4.34)	1.9 (0.61)	1.3 (0.42)	0.90 (0.23)	0.80 (0.18)	0.8 (0.15)	63.1 (37.18)	15.5 (12.96)	7.2 (6.09)	5.5 (4.63)	6.1 (5.22)	5.2 (4.33)
All	184.4 (100)	307.1 (100)	311.0 (100)	395.3 (100)	453.7 (100)	509.4 (100)	169.7 (100)	119.3 (100)	118.2 (100)	119.8 (100)	116.9 (100)	120.0 (100)

Figures in brackets are the percentages.

Source : 1)Agricultural Census,1970-71, 1976-77, 1980-81, 1985-86,1990-91, Government of Kerala, Bureau of Economics and Statistics, Thiruvananthapuram.

2)Land Reform Survey of Kerala, Goverment of Kerala,1968.

The distribution of holdings indicates an increasing concentration in the holdings group of less than one hectare (approximately less than 2.50 acres). The share of this group in the total number of households shot up from 75 percent in 1966-67, a pre-land reform year to 89 percent in 1970-71 and 90 percent in 1976-77, the years when land reforms became reasonably effective. Their share in land shot up from 19.7 percent in 1966-67 to 50.5 percent in 1976-77. This sudden spurt may be the result of the conferment of ownership to hutment dwellers. The distribution of surplus land, being a slow process, must not have made its impact fully by 1976-77.

A further division of these holdings into two categories, those below 0.5 hectare and those between 0.5 hectare and one hectare is not possible for this period in the absence of break-up of the data for the years 1966-67 and 1976-77. Data for 1970-71, 1980-81 and 1990-91, shows that increase in the number of holdings took place in the former category. The share of holdings below 0.5 hectare which was 79.3 percent in 1970-71 increased to 82.2 percent in 1980-81, 85.1 percent in 1986-87 and 87 percent in 1990-91. Their area increased from 24.4 percent in 1970-71 to 32.4 percent in 1980-81, 36.1 percent in 1986-87 and 39.5 percent in 1990-91. During 1970-71, the share of holdings in the size category of 0.5 to 1 hectare was 10.1 percent. It increased marginally to 10.4 percent in 1980-81 but declined to 9.1 and 8.2

percent in 1986-87 and 1990-91 respectively. In spite of the slight fall in the percentage share of holdings in this category, their share in operated area increased from 18.3 percent to 24.4 percent between 1970-71 and 1990-91. The share of holdings in the size category of 1.00-2.00 hectare, declined from 11.9 percent to 7.6 percent between 1966-67 and 1976-77. It further declined to 5.5 percent in 1980-81 and to 3.7 percent in 1990-91. The percentage of area operated by this class increased from 18.7 percent to 27.8 percent between 1966-67 and 1976-77. However,the share of area operated declined from 25.1 percent to 21.2 percent during the subsequent periods. The share of holdings and area operated belonging to 2.00-4.00 hectare and 4 hectare and above categories declined substantially during the period. However, the percentage of area operated by large farmers owning 4 hectare and above increased from 4.6 percent in 1980-81 to 5.2 percent in 1986-87. This trend,however, was reversed in the period between 1986-87 to 1990-91.

Average Size of Holdings.

The changes in agrarian structure become clearer from the changes in the average size of holdings given in table 4.17.

Table 4.17

Average Size of Holding in Thrissur District - 1966-67,1970-71, 1976-77, 1981,1986-87,1990-91.

Size of holding. (Hectares)	Average Size (hectares)					
	1966-67	1970-71	1976-77	1980-81	1986-87	1990-91
0 - 0.50	-- 0.24	0.12	-- 0.21	0.12	0.11	0.11
0.50 - 1.00	--	0.70	--	0.71	0.69	0.71
1.00 - 2.00	1.44	1.36	1.39	1.37	1.33	1.35
2.00 - 4.00	2.71	2.70	2.67	2.65	2.58	2.56
4.00+	7.89	8.22	5.54	6.54	7.17	6.88
All	0.92	0.39	0.38	0.30	0.26	0.24

Source: Table 4.16

The average size of holdings declined from 0.92 hectares to 0.24 hectares between 1966-67 and 1990-91. This decline is noted in all size groups during the first decade(1966-67 to 1976-77). During the second decade(1976-77 to 1986-87) there was sizeable increase in the average size of the holdings in size class, 4 hectares and above. However, during the period 1986-87 to 1990-91, average area owned by them declined marginally. Paradoxically, there was such an increase in the average size of holdings of this group from 1966-67, a pre-land reform period to 1970-71,the post-reform year. This might be due to the taking

over the possession of land from the sharecroppers and lessees,after giving compensation to them. The sharp decline in the average size of large farmers between 1970 and 1977 might be the delayed result of land reform measures. The steady increase in the size of holdings between 1976-77 and 1986-87 can be attributed to accumulation of land by this class through the land market.

This process of agrarian change, however, has not led to a high proportion of landless households in the state and the different districts (except Idukki) [14]. This can be seen from the district-wise distribution of landless housesholds given in table 4.18.

Of the total households numbering 3.9 lakhs in Thrissur district, only 5.1 percent did not have any land in 1980. This may possibly be the effect of land-reforms whereby many of the landless labourers obtained land ownership, although their land holdings might only be their small dwelling plot. Whatever be the size of holding, this has arrested the process of depeasantization. This,however, has not lead to a reduction in the proportion of agricultural labourers in the total work force. In fact, this proportion increased from 15 percent in 1961 to 33 percent in 1971. After a decline to 26 percent in 1981, it increased to 32 percent in 1991(see table 4.19).

Table 4.18

District-wise Distribution of Households and Landless Households in 1980.

District	No. of HH (in lakhs)	Landless HH	Landless HH as % to total number of HH
Thiruvanan-thapuram	4.45	43264	9.73
Kollam	4.80	26738	5.58
Alappuzha	4.05	12609	3.11
Kottayam	2.74	17880	6.52
Idukky	1.68	39454	23.52
Ernakulam	4.01	26418	6.58
Thrissur	3.93	19993	5.08
Palakkad	3.40	22587	6.64
Malapuram	3.40	12435	3.65
Kozhikode	3.90	28530	7.32
Kannur	4.30	22578	5.26
State	40.66	272486	6.70

HH - Households.

Source: Government of Kerala, Housing and Employment Survey, Bureau of Economic and Statistics, Thiruvananthapuram, 1 1985 pp. 8-9.

Table 4.19

Percentage Distribution of Working Population, Thrissur District: 1961-1991.

District State	Cultivators				Agricultural labours				Workers others than cultivators and agricultural labours			
	1961	1971	1981	1991	1961	1971	1981	1991	1961	1971	1981	1991
Thrissur district	16.58	13.64	9.35	8.84	15.11	32.84	25.65	31.85	68.31	53.52	65.00	56.94
Kerala	20.92	17.80	13.07	11.21	17.38	30.69	28.23	29.66	61.70	51.50	58.70	61.50

Source: Census of India,. of Final Totals of Workers and Non-workers: 1971,1981, 1991.
Figures of 1991 are provisional.

A change in the definition of workers in 1971 might probably have led to an exaggeration of the increase of labourers between 1961 and 1971. For the same reason, the slight drop in the percentage of agricultural labourers shown in 1981 may also not indicate a real decline as this also can be due to the statistical correction to the over registration in the previous census[15]. The influx of surplus members from the small farmers' households may be the reason for the increase in the number and proportion of agricultural labourers in the work force between 1981 and 1991.

It is clear from the above analysis that agrarian order has not remained static in the district. Truly radical changes in property relations have taken place. The fact that 95 percent of the farmers are small owners with less than one hectare is a

significant feature of the district's agrarian structure. They had more than 60 percent of the total cultivated area at their disposal. Does it imply no proletarianization? This was the question posed by Vyas, several years ago, at the all India level[16]. Vyas' general conclusion was that the class of small farmers was undergoing a process of impoverishment but not proletarianization. Vyas identified the operation of a ladder process in the structural changes in landholding pattern. The upward movement has taken place by landless workers acquiring land and becoming marginal land owners. Small owners, by the same process are becoming medium land owners. The process can come in the reverse direction by the sale of land by the higher size groups to the lower size groups and downward movement of the higher size groups to the lower size groups due to the partitioning of households. Thus, in states where there has been a decline in the bottom concentration, the number of landless households showed a declining trend. This suggests that the landless have been acquiring tiny plots of land. The possible explanations cited for the decline in bottom concentration of the households are (1)purchase of land by marginal and small farmers and sale of land mainly by large and medium farmers, (2) impact of land reforms and (3) demographic pressure necessitating the division of holdings.

Our analysis of the changes in agrarian structure of Thrissur district during the last three decades shows an increase in the bottom concentration and decline in the middle and top. The increase in the bottom concentration can be attributed to the decline in the number of landless households largely as a result of the land reform measures such as the assignment of Kuddikidappu rights and distribtion of surplus land and partly as a result of purchase of small plots of land by them. On the other hand, the downward movement of the other classes can also contribute to the increase in bottom concentration of land. It would be wrong to say that land legislation did not have impact on the agrarian structure. It did. Although not detached from this legislative measures, land transfers in the form of partitioning among the members of the households and market transfers have also exerted tremendous pressure on the rural agrarian structure. The impact of land market transfers and partitioning on the agrarian structure will be examined in the subsequent chapters.

Notes and References

1. For details see Jeemol Unni, An Analysis of Change in the Cropping pattern in Kerala With particular reference to Substitution of coconut for Rice, 1960-61 to 1978-79, M.Phil Thesis, Centre for Development Studies, Trivandrum, 1981.

2. For details, see Ayar, L.K.A, Anthropology of the Syrian Christians, Cochin Government Press, Ernakulam,1926, pp 2-13.

   Brown, L.W, The Indian Christians of St.Thomas, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1956, p 43

3. Ibid pp 66-69.

4. Jeffrey, Robin, Decline of Nair Dominance: Society and politics in Travancore, 1847-1908, Vikas Publishing House, New Delhi, 1976.

5. Malabar came directly under the British rule. In the case of Travancore and Cochin, the treaties with the East India Company in 1805 and 1793 respectively, gave the Governor General powers to interfere in the internal affairs of these two states.

6. For details of land tenures in the Cochin state see:

   a) Achuthamenon,C, Cochin State Manual, Government press, Ernakulam,1911.

   b) Elamkulam Kujanpillai, Studies in Kerala History, National Book Stall Kottayam, 1970.

   c) Sreedhara Menon,A, Kerala District Gazeteers, Thrissur, Government press, Thiruvananthapuram ,1962.

   d) K.G. Sivaswamy, Famine, Rationing, and Food Policy in Cochin, Government press,Cochin,1946.

   e) William Logan, Malabar, Asian Educational Services, New Delhi,1984.

   f) Census of India,1961, Kerala series, District Census Hand Book, Thrissur.

7. Varghese T.C.(1970) Op.cit. P 95.

8. The Incorporated Devaswoms are the templee which were taken over by the state between 1810 and 1817 during Munro's Dewanship. See Padmanabha Menon's,Cochin Raja Charitham,Cochin Government press, 1912, pp 199-123.

9. Numerous books and papers on land reforms and agrarian change in Kerala during the past two centuries have been published. For example:-

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   b) Oommen, M,A A Study of Land Reforms in Kerala, Oxford and IBH, New Delhi, 1975.

   c) Raj, K,N and Tharakan,Michael. "Agrarian Reform in Kerala and Its impact on the Rural Economy:A Preliminary Assesment" in Ajith Kumar Ghose(ed) Agrarian Reform in contemporary Developing Countries, Croom Helm, London, 1983.

   d) Prakash, B,A,. "Evolution of Land Tenures in Kerala", in P.P.Pillai(ed) Agricultural Development in Kerala, Agricole, New Delhi, 1982.

   e) Prakash,B,A, "Agricultural Backwardness of Malabar during the Colonial Period:An Analysis of Economic Causes",Social Scientist, September, 1989.

   f) Radhakrishnan,P, Peasant Struggles, Land Reforms and Social Change, Malabar, 1836-1982, Sage Publications, New Delhi. 1989.

   g) A systamatic account of the traditional land rights has been given by Elamkulam, Kunjan Pillai, Studies in Kerala History, National Book Stall, Kottayam, 1970.

   h) An account of the development of the land rights during the medieval period can be seen in Ganesh,K,N, "Ownership and Control of land in medieval Kerala: Janmom-Kanom relations during the 16th-18th centuries". The indian Economic and Social History Review, March, 1991.

10. See for detail: Raj,K,N and Tharakan, Michael(1983) Op.cit. Oommen,M,A, "Land Reforms and Agrarian Change in Kerala since Independence", in Oommen,M,A(ed) Kerala Economy Since Independence, Oxford and IBH, New Delhi, 1979.
Oommen,M,A, "Land Reforms and Economic Change: Experience and Lessons from Kerala", Science and People, Vol.I(2), March, 1990.

11. Government of Kerala(1968) Land Reform Survey, Bureau of Economics and Statistics, Thiruvananthapuram ,p 105

12. Available data relating to the distribution of land at different points of time are not strictly comparable due to differences in the concepts used and the coverage. For a survey of the nature of the data collected through sample surveys in Kerala See: Centre for Development Studies, Poverty, Unemployment and Development policy: A case study of selected Issues with Reference to Kerala, United Nations, New York, 1975.

13. The Census figures of 1956-57 are not strictly comparable with subsequent census figures due to the re-organisation of the district in 1957 and 1958.

14. Housing and Employment Survey(1980) noted that the tribals and number of plantation labourers including migrants from other states might be landless.That may perhaps explain higher proportion of agricultural labourers in this district. It was also noted that this feature is confined mainly to Devikulam and Peerumade Taluks of the Idukki district. See Government of Kerala (1985),Housing and Employment Survey, Bureau of Economics and Statistics,Thiruvananthapuram ,1985.

15. The main criticism about the economic question in the 1971 census was that the contribution of female workers to economic activity had been ignored. In the 1971 census the concept of main activity and secondary work was adopted. All persons were divided into two main streams of workers and non-workers on the basis of their main activity. The bifurcation into two broad streams of workers and non-workers under main activity ignores the contribution of what may be called marginal workers. The economic questions for 1981 census were framed with some changes from 1971 so as to overcome the lacunae and at the same time maintain adequate comparability with the 1971 data.

16.Vyas, V,S, "Some Aspects of Structural Change in Indian Agriculture", Indian Journal of Agricultural Economics, Vol,39,No:1, 1979.

CHAPTER 5

TRENDS IN LAND MARKET TRANSFERS.

We have noted in the last chapter the substantial changes in the agrarian structure of Thrissur district, as a result of land transfers induced by both market and non-market factors. We had also seen how the pre-conditions for an active land market were set by social factors like the break-up of joint families and institutional factors like land reforms. In this chapter, we propose to discuss the trends in land market transfers in the four selected villages of Thrissur district during the period,1967-90. The underlying economic factors behind these trends are also examined.

Trends in Land Sales and Land Prices in Four Villages of Thrissur District

As already noted in the last chapter, data on trends in land transfers are not available separately for Thrissur district in the Land Reform Survey for the period 1956-57 to 1966-67. It was not available for subsequent periods also. It was to fill this gap, at least partly, we conducted a study of land market transactions in our study area. Our original intention was to cover the period, 1956-90 so that some comparison with the state

could be done. But unfortunately, some of the documents that recorded the land transaction prior to 1966-67 could not be located in the registry offices. Therefore, the analysis had to be restricted to the period, 1967-90. A comparison of the land market trends in our villages with those in Thrissur district and in the state is not possible in the absence of data.

It may be mentioned here that our data pertains only to sales and not to mortgages and gifts. The gifts of land either to the members of the household or relatives are very few as seen from table 4.14 in chapter 4. We have excluded mortgages as we found during the course of our examination of the records of registry offices that in an overwhelming majority of cases, land was mortgaged only to institutions, like commercial banks, co-operative banks, etc., as a collateral for securing loans for farm operations or land improvement. This is unlike in the pre-land reform period when there was a variety of mortgages conferring a variety of rights to mortgagees who were then mostly individuals.

Time series data on land sales and land prices collected through our survey from four villages of the Thrissur district are given in table 5.1. The table gives data relating to the i) number of sales; ii) area sold iii) actual and registered land price per acre and iv) average area per sale. The number of sales, area sold and registered price were collected from the sub-registry offices. The actual land price was collected on 1489

Table 5.1

Trends in Land Sales and Land Prices.

Year	No: of Sales	Area sold (acres)	Average area per sale	Land Price (Rs.per acre) Actual	Registred
1967	366	152	0.42	5752	1720
1968	377	172	0.46	6618	2616
1969	373	154	0.41	6699	2629
1970	388	201	0.52	8423	3288
1971	299	128	0.43	9597	2649
1972	402	160	0.40	11314	2728
1973	459	225	0.49	12895	2925
1974	539	271	0.50	15625	3354
1975	557	254	0.40	20108	4469
1976	488	202	0.41	26315	6682
1977	379	162	0.43	33205	8048
1978	499	197	0.39	40111	8777
1979	640	275	0.43	52656	9806
1980	690	287	0.42	66231	10217
1981	639	247	0.39	76910	15378
1982	695	259	0.37	93055	16788
1983	666	269	0.40	105733	16969
1984	698	249	0.36	116910	20399
1985	657	218	0.33	128323	19940
1986	577	187	0.32	134503	22131
1987	554	158	0.29	138629	25306
1988	580	209	0.36	139843	32175
1989	708	197	0.28	141519	35754
1990	703	207	0.29	142970	35217
Total	12933	5040	0.39		

Sources [1]: Land sales and Registered price - Records of the Sub-Registrar office.
[2] Actual Land price -Our survey.

tranefere(elightly more than 10 percent of the total tranfere) through direct personal contacts.

The information given in table(5.1) reveals that, during the period, 1967-90, 5040 acres of land were sold through 12933 sales. The average area per sale during the period was only 0.39 acres. The general trend in land prices shows a continuous rise from 1967-68 to 1989-90. The major part of this increase in prices occurred between 1974-75 and 1982-83. In the four villages under study, 76.3 percent of the total occupied land was transacted in the market during the course of 24 years (1966-67 to 1989-90) indicating a vibrant land market. Thus our findings contradict the views of Vyas(1976), Sau(1981) and Dutt(1984) (noted in chapter 2) that land market is frozen in a typical third world country, like India[1]. Bliss and Stern(1982) found that land sales are unusual events though they admitted that they have very important effect on the time series movements of land ownership[2]. But in our study area, they are not unusual events.

The trends in land sales and land prices were probed by fitting linear trend equations[3] . The estimated trend equations are presented in table 5.2.

The estimated trend values show that coefficients of time variables are positive (except for the average area per sale) and highly significant in the case of number of transactions, area sold and land prices. This suggests that number of land sales and

Table 5.2

Estimated values of Trends in Land Sales & Land Prices (1966-67 to 1989-90)

Equ No.	Dependent Variable	Constant (a)	Coefficient of X (b)	t-Value	Signi-ficance	R^2	F Value
1	No.of Sales	345.83	15.43	6.90	*	0.68	47.69
2	Area Sold	184.46	2.04	1.56	***	0.10	2.44
3	Average area per sale	0.49	-0.01	6.49	*	0.67	42.12
4	Land price(actual)	28244.22	7372.71	22.97	*	0.96	528.82
5	Registered Price	- 5399.97	1465.21	26.67	*	0.97	711.63

* Significant at 1% level
*** Significant at 10% level
NS Not significant

Form of estimated equation, Y = a + bx
Where, Y - Number of sales, area sold or land prices;
X - years (1,2...24)

land prices(actual and registered) were showing a significant upward trend during the period 1967-'90.

The square of the co-efficient of the time series R^2 enable us to state the relative degree of variation in land sales and land prices. The R^2 value suggests that estimated trend equations describe the trend quite well except in the cases of area sold. The low value of R^2 in the case of area sold is partly due to the pronounced year to year fluctuations in area sold and partly due to the decline in the area sold after 1986.

Growth Rate in Land Sales and Land Prices

Compound growth rate of land sales and land pricee are presented in table 5.3.

Table 5.3

Growth Rate in Land Sales and Land Prices(1966-67 to 1989-90)

Equa. No.	Dependent Variable Log Y	Coefficient of X (b)	t-Value	Signifi-cance	R^2	F Value	Growth rate (g) b x 100
1	No .of Sales	.0311	6.89	*	0.68	47.56	3.11
2	Area Sold	.0134	1.78	**	0.12	3.17	1.34
3	Average area per sale	-.0198	6.67	*	0.67	44.53	-1.98
4	Land price(actual)	.1769	23.29	*	0.96	542.39	17.69
5	Registered price	.1465	26.67	*	0.97	711.33	14.65

* Significant at 1% level
** Significant at 5% level
***Significant at 10% level

Form of estimated equation, $Y = ab^x = a(1+g)^x$
Y = No.of sales,area sold, land prices etc
x = Years(1,2,3..... 24)

This table reveals that number of sales increased by 3.1 percent while the total area sold rose at the annual rate of 1.3 percent. Consequently, the average area per sale declined by 2.0 percent per annum. Actual and registered land price per acre rose at the rate of 17.7 and 14.7 percent respectively. The reason for

the more rapid growth of land value might be explained probably by the growing population and the increased demand for housing plots. The uptrend in land prices if continued, may indicate that the demand in the land market will be increasingly dominated by households purchasing land mainly for housing or for ensuring continued employment to household labour. If this process continues commercially oriented from households may gradually lose interest in land as an investment.

Trends in Land Sales and Land prices - Wet and Dry Land

Trends in land sales, land prices and prices of principal crops cultivated in the dry and wet lands are analysed separately for the period, 1966-67 to 1989-90(Tables 5.4 and 5.5). Wet lands are low-lying lands, particularly in the valleys where there is abundance of water in the soil throughout the year. Dry lands are found on the slopes and hill tops where water is not so abundant particularly during summer months. Rice is the main crop grown in the wet lands, whereas coconut is the predominant crop in dry land. The area under these two crops constitute 65 percent of the total cultivated area in Thrissur district. Since paddy and coconut are the two major crops in the wet and dry land, the movement of prices of these two crops, may affect the demand for land and hence on the land prices. The trends in land sales, land prices and commodity prices(coconut) of dry land are given in table 5.4.

Table 5.4.

Trends in Land Sales and Land Prices - Dry Land 1966-67-1989-90

Year	No: of Sales	Area sold (acres)	Average area per Sale	Price per acre(Rs.)		Coconut price (100 nos)	Coconut	
				Actual	Registered		Output per hectare	Value of output per hectare
1967	172	40	0.23	8260	2279	39.61	6234	2469
1968	166	45	0.27	8587	3645	48.43	6319	3060
1969	188	47	0.25	9232	3909	41.27	6317	2607
1970	169	50	0.30	11431	4701	52.19	6323	3300
1971	149	49	0.33	13175	3487	58.66	6325	3710
1972	228	73	0.32	15482	3444	40.94	6327	2590
1973	278	115	0.41	17653	3872	53.85	6084	3276
1974	280	131	0.47	22020	4620	91.78	5639	5175
1975	266	92	0.36	29403	6603	88.47	5896	5216
1976	273	96	0.35	40089	9381	70.08	5968	4182
1977	221	70	0.32	52404	11867	94.18	6835	6437
1978	284	98	0.35	63671	13359	107.28	6265	6721
1979	359	144	0.40	85708	14141	108.67	6569	7139
1980	421	151	0.36	110025	14051	122.18	6088	7438
1981	341	103	0.30	129165	23066	154.60	6422	9928
1982	317	90	0.28	159243	25474	126.53	6648	8412
1983	371	105	0.28	180405	25946	158.57	6194	9822
1984	416	115	0.28	200603	31774	257.52	6262	16126
1985	465	125	0.27	222255	30983	272.48	4752	12948
1986	372	98	0.26	233636	33974	161.88	6112	9894
1987	350	73	0.21	240295	39526	255.38	5250	13407
1988	378	116	0.31	241781	52027	282.33	4930	13919
1989	360	117	0.25	243757	58035	270.16	5359	14478
1990	451	120	0.27	245513	57168	212.53	5348	11366
Tota	7375	2263	0.31					

Sources [1]: Land sales and Registered price - Records of the Sub Registrar office.
[2] Actual Land price -Our survey.
[2]: Coconut price - Season and Crop report of Kerala (Various issues).

The table reveals that the number of transactions, area sold, average area per sale and coconut prices show ups and downs In contrast, land prices move only upwards. Land prices per acre shows a continuous increase from Rs. 8260 in 1967 to Rs.2.46 lakhs during 1990.

The trends in land sales and land prices of wet land are given in table 5.5. The table shows that the number of transactions, land prices, paddy prices and agricultural wage rates registered an increasing trend over the period. Area sold and average area per sale showed declining trend. This declining trend in area sold and area per sale largely occurred during the 1985-90 period. It may possibly be due to greater increase in wage rate of agricultural labourers and declining trend of paddy prices during the period.

The nature and magnitude of the market trends in wet and dry lands can be captured from the trend values presented in table 5.6.

Estimated trend values of dry land (table 5.6) show that coefficients of time variables of land sales, land prices and commodity prices (coconut) are positive and significant(except the value for the average area sold). This suggests that land sales, land prices and commodity prices of dry land show a significant

Table 5.5

Trends in Land Sales and Land Prices - Wet Land, 1966-67-1989-90.

Year	No: of Sales	Area sold (acres)	Average area per Sale	Land price per acre(Rs)		Paddy Price(Rs. per quintel)	Wage Rate(Rs) (Agricultural labour-male	Paddy	
				Actual	Registered			Output per hectare	Value of output per hectare
1967	194	112	0.58	3243	1161	100.59	3.83	1262	1275
1968	211	127	0.60	4649	1587	132.83	5.09	1332	1772
1969	185	107	0.58	4166	1349	104.31	5.27	1266	1317
1970	219	151	0.69	5416	1875	97.56	5.45	1292	1253
1971	150	79	0.52	6019	1811	88.32	5.62	1417	1247
1972	174	87	0.50	7144	2012	99.07	5.95	1366	1352
1973	181	110	0.61	8136	1978	120.02	5.98	1428	1714
1974	259	140	0.54	9230	2088	189.61	7.26	1151	2175
1975	291	162	0.56	10814	2335	251.20	8.08	1376	3454
1976	215	106	0.49	12541	3983	181.61	8.50	1283	2322
1977	158	92	0.58	14007	4229	140.82	8.50	1339	1875
1978	215	99	0.46	16551	4195	124.84	8.50	1204	1481
1979	281	131	0.47	19605	5471	122.63	8.89	1322	1626
1980	269	136	0.51	22438	6183	128.14	10.09	1396	1787
1981	298	144	0.49	24655	7690	150.05	12.44	1378	2067
1982	378	169	0.45	26868	8102	174.58	14.40	1346	2342
1983	295	164	0.56	31061	7992	212.75	14.75	1386	2952
1984	282	134	0.48	33217	9024	257.39	17.04	1501	3858
1985	192	93	0.48	34391	8897	196.90	27.42	1437	2831
1986	205	89	0.43	35370	10288	217.43	28.88	1595	3461
1987	204	85	0.42	36964	11086	234.67	32.83	1601	3746
1988	202	93	0.46	37906	12323	254.09	33.00	1555	3950
1989	248	80	0.32	39281	13423	275.12	33.00	1558	4285
1990	252	87	0.35	40427	13266	278.87	35.63	1675	4673
	5558	2777	0.50						

Sources [1]: Land sales and Registered price - Records of the Sub Registrar office.
[2] Actual Land price -Our survey.
[3]: Paddy price - Season and Crop report of Kerala (Various issues).

Table 5.6

Estimated values of Trends in Land Sales & Land Prices (1967-90) - WET LAND.

Equa. No.	Dependent Variable	Constant (a)	Coefficient of X (b)	t Value	Signifi-cance	R^2	F-Value
1	No.of Sales	198.45	2.65	1.73	***	0.12	2.98
2	Area Sold	125.70	-0.80	0.96	NS	0.04	0.92
3	Average area per sale	0.62	-0.01	6.40	*	0.65	41.01
4	Land price (Actual)	2807.58	1828.27	26.51	*	0.97	702.78
5	Registered Price	1163.44	567.56	20.69	*	0.95	428.09
6	Paddy Price	82.78	7.16	6.64	*	0.65	44.08
7	Yield per hectare	1220.21	13.93	5.31	*	0.56	28.22
8	Output per hectare	835.56	129.20	7.33	*	0.71	53.87
9	Wage Rate	-3.04	1.4	6.37	*	0.83	40.53

Dry Land

Equa. No.	Dependent Variable	Constant (a)	Coefficient of X (b)	t-Value	Signi-ficance	R^2	F-Value
1	No.of Sales	147.43	12.79	10.18	*	0.83	103.71
2	Area Sold	58.74	2.84	3.75	*	0.39	14.06
3	Average area per sale	0.34	-0.01	1.31	NS	0.07	1.72
4	Land price per acre	-53681.80	12907.19	16.63	*	0.93	276.45
5	Registered price	- 9637.94	2362.14	12.27	*	0.87	150.57
6	Coconut Price	-2.95	10.80	10.49	*	0.83	110.15
7	Yield per hectare	6452.00	-41.85	3.10	*	0.30	9.59
8	Output per hectare	606.10	563.58	11.36	*	0.85	129.06

* Significant at 1% level
*** Significant at 10% level
NS Not significant

upward trend during the 1967-90 period. The time coefficients of the above variables of wet land except of area sold are also positive and significant,manifesting an upward trend over the period. However, the time coefficients of land sales, land prices and commodity prices (paddy) of wet land are comparatively lower than that of dry land and even negative in the case of area sold. In both types of land the time coefficients for average area sold is negative, showing a declining trend over the period. This declining trend in average area per sale is highly significant, as shown by the value of R^2 in wet land compared to dry land. For all other variables of dry land, value of R^2 are highly significant. The values of R^2 of number of sales and area sold in the case of wet land are insignificant and only the other variablee like land prices and paddy prices are highly significant.

The differences in the trends in land sales and land prices of wet and dry land are brought in table 5.7 which gives the growth trends in land sales and land prices of wet and dry land during the period 1967-90.

As could be seen from table 5.7(last column) the growth rates in all the dry land variables such as number of sales and area sold, were considerably higher than the growth rates of wet land variables. All these values are statistically significant as shown by the t values for the coefficient of X.

Table 5.7

Growth Rate in Land Sales and Land Prices(1967-90) - WET LAND.

Equa. No.	Dependent Variable Log Y	Coefficient of X (b)	t-Value	Signifi-cance	R^2	F-Value	Growth Rate (g) b x 100
1	No.of Sales	.1190	1.86	***	0.14	3.45	1.19
2	Area Sold	-.0080	1.11	NS	0.05	1.24	-0.80
3	Average area per sale	-.0199	6.34	*	0.65	40.23	-1.99
4	Land price	.1286	8.31	*	0.76	69.06	12.86
5	Registered price	.1200	22.97	*	0.96	528.59	12.00
6	Paddy price	.0438	6.52	*	0.66	42.64	4.38
7	Yield per hectare	.0097	5.13	*	0.54	26.15	0.97
8	Output per hectare	.0541	7.68	*	0.72	59.01	5.41
9	Wage rate	.1041	20.15	*	0.95	406.01	10.41

Dry Land.

Equa. No.	Dependent Variable Log Y	Coefficient of (X)	t-Value	Signi-ficance	R^2	F-Value	Growth Rate (g) b x 100
1	No.of Sales	.0447	9.91	*	0.83	98.22	4.47
2	Area Sold	.3860	4.38	*	0.47	19.21	3.86
3	Average area per sale	-.0072	1.30	NS	0.07	1.68	-0.72
4	Land price per acre	.1929	22.30	*	0.96	497.39	19.29
5	Registered price	.1560	26.67	*	0.97	711.33	15.60
6	Cocanut Price	.0944	15.42	*	0.92	237.80	9.44
7	Yield per hectare	- 0074	3.16	*	0.30	9.98	-0.74
8	Output per hectare	0864	14.59	*	0.91	213.12	8.64

* Significant at 1% level
** Significant at 5% level
*** Significant at 10% level

The proportion of total wet land sold during the period, 1967-90 to total cultivated wet land in the villages was 77.8 percent. The corresponding proportion for dry land was lower at 74.6. Out of the 12933 transactions over the period, dry land transactions constituted 57 percent of the total number of sales whereas they accounted for only 45 percent of the total area sold. Consequently, average area per transaction was lower for dry land than for wet land. This may be due to the low price of wet land which enable the peasants to purchase larger area even with low surpluses. Due to reasons of unprofitability and difficulties in management, which will be discussed shortly, large owners of wet land were inclined to sell more of this land. The reduction in the average area per sale may also be due to the decline in average size of holdings over the period. The average area per sale declined by 0.72 percent and 1.99 percent respectively for dry and wet land. The relatively higher growth rate of price of dry land can be attributed partly to some extent the higher growth rates in coconut and other dry land crops' prices than in paddy prices. But the fact that land value had grown at a faster rate than the prices of both paddy and coconut reduce the attractiveness of land as a means of production.

Movement in relative prices is only one of the factors that affect the demand for land as a means of production. The other factors are the increase in productivity and the increase in

costs. Between 1967-68 and 1989-90, productivity of paddy increased at a rate of (0.98 percent per annum); where as productivity of coconuts shows a negative growth rate of 0.74 percent per annum[4]. But this lower growth rate in coconut productivity was more than offset by the higher rise in coconut prices as compared to paddy prices(4.4 percent and 9.4 percent). As a result, gross value of output of coconuts per hectare showed an increase of 8.6 percent per annum as against 5.4 percent for paddy.

In addition to commodity prices, the cost of production is another important factor that determine the demand for land for farming. The increase in cost of production and consequent decline in the net return over cost is an observed fact in the wet land paddy cultivation in Kerala[5]. Table 5.8 brings out the relatively lower returns from paddy cultivation than from coconut cultivation[6].

The table reveals that the lower profitability of paddy cultivation is due to more than one factor. The gross returns are lower due to lower prices of paddy. The total cost is higher. Increase in wages are more important for paddy as the labour requirement of cultivation is very large. The increase in costs particularly wage costs in relation to paddy prices especially

Table 5.8

Cost Per Hectare/ Gross Value of Output Per Hectare/ Net Revenue Per Hectare - 1989-90

Paddy and Cocanut

	Paddy	Coconut
Total cost per hectare	7252.00	4939.00
Hired labour cost per hectare(Rs.)	3620.00	2050.00
% hired labour cost to total cost(Rs.)	52.76	44.27
Hired labour cost as % of the total value of output	39.20	18.10
Gross value of output(Rs.)	9234.00	11323.00
Net Revenue per hectare(Rs.)	1982.00	6454.00

Source: Cost of Cultivation Studies,Bureau of Economics and Statistics,Thrivanathapuram,1990.

after 1980's was one of the reasons which forced many farmers to sell their wet land. It may be noted that the growth rate in wage rates i.e. 10.41 percent per annum was considerably higher than the growth rate in paddy price (4.38 percent).Though the increase in wage rates exceeded the increase in coconut prices also, the differences was much smaller than that of paddy. This led to a decline in the demand for wet land and increased the

relative attractiveness of dry land. Secondly, dry land's more than one alternative agricultural use as also non-agricultural uses, e.g., for the construction of houses might have led to their higher demand. It is also observed that occasionally developers and speculators of land also enter both the wet and dry land market as buyers. They purchase land for the purpose of converting them into dry land[7] either for cultivation or building construction. The scarcity of dry land available in the market for sale and their higher prices are the important reasons for the increase even in wet land prices, even at low returns from it.

Population Growth and the Demand for land.

One of the major forces that influence the demand for land and land prices is the growth of population. The density of population in the selected village has been steadily increasing over the last few decades from 490 in 1961 to 740 in 1991 (see table 5.9). Population growth can affect the demand for land as a means of production, as an asset and for residential purposes. The rapid growth of population between 1961 to 1991(see table 5.10) leads to fragmentation of holdings and entery of new sellers and buyers in the land market.

Table 5.9

Density of Population in Thrissur District and in the Selected Villages.

Year	Thrissur	Villages
1961	557	490
1971	702	647
1981	805	740
1991	902	840

Sources: 1) Census of India, 1961, 1971,1981 and 1991 series 10, Kerala part, 11-17, General population Tables,

Table 5.10.

Percentage Decadel Variation in Population in Thrissur District, and the Selected Villages

Year	Thrissur	Selected Villages
1961-71	26.09	32.01
1971-81	14.60	14.29
1981-91	12.08	13.52

Source: Same as in table 5.14.

The investment of surplus funds in land by both the farmers and the non-farmers for speculative purposes may be yet another reason for the high growth in land prices.The lack of alternative investment opportunities in rural areas induce both farmers and other speculators to invest their surplus funds in land. The continuous increase in land price noted earlier indicates that speculative holding of land is never a losing proposition.

Cyclical Movements.

Compound growth rates for the entire period camouflage the wide irregular year to year fluctuations of land sales and land prices. Year to year growth rates in land sales and land prices are given in table(5.11)

Increase in number of sales, area sold and land prices are followed by a decline in the succeeding one or two or three years. The cycle is repeated though not at regular intervals. On this basis, 13 phases (7 upswings and 6 downswings) can be observed for the entire 24 year period in the land market(see table 5.12).

The duration of the cycles vary. Some of them are minor cycle of 1 year duration. Others are of 2 years duration.Some cycles last for 3 or 4 years. In seven of the 13 phases, cycles are of one year duration. These short cycles have mostly taken

Table 5.11

Year to Year Growth Rate in Land Sales and Land Prices Prices (Percentages).

Year	Wet Land			Dry Land			Total		
	No: of sales.	Area sold	price per acre (Rs.)	No: of sales	Area sold (acres)	Price per acre (Rs.)	No: of sales	Area sold (acres)	Price per acre (Rs)
1967	-	-	-	--	--	--	--	--	--
1968	3.31	13.39	12.52	-3.49	12.50	0.40	3.01	13.16	6.36
1969	-12.32	-7.87	14.17	13.25	4.44	7.55	-1.06	-10.47	9.50
1970	18.37	41.12	30.00	-10.11	6.38	23.81	4.02	30.52	25.74
1971	-31.51	-47.68	11.13	-11.83	-2.00	14.99	-22.94	-36.32	13.94
1972	16.00	10.13	18.69	34.64	48.98	17.53	34.45	25.00	17.89
1973	4.02	26.44	13.88	21.93	57.53	14.01	14.18	40.63	13.97
1974	43.09	27.27	13.45	0.72	13.91	24.74	17.43	20.44	21.17
1975	12.36	15.71	17.16	-5.00	-29.77	33.53	3.34	-6.27	28.69
1976	-26.12	-34.57	15.97	2.63	4.35	36.34	-12.39	-20.47	30.87
1977	-26.51	-13.20	14.88	-19.05	-27.88	30.72	-22.34	-19.80	26.94
1978	36.07	7.61	14.88	28.51	40.00	21.50	31.66	21.60	20.07
1979	30.69	32.32	18.45	26.41	46.94	34.61	28.26	39.59	31.28
1980	-4.27	3.82	14.45	17.27	4.86	28.37	7.81	4.36	26.73
1981	10.79	5.88	9.88	-19.00	-31.78	17.39	-7.39	-13.94	15.25
1982	26.84	17.36	8.92	-7.03	-12.62	23.28	8.76	4.86	20.99
1983	-21.95	-2.95	15.60	17.03	16.67	13.28	-4.17	3.86	13.62
1984	-4.41	-18.29	6.94	12.13	9.52	11.20	4.80	-7.43	10.57
1985	-31.91	-30.60	3.53	11.78	8.70	10.79	-5.87	-12.45	9.76
1986	6.77	-4.30	2.85	-20.00	-21.60	5.12	-12.18	-14.20	4.82
1987	-0.49	-4.49	4.45	-5.91	-25.51	2.85	-3.99	-15.50	3.07
1988	-0.98	9.41	2.54	8.00	58.90	0.62	4.69	32.28	0.88
1989	22.77	-13.97	3.62	-4.76	0.86	0.82	4.69	-5.74	1.20
1990	1.61	8.75	2.92	25.27	2.56	0.72	15.62	5.08	1.03

Source: Tables 7.1, 7,4 and 7.5.

Table 5.12

Average Growth Rates in Land Prices and during the Upswing and the Downswing of the Area Sold

(Growth rates in %)

	Area sold	No.of sales	Land prices
Upswing			
1967 to 1968	13.16	3.01	6.36
Downswing			
1969	-10.47	-1.06	9.50
Upswing			
1970	30.52	4.02	25.74
Down swing			
1971	-36.32	-22.94	13.94
Upswing			
1972 to 1974	28.69	22.02	17.67
Downswing			
1975 to 1977	-15.51	-10.46	29.16
Upswing			
1978 to 1980	21.85	22.58	26.03
Downswing			
1981	-13.94	-7.39	15.25
Upswing			
1982 to 1983	4.36	2.30	17.31
Downswing			
1984 to 1987	-12.39	-4.31	7.06
Upswing			
1988	32.28	4.69	0.88
Downswing			
1989	-5.74	4.60	1.20
Upswing			
1990	5.08	15.62	1.03

place during 1969-71 and 1987-90 periods. The remaining major and medium cycles occurred between 1972 and 1987. It may be noted that the negative or positive average growth rate in number of sales followed more or less the same pattern as of area sold in almost all the upswing and downswing phases. It may noted that land prices did not decline during the downswing phases. Most of the upswing phases between 1967 and 1987 were marked by a higher growth rate in land prices than during the preceding downswing phases.

In this chapter, we have made an attempt at analysing the trends in land market transfers and land prices. Our study shows the existence of an active land market in which 76.3 percent of the total cultivated area in the four villages were brought for sale. The volume of sales suggests the possibilities of substantial changes in agrarian structure, either towards concentration or diffusion. In the next chapter, we propose to trace the directions of this change.

Chart 5.1 Trends in Number of Sales - 1967-90

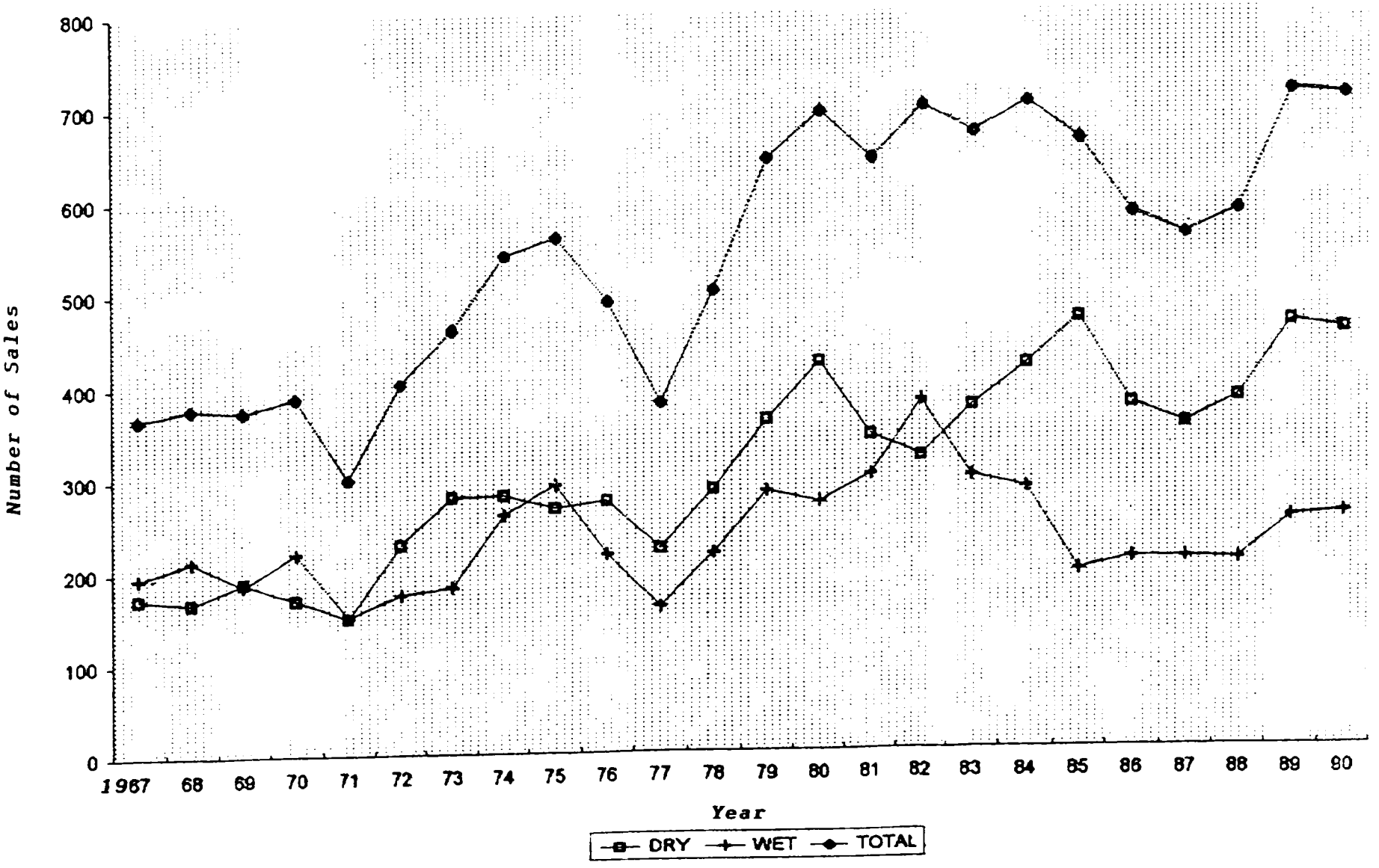


Chart 5.2 Trends in Area Sold - 1967-90

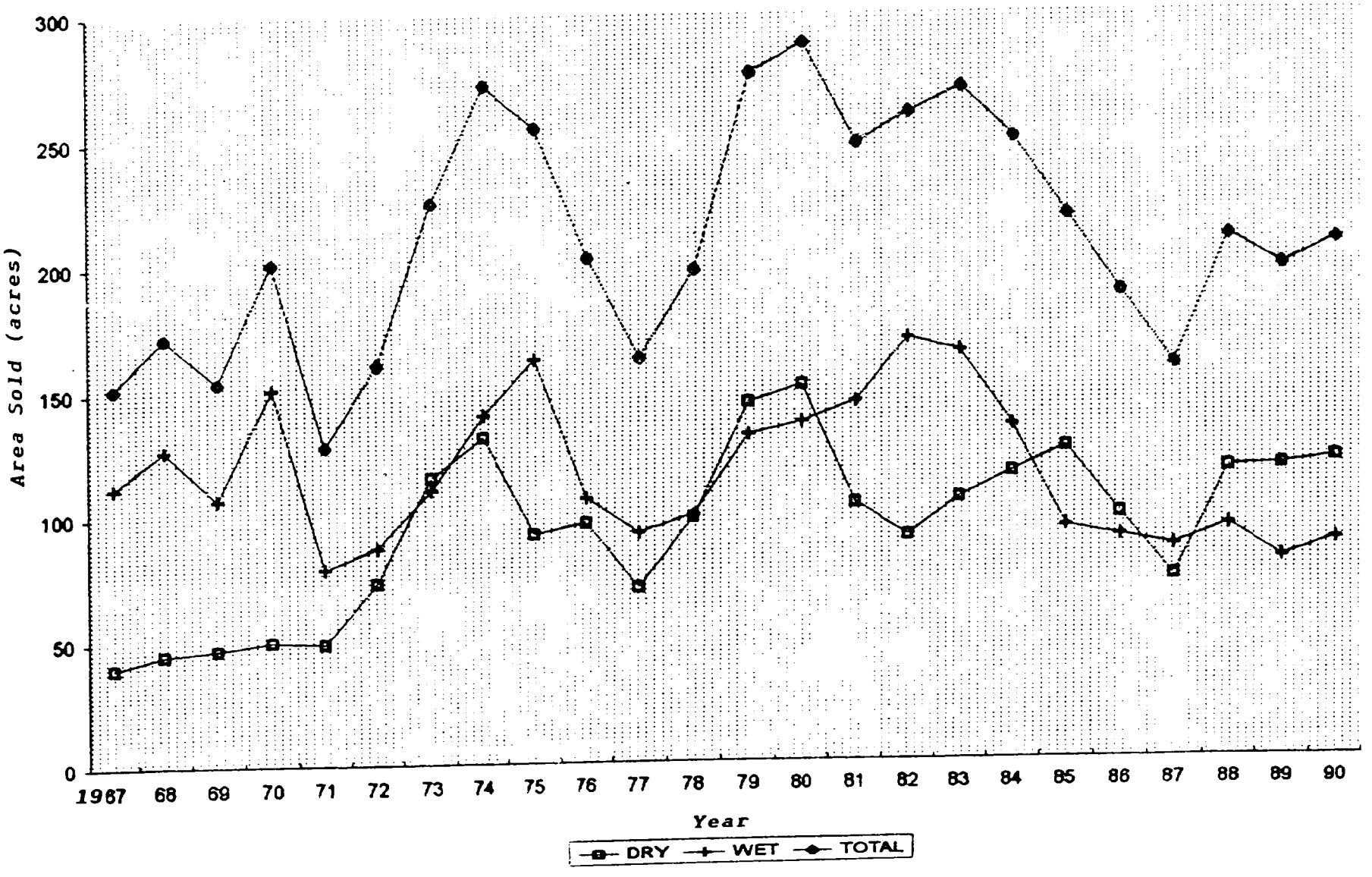
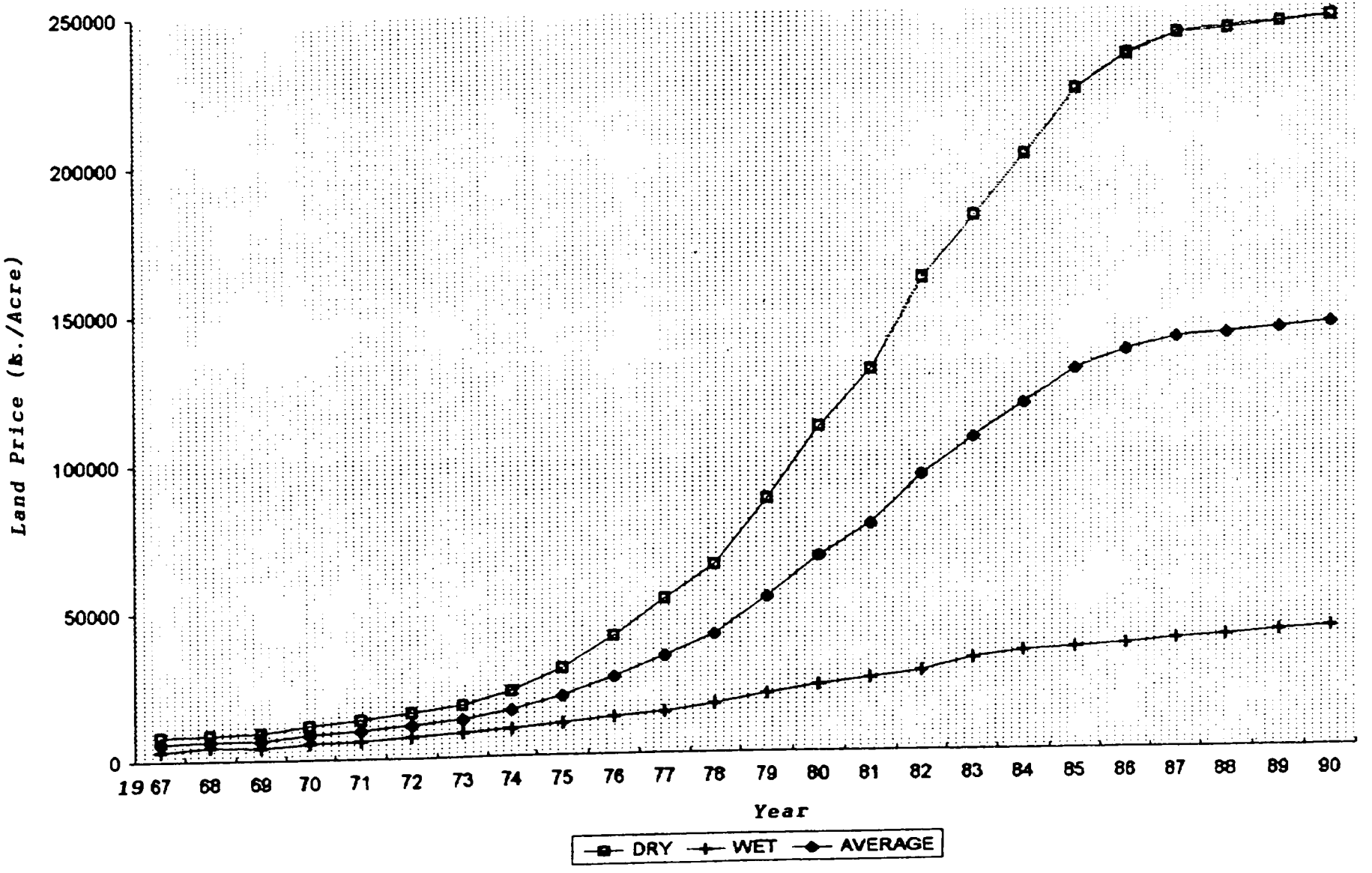


Chart 5.3 Trends in Land Prices - 1967-90



Notes and References

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3. Times series data for twenty four years (1967-90) was used to study the trends in land sales, land prices and partitioning. The nature and magnitude of the trend was probed by fitting linear trend equations. The following trend equation was estimated for each of the variables.

$$Y = a + bx + e$$

Where, x = time(1,2.....24)

Y = Area sold or partitioned, land prices etc.

Growth rates in area sold, land prices and partitioning over the period were computed by estimating semi-logarithamatic (or exponential) equation. With wide variations in the value over the period the exponential growth model was found to be appropriate. The model is:

$$Y = ab^x = a(1+g)^x$$

Which on taking the log became,

$$\text{Log } Y = \log a + x \log b$$

$$\log b^x = \log(1+g)^x$$

Then [(anti-log of b)-1] x100 will be annual growth rate of each variables. Equations were estimated by ordinary least square method, separately for each variables and growth trends and growth rates were derived. These values were studied for statistical significance. " T" test has been

applied to test the significane of each parameter. R^2 (square of correlation coefficient of the time series) and "F value" to test the significance of estimated equations have been calculated and presented with the results.

4. The degree of staganation in production is severe in Kerala compared to other states. Recent estimates indicate that between 1962-63 to 1974-75 there has been overall increase in the rate of growth of production and yield for all crops in Kerala, while in the following period 1975-86 there has been near staganation in the growth rate of production and productivity. For details,see Kannan, K.P. and Pushpangadan, K, "Agricultural Staganation in Kerala", Economic and Political Weekly, Vol.23, No.39, September 24, 1988.

5. For details see Jeemol Unni, An Analysis of Change in the cropping pattern in Kerala with particular referance to substitution coconut for rice,1960-61 to 1978-79, M.Phil Thesis, Centre for Development studies, Trivandrum. 1981.

6. The only source of detailed information available on the cost of cultivation of paddy and coconut in Kerala is the continuous survey undertaken by the department of Economics, University of Kerala, at the instance of Ministry of Agriculture Government of India. The survey was started in 1970-71 as a continuation of the Farm Management studies(FMS) conducted earlier(terminated in 1964-65).

7. The conversion of wet land to dry land can occur in either two ways (a) through the conversion of the entire paddy field into dry land by raising the level of the paddy field and then planting coconut saplings or constructing houses on it; or more commonly(b) through a process of strengthening the bunds or raising mounds, with in the wet land on which coconut saplings are grown. The latter is more gradual process and the initial investment involved is smaller.

CHAPTER 6

ACCUMULATION AND ALIENATION OF LAND

In the previous chapter, we have noticed the existence of a vibrant land market in the four villages studied by us. Nearly three-fourth of the occupied area had changed hands during the short span of 24 years. Such land market transfers contain the possibility of redistribution of land. In the present chapter, we propose to examine the direction of such redistribution and its impact on vertical mobility of households across the socio-economic groups. To meet this objective, it is proposed to identify the land holding classes and castes that enter into land market transfers and their relative gain or loss of land through this mechanism. The analysis centres on:(1) size class and caste-wise participation in the land market,(ii) size class and caste-wise accumulation and alienation of land,(iii) land sale pressures(iv) sources of the funds for purchase and (v) re-distributive consequences of the land market transactions.

Class and Caste-wise Participation in the Land Market.

As mentioned in chapter 3, the data for this analysis is collected from 328 households from four villages. All these households had gone in for land market transactions during the period 1957-90. Based on their initial ownership of land, the participants in the land market are grouped into five classes namely, marginal peasants(owning less than 0. 50 acre), poor peasants (owning between 0-50-1.25 acres),lower middle peasants (owning between 1.25-2.50 acres), upper middle peasants (owning between 2.50-5.00 acres) and rich peasants (owning above 5.00 acres). The number of buyers of land among the agricultural labour households without land was insignificant (only 4) and therefore they were included in the category of farmers owning below 0.50 acres. The households owning below 50 cents are categorised as marginal, since they own only very little land. They obtain their livelihood partly on wage labour and partly on the income from their tiny pieces of land. The poor peasants hold small plots of land, which enable them to satisfy the minimum needs of their families. Generally, they do not hire outside labour except when the family labour is insufficient during peak seasons (or inefficient to handle certain operations). Generally, they hire-out labour when there is no work in the

family farm. The lower middle peasants are those who own land that is sufficient to provide them meagre subsistence for the family. They do hire outside labour but generally it is less than the amount of family labour utilised in their farm. The upper middle peasants are those who own land that is not only sufficient to provide their subsistence but also to produce a certain surplus. The rich peasants are mostly cultivators producing largely for the market.

Table 6.1 gives distribution of participants in the land market on the basis of their initial ownership of land. The participants are either buyers or sellers during the period 1957-90.

Among the 328 participants in the land market, the marginal farmers accounted for 35.4 percent and the poor peasants for 20.1 percent. The participants from the lower middle, upper middle, and rich farmers formed 14.9, 19.2 and 10.4 percent respectively. It may be noted that the participation of upper middle class was more than that of lower middle class.

Table 6.1

Size-Class and Caste-Wise Participation in the Land Market according to the Participants Initial Possession of Land.

(Size class in acres)

Size Class	Christians	Brahmins	OHCH	OBC	SC	Muslims	Total
0-0.50	44 [37.92] (30.14)	4 [3.44] (19.05)	9 [7.78] (25.00)	18 [15.28] (31.58)	28 [24.14] (93.34)	13 [11.20] (34.21)	116 [100] (35.36)
0.50-1.25	35 [53.02] (23.97)	3 [4.55] (14.28)	7 [10.61] (19.44)	7 [16.66] (19.30)	1 [1.52] (3.33)	9 [13.64] (23.68)	66 [100] (20.12)
1.25-2.50	21 [42.85] (14.39)	4 [8.16] (19.05)	3 [6.12] (8.34)	13 [26.53] (22.81)	1 [2.05] (3.33)	7 [14.29] (18.43)	49 [100] (14.94)
2.50-5.00	32 [50.79] (21.92)	4 [6.36] (19.05)	9 [14.28] (25.00)	10 [15.87] (17.54)	--	8 [12.70] (21.05)	63 [100] (19.21)
5.00+	14 [41.18] (9.58)	6 [17.64] (25.57)	8 [23.52] (22.22)	5 [14.72] (8.77)	--	1 [2.94] (2.63)	34 [100] (10.37)
Total	146[44.51] (100)	21[6.40] (100)	36[10.98] (100)	57[17.38] (100)	30[9.15] (100)	38[11.58] (100)	328[100] (100)

Figures in brackets are the (%) of the sample households in each caste categrory.

Figures in Square brackets are the % to each size class.

OCH - Other high caste Hindus; OBC - Other backward caste; SC - Scheduled caste

There is no household belonging to Scheduled Tribes in our Sample.

The religion and caste-wise distribution of participants shows that Christians(44.5 percent) were the dominant group participating in the land market. They were followed by other Backward Castes(17.4 percent) and Muslims(11.6 percent). The percentage of participants from Other High Caste Hindus, and Scheduled Castes (Scheduled Tribe has not come under the participants) were 11.0 and 9.1 respectively. Brahmins formed only 6.4 percent of the participants.

Size Class-wise Accumulation and Alienation of Land

Our analysis so far has been in terms of the number of households belonging to different size classes and castes that participated in the land market. Such an analysis however, does not reveal the extent of accumulation and alienation of land by the different groups. Therefore, the net gain or loss of land through land market transfers by the various size classes and castes is computed (table 6.2).

The acquisition and alienation of land by the participants during the 1957-90 period, shows that 383 acres of land were purchased and 288 acres sold by the 328 sample households. The area of land sale and purchase transactions does not match, as some of the transactions are with households outside

Table 6.2

Size Class-wise Land Sold and Purchased - 1957-69,1970-90,1957-90.

(Area in acres)

	1957-69			1970-90			1957-90		
	Total Purchase	Total Sales	Net Effect	Total Purchase	Total Sales	Net Effect	Total Purchase	Total sales	Net Effect
	6.99 (11.50)	0.25 (0.44)	+6.74	35.72 (11.07)	12.68 (5.46)	+23.04	42.71 (11.14)	12.93 (4.48)	+29.78
	11.68 (19.22)	2.16 (3.85)	+9.52	22.43 (6.95)	35.40 (15.23)	-12.97	34.11 (8.89)	37.56 (13.02)	-3.45
	12.48 (20.54)	2.52 (4.48)	+9.96	46.59 (14.43)	31.21 (13.43)	15.38	59.07 (15.40)	33.73 (11.68)	+25.34
	21.43 (35.26)	13.71 (24.36)	+7.72	169.70 (52.57)	83.20 (35.79)	+86.50	191.13 (49.83)	96.91 (33.57)	+94.22
	8.19 (13.48)	37.63 (66.87)	-29.44	48.34 (14.98)	69.93 (30.09)	-21.59	56.53 (14.74)	107.56 (37.25)	-51.03
	60.77 (100)	56.27 (100)	4.50	322.78 (100)	232.42 (100)	90.36	383.55 (100)	288.69 (100)	94.86

ures in brackets are the (%) share in the total land sold and Purchased.

ce: Our Survey.

the sample, sometimes from outside the village itself. The sale of land by the former landlords residing outside the villages had also taken place[1]. These sales could not be captured in the study since we focussed on the households in the villages. The analysis is divided into two periods - the land reform period and the post-land reform period. This periodisation was adopted to capture to the extent possible the impact of land reforms on land market transfers.

It may be seen from the above table that the major losers of land were the rich peasants. Their tendency to alienate land which started during the pre-land reform period continued unabated even after land reforms, indicating strong social and economic pressures for selling land. However, they lost more land (57.6 percent) during the pre-land reform period. The other net losers of land were the poor peasants, though their net loss of land was only marginal. The net loss of land by them took place during the post land reform period only. The biggest gainers of land were the upper middle class followed by the marginal peasants and the lower middle class. All these groups gained land during both the periods. But the gain was more during the post-reform period. This was particularly true of the upper middle class which gained 92 percent of the total gain during the post-land reform period.

The marginal peasants gained 77 percent of the net gain in land during this post-reform period. The lower middle peasants gained 61 percent of the land during the post-reform period. The above discussion indicates that more sweeping changes in agrarian structure through the medium of land market had taken place during the post-reform period.

Caste-wise Accumulation and Alienation of land

The material basis of the traditional caste hierarchy lay in the unequal distribution of assets, the most important among them being landed property[2] . Thrissur district provides a good example of where land holding hierarchy and hierarchy of castes fitted closely. In the rural areas of the district, the Namboodiri Brahmins, Other High Caste Hindus such as the Nairs and the Syrian Christians to some extent, were the dominant land owners. Their dominance enabled them to control the lives of other castes in a multitude of ways. At the top of the hierarchy were the Namboodiri Brahmins, who were non-cultivating owners (Jenmis). The high caste Nairs were mostly the non-cultivating lessees of land belonging to the Namboodiris or temples. Generally, the non-cultivating land owning or holding castes had the highest status. Some of the Syrian Christians who owned\held large tracts of land had almost the same status. Below them

came the cultivators who comprised of the majority of Christians, Muslims and Other Backward Ccastes such as the Ezhavas. At the bottom were the agricultural labourers mostly belonging to the Scheduled Castes. The land reforms had very rapidly brought these cultivating castes into prominence. This tendency continued even after land reforms as a result of land market transfers. The land acquisition and alienation tendency among the major castes in the four villages of Thrissur District during 1957-90 is shown in table 6.3.

The caste-wise land transfers show that Christians were the principal gainers of land. The Other Backward Castes such as Ezhavas followed by Muslims also gained land. The Scheduled Castes were also net gainers, though marginally. The main losers were the Brahmins and the Other Upper Caste Hindus.

A comparison between the pre-land reform and post- land reform periods shows trends in the same direction, except in the case of Christians. This community which was net losers of land, albeit marginally, in the pre-reform period became gainers of land in a big way during the post reform period. A closer look at the table shows that the tendency for gain of land by some castes and communities and for loss by others was more pronounced

Table 6.3

Caste-wise Land Sold and Purchased -1957-'69,1970-90,1957-90..

(area in acres)

Caste	1957 - 1969			1970 -1990			1957-1990		
	Land Sold	Land Purchased	Net Effect	Land Sold	Land Purchased	Net effect	Land Sold	Land Purchased	Net effect
Christians	32.16 (57.15)	30.95 (50.93)	- 1.21	110.84 (47.69)	223.52 (69.25)	+112.68	143.00 (49.52)	254.47 (66.34)	+111.47
Brahmins	11.40 (20.26)	1.20 (1.98)	-10.27	37.03 (15.93)	7.79 (2.41)	-29.24	48.43 (16.78)	8.99 (2.35)	-39.44
Other HighCaste Hindus	6.91 (12.29)	0.78 (1.28)	-6.13	44.94 (19.32)	5.23 (1.62)	-39.71	51.85 (17.96)	6.01 (1.58)	-45.84
Other Backward Castes	4.17 (7.40)	22.25 (36.61)	18.08	19.83 (8.52)	39.93 (12.37)	+20.10	24.00 (8.32)	62.18 (16.21)	+38.18
Scheduled Castes	--	0.48 (0.79)	+0.48	3.12 (1.35)	6.20 (1.92)	+3.08	3.12 (1.08)	6.68 (1.74)	+3.56
Muslims	1.63 (2.90)	5.11 (8.41)	+3.48	16.66 (7.19)	40.11 (12.43)	+23.45	18.29 (6.34)	45.22 (11.78)	+26.93
Total	56.27 (100.00)	60.77 (100.00)	+4.50	232.42 (100.00)	322.48 (100.00)	+90.36	288.69 (100.00)	383.55 (100.00)	+94.86

Figures in brackets are the % to the total.

Source: Our Survey

during the post-land reform period. As indicated earlier, this trend suggests the existence of deep rooted socio-economic factors affecting land gain/loss by different castes and communities. An institutional factor like land reform was only one among the many factors. May be it was the catalytic factor.

Further disaggregated analysis of the net effect of land market transfers according to both class and castes is given in table 6.4.

This disaggregated picture shows that marginal farmers belonging to all caste categories were net gainers of land. Among the poor peasants, only Christians and Other High Caste Hindus were net losers of land. Among the lower middle class the tendency of alienation, though marginal was seen not only among Brahmins and the Other High Caste Hindus but also among the Scheduled Castes. Of all the upper middle class farmers, net loss of land was confined to the Brahmins and the Other High Caste Hindus. Rich farmers belonging to all castes other than the backward castes were alienating land during the period under study. The highest accumulating class was the upper middle class farmers among the Christians. This overwhelming tendency of accumulation of land among the upper middle class Christians could not be found among the rich Christian farmers.

Table 6.4

Size Class and Caste- wise NetGain\Loss of land - 1957-90

(Area in acres)

Caste Class	Christi-ans	Brahmins	OHCH	OBC	SC	Muslims	Total
0-0.50	+14.52	+3.16	+0.51	+4.01	+4.43	+3.15	+29.78
0.50-1.25	-4.27	+1.07	-2.72	+1.59	+0.10	+0.78	-3.45
1.25-2.50	+21.93	-5.68	-1.49	+8.63	-0.97	+2.92	+25.34
2.50-5.00	+95.95	-10.09	-16.69	+6.30	-	+18.75	+94.22
5.00+	-16.66	-27.90	-25.45	+17.65		+1.33	-51.03
Total	+111.47	-39.44	-45.84	+38.18	+3.56	+26.93	+94.86

Figures in brackets are the (%) share in the total land sold and purchased.

OHCH - Other High Caste Hindus.
OBC - Other Backward Caste.
SC - Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe

Source : Our Survey

Land Sale pressures

Usually, there are a number of factors forcing a household to dispose off its land. In our survey, however, only the most important reasons were elicited from the housholds. Broadly, land sale pressures, relate to consumption, investment, managerial difficulties, accumulated debt and land reforms. We have tried to capture these sale pressures among the various castes and classes and the results are given in table 6.5

Consumption Pressures

Among the six land sale pressures that force the peasants to alienate land, consumption pressures were the most dominant. Among the consumption pressures, expenses on marriage and payment of dowry constituted the single most important pressure. This shows that in spite of the attempts at legislation and social reforms, the dowry system continue to exist among large sections of the Hindu, Christian and Muslim communities in the region[3]. Dowry or 'Sthridhanam' is paid either in cash or jewellery or property by the father of the bride to the groom's father. Very often, it may be more than what the sons

Table 6.5

Reason for the Sale of Land - 1957-69,1970-90, 1957-90 (No.Of Sales and Area Sold)

Reasons	1957-69		1970-90		1957-90	
	Total No Sales	Total Area sold	Total No. Sales	Total Area Sold(acres)	Total No. Sales	Total Area Sold(acres)
1.Consumption Pressures						
a.Family Consumption	12	3.75	70	22.50	82	26.25
	(11.32)	(6.67)	(14.32)	(9.68)	(13.78)	(9.09)
b.Ceremonial consumption	5	1.55	15	4.64	20	6.19
	(4.71)	(2.75)	(3.07)	(2.00)	(3.36)	(2.14)
c.Payment of dowry and	31	14.40	182	55.89	213	70.29
Marriage expenses	(29.25)	(25.59)	(37.22)	(24.05)	(35.80)	(24.34)
d.Intoxicants Consumption	3	0.52	14	4.69	17	5.21
	(2.83)	(0.92)	(2.86)	(2.01)	(2.86)	(1.80)
e.Litigation Quarrels	2	0.90	7	3.09	9	3.99
Etc.,	(1.89)	(1.60)	(1.43)	(1.33)	(1.51)	(1.38)
sub total	53	21.12	288	90.81	341	111.93
	(49.99)	(37.53)	(58.90)	(39.07)	(57.31)	(38.75)
2.Investment Pressures						
a.Investment in Human	2	0.70	7	8.51	9	9.21
capital(Education)	(1.89)	(1.24)	(1.43)	(3.66)	(1.51)	(3.19)
b.Purchase of other Land	8	3.85	65	26.52	73	30.37
	(7.55)	(6.84)	(13.29)	(11.42)	(12.27)	(10.52)
c.Business,Trade	5	2.65	7	4.97	12	7.62
	(4.72)	(4.72)	(1.43)	(2.14)	(2.02)	(2.64)
d.Other Assets	5	3.44	7	11.29	25	25.21
	(4.72)	(6.11)	(1.43)	(4.86)	(4.20)	(8.73)
sub total	20	10.64	99	61.77	119	72.41
	(18.87)	(18.91)	(20.24)	(26.58)	(20.00)	(25.08)
3. Managerial Pressures						
a. Hurdles to manage the land	2	2.00	19	23.41	21	25.41
located outside the village	(1.89)	(3.55)	(3.89)	(10.07)	(3.53)	(8.80)
b. Unprofitability and high	2	1.80	15	17.13	17	18.93
cost of cultivation	(1.89)	(3.20)	(3.07)	(7.37)	(2.40)	(6.56)
Sub-total	4	3.80	34	40.54	38	44.34
	(3.78)	(6.75)	(6.96)	(17.44)	(5.93)	(15.36)
4. Migration pressures	11	9.26	45	28.95	56	38.21
	(10.38)	(16.46)	(9.20)	(12.46)	(9.41)	(13.25)
5. Accumulated debt pressures	12	3.45	23	10.35	35	13.80
	(11.32)	(6.13)	(4.70)	(4.45)	(5.88)	(4.78)
6. Land reform pressures	6	8.00			6	8.00
	(5.66)	14.22)	--	--	(1.01)	(2.77)
Total	106	56.27	489	232.42	595	288.69
	(100)	(100)	(100)	(100.00)	(100)	(100.00)

figures in brackets are the percentage to the total.

TABLE 6.6

Size Class-wise Reason for the Sale of Land - 1957-90 (% to total No.Of Sales and Area Sold)

Size Class / Reasons	0-0.50	0.50-1.25	1.25-2.50	2.50-5.00	500+	Total	Total No. Sales	Total Area (acres)
1.Consumption Pressures								
a.Family Consumption	16.25	19.71	16.00	7.27	12.03	13.78	82	26.25
	(15.70)	(18.32)	(11.59)	(5.05)	(7.93)	(9.09)	(13.78)	(9.09)
b.Ceremonial consumption	5.00	2.11	5.00	3.03	2.78	3.36	20	6.19
	(5.57)	(1.60)	(3.74)	(2.04)	(1.52)	(2.14)	(3.36)	(2.14)
c.Payment of dowry and	53.75.	47.18	40.00	20.60	26.85	35.80	213	70.29
Marriage expenses	(52.34)	(46.46)	(41.74)	(13.98)	(17.44)	(24.34)	(35.80)	(24.34)
d.Intoxicants Consumption	2.50	3.52	2.00	4.85	--	2.86	17	5.21
	(1.93)	(3.01)	(1.78)	(3.33)		(1.80)	(2.86)	(1.80)
e.Litigation Quarrels	--	2.11	1.00	1.21	2.78	1.51	9	3.99
Etc.,		(2.88)	(0.74)	(1.53)	(1.10)	(1.38)	(1.51)	(1.38)
sub total	77.50	74.63	64.00	36.96	44.44	57.31	341	111.93
	(75.54)	(72.27)	(59.59)	(25.93)	(27.99)	(38.75)	(57.31)	(38.75)
2.Investment Pressures								
a.Investment in Human	--	0.71	1.00	1.82	3.70	1.51	9	9.21
capital(Education)		(0.67)	(1.45)	(2.97)	(5.20)	(3.19)	(1.51)	(3.19)
b.Purchase of other Land	7.50	7.04	13.00	21.82	7.41	12.27	73	30.37
	(8.13)	(6.68)	(12.93)	(17.71)	(4.92)	(10.52)	(12.27)	(10.52)
c.Business Trade	--	--	3.00	3.64	2.78	2.02	12	7.62
			(4.00)	(4.02)	(2.20)	(2.64)	(2.02)	(2.64)
d.Others Assets	--	0.71	--	7.88	10.18	4.20	25	25.21
		(0.49)		(11.04)	(13.04)	(8.73)	(4.20)	(8.73)
sub total	7.50	8.46	17.00	35.16	24.07	20.00	119	72.41
	(8.13)	(7.84)	(18.38)	(35.77)	(25.36)	(25.08)	(20.00)	(25.08)
3. Managerial Pressures								
a. Hurdles to manage the land	--	--	3.00	6.67	6.48	3.53	21	25.41
located outside the village			(2.08)	(10.33)	(13.67)	(8.80)	(3.53)	(8.80)
b. Unprofitability and high	--	4.23	--	3.03	5.56	2.86	17	18.93
cost of cultivation		(5.59)		(3.36)	(12.62)	(6.56)	(2.40)	(6.56)
sub total	--	4.23	3.00	9.70	12.04	6.39	38	44.34
		(5.59)	(2.08)	(13.66)	(25.69)	(15.36)	(5.93)	(15.36)
4. Migration Pressures	10.00	7.75	8.00	12.12	8.33	9.41	56	38.21
	(12.22)	(8.57)	(10.02)	(17.88)	(11.81)	(13.25)	(9.41)	(13.25)
5. Accumulated Debt pressures	5.00	4.93	8.00	6.06	5.56	5.88	35	13.80
	(4.11)	(4.92)	(9.93)	(6.76)	(1.41)	(4.78)	(5.88)	4.78
6. Land reform pressures	--	--	--	--	5.56	10.11	6	8.00
					(7.74)	(2.77)	(1.01)	(2.77)
Total Number of Sales	80	142	100	165	108	595		
	(100)	(100)	(100)	(100)	(100)	(100)		
Total Area Sold	12.93	37.56	33.73	96.91	107.56	288.69	595	288.69
	(100)	(100)	(100)	(100)	(100)	(100)	(100)	(100.00)

Figures in brackets are the percentage to the Total Area Sold by each class category.

Table 6.7

Caste-wise Reason for the Sale of Land 1957-90 (% of Total No.of Sales & Area Sold).

Caste / Reasons	Christ-ians	Brahmins	OHCH	OBC	SC/ST	Muslims	Total	Total No. Sales	Total Area Sold
I.Consumption Pressures									
a.Family Consumption	11.95	7.65	23.28	9.68	17.39	11.29	13.78	82	26.25
	(6.58)	(10.59)	(14.17)	(10.00)	(18.91)	(7.49)	(9.09)	(13.78)	(9.09)
b.Ceremonial Consumption	0.73	10.29	13.69	--	4.35	--	3.36	20	6.19
	(0.25)	(4.29)	(7.06)		(3.21)		(2.14)	(3.36)	(2.14)
c.Payment of Dowry and	39.14	26.48	20.54	41.94	56.51	32.25	35.80	213	70.29
Marriage expenses	(20.80)	(14.96)	(37.20)	(33.50)	(55.45)	(17.93)	(24.34)	(35.80)	(24.34)
d.Intoxicants Consumption	3.62	--	1.37	4.30	4.35	1.61	2.86	17	5.21
	(2.46)		(0.19)	(5.58)	(3.20)	(0.82)	(1.80)	(2.86)	(1.80)
f.Litigation,quarrels	1.08	1.47	4.11	2.15	--	--	1.51	9	3.99
etc	(0.70)	(1.65)	(2.38)	(3.96)			(1.38)	(1.51)	(1.38)
Sub total	55.44	55.89	62.99	58.07	82.60	45.15	57.31	341	111.93
	(30.79)	(33.49)	(61.00)	(53.04)	(80.77)	(26.24)	(38.75)	(57.31)	(38.75)
II.Investment Pressures									
a.Investment in Human	0.73	2.94	4.11	1.08	--	4.35	1.51	9	9.21
capital(Education)	(1.59)	(4.71)	(7.05)	(1.67)		(3.28)	(3.19)	(1.51)	(3.19)
b.Purchase of other Land	10.86	7.35	6.85	15.05	--	30.64	12.27	73	30.37
	(10.06)	(5.32)	(3.14)	(17.17		(41.82)	(10.52)	(12.27	(10.52)
c.Business and Trade	1.81	--	1.37	3.23)	--	4.84	2.02	12	7.62
	(2.97)		(0.29)	(5.62		(10.28)	(2.64)	(2.02)	(2.64)
e.Others Assets	4.34	8.82	2.74	3.23	--	3.23	4.20	25	25.21
	(10.05)	(15.51)	(3.04)	(4.33)		(3.82)	(8.73)	(4.20)	(8.73)
Sub total	17.74	19.11	15.07	22.59		38.71	20.00	119	72.41
	(24.67)	(25.54)	(13.54)	(28.79		(58.71)	(25.08)	(20.00)	(25.08)
III. Managerial Pressures									
a.Hurdles to manage the	4.36	10.29	2.74	--	--	--	3.53	21	25.41
land located outside	(9.97)	(16.85)	(5.79)				(8.80)	(3.53)	(8.80)
the village									
b. Unprofitability and	2.54	7.36	6.85	--	--	--	2.86	17	18.93
high cost of cultivation	(4.30)	(14.83)	(10.80)				(6.56)	(2.86)	(6.56)
Sub total	7.90	17.65	9.59	--	- --	--	6.39	38	44.34
	(14.27)	(31.68)	(16.59)				(15.36)	(15.36)	(15.36)
IV. Migration Pressures	11.59	--	--	16.12	- 8.70	11.29	9.41	56	38.21
	(22.42)			(15.58	(19.23)	(9.97)	(13.25)	(9.41)	(13.25)
V. Accumulated Debt	6.16	4.41	10.97	3.22	--	4.85	5.88	35	13.80
pressures	(5.05)	(2.06)	(7.91)	(2.58		(4.65)	(4.78)	(5.88)	(4.78)
VI. Land Reform Pressures	1.09	2.94	1.38	--	--	--	10.11	6	8.00
	(2.80)	(7.23)	(0.96)				(2.77)	(10.1	(2.77)
Total No.of Sales	276	68	73	93	23	62	595	595	288.69
	(100)	(100)	(100)	(100)	(100)	(100)	(100)	(100)	(100)
Total Area Sold	143.00	48.43	51.85	24.00	3.12	18.29	288.69		
(acres)	(100)	(100)	(100)	(100)	(100)	(100)	(100)		

Figures in brackets are the percentage to the Total Area Sold by each caste category.

receive. This is particularly so among the marginal and poor farmers, where entire landed property may sometimes be sold or mortgaged in order to marry off one or more daughters. In the case of rich peasants, dowry paid may be less than what the sons receive as inheritance when the father dies.

Investment Pressures

Next to consumption, the most important pressure for selling land was the investment pressure. Investment in education,purchase of other land, construction of houses, investment in business and trade, and purchase of other assets such as jewellery,exerted strong pressures for selling land. The relative importance of these pressures varied according to size class. Purchase of more fertile and favourably located land was the most dominant investment pressure. Investment in other assets was the next important reason.

Managerial Pressures

Managerial pressures constituted the third most important category of sales pressures. The most important managerial pressure that forced the farmers to sell land was the difficulty to manage distant lands. Unprofitability due to high cost of

cultivation and low price of products was also important. The noteworthy feature is that the role of these pressures is related to the class and caste. It was more prominent with the rich peasants among the High Caste Hindus and to a certain extent among the Christians.

Migration Pressures.

The pressure of migration forced the farmers to sell their land in their home village and purchase in new areas. Sixteen percent of the total land was sold during the land reform period and 12 percent during the post-land reform period due to migration pressures. Sale of land due to this pressure had taken place, among all the size category of landowners. It was higher among the upper middle class farmers.

Accumulated Debt Pressures.

Land sold due to pressure of accumulated debt formed only 4.45 percent during the post-land reform period and 6.13 percent in the land reform period. The peasants belonging to lower middle and other lowest strata were more prone to land alienation due to accumulated debt pressures.

Land Reform Pressures

The late fifties witnessed an intense awareness among the rich land owners in the state about the impending legislation on land reforms. Fearing the legislation big land owners desperately disposed off their lands. Since most of the former landlords resided in the urban areas or outside the villages studied by us, we are not able to capture this pressure on the land market transfers. Our data shows that during the period 1957-69, 21.26 percent of the total area sold by the rich farmers was due to the impact of land legislation in the state.

As indicated earlier the reasons for sale of land vary according to the size classes. These are given in table 6.6. The table shows that the relative importance of consumption pressures varies inversely with the size class. This is particularly true with regard to three lower size classes. Investment and managerial pressures, on the other hand, vary directly with size class. Land reform pressures are noticed only among the rich peasants. The other pressures do not exhibit any definite trend.

Caste-wise analysis of the reasons for the sale of land is given in table 6.7. The table shows that consumption pressures

were the least important among Christians, Muslims and Brahmins. It was the most important among non-Brahmin Hindus belonging to all castes. This was particularly true about family consumption pressures. Pressures on account of dowry, contrary to popular impression was lower among Christians and Muslims than among all non-Brahmin Hindus. As for investment pressures, they were the lowest among non-Brahmin high caste Hindus. They were most important for Muslims. Managerial and land reform pressures were important only to Brahmins, Upper Caste Hindus and Christians. Sale of land due to migration was more pronounced among Christians followed by Scheduled Castes and Other Backward Castes. Contrary to popular belief, pressure on account of accumulated debt was not very important except for the upper caste Hindus.

Sources of Funds for Purchase

Sources of funds for the purchase of land are many. However, for our purpose only the most important source of each purchase was taken into consideration. The most important sources of funds were (i) Personal savings derived from agricultural and non-agricultural activities. (ii) Dowry - all non-land resources, financial or otherwise obtained by girls from the parent household- treated as dowry. (iii) remittances of the members of the

household, working within the country or outside (iv) selling of unfavourably located and unprofitable land and (v) other sources such as loans from commercial banks, co-operative societies, money lenders, friends, relatives etc.

Size class-wise analysis of the sources of the funds for purchase is given in 6.8.

Table 6.8

Size Class-wise Sources of the Funds for Purchase 1957-90

(Area in acres)

Sources	0-0.50	0-50-1.25	1.25-2.50	2.50-5.00	5.00+	Total
1.Personal Savings						
a.agricultural savings	0.16 (0.36)	1.12 (3.28)	5.27 (8.92)	16.14 (8.44)	18.11 (32.03)	40.80 (10.64)
2.Non-agricultural savings	7.34 (17.19)	4.41 (12.93)	10.75 (18.19)	30.30 (15.85)	17.20 (30.42)	70.20 (18.25)
3. Dowry	23.90 (55.96)	16.14 (47.32)	24.34 (41.20)	72.00 (37.67)	5.36 (9.49)	141.74 (36.95)
4.Remittances	7.55 (17.68)	6.77 (19.84)	11.50 (19.45)	50.75 (26.55)	8.52 (15.07)	85.09 (22.18)
5.Sellig of land	1.05 (2.46)	2.51 (7.36)	4.36 (7.39)	17.16 (8.98)	5.29 (9.36)	30.37 (7.92)
6.Others	2.71 (6.35)	3.16 (9.27)	2.85 (4.83)	4.78 (2.51)	2.05 (3.63)	15.55 (4.06)
Total	42.71 (100)	34.11 (100)	59.07 (100)	191.13 (100)	56.53 (100)	383.55 (100)

Figures in brackets are the percentages to the total purchase by each size category.

The table shows that dowry was the most important source, except for the rich peasants. Thus, dowry while it was the most important reason for alienation of land; it was also the most important source of funds for acquiring land. Other important sources were the remittances of the members and the non-agricultural savings of the households. Income from non-farming activities such as the construction work, petty trading in commercial crops etc., provided the base for non-agricultural savings in the case of marginal and poor peasants. Employment in service sectors provided the source of income for the higher size classes.

The opportunities of employment outside the village enabled some of the poor farmers to acquire land. Generally, the family members working outside visit their parents at least once in a year. They invest their surplus in the purchase of land, since it is the most attractive form of investment in rural areas. It is also for providing a minimum source of income to the parents. Besides, they also think that investment in land will give them an additional source of income when they come back after retirement. It also adds to the social prestige. It may be noted that, it is not the surpluses from agriculture that enabled the households to acquire land. This is true of all categories of farmers except perhaps, the rich farmers.

Caste wise data on the sources of funds for the purchase given in table 6.9 show that except among the high Caste Hindus such as Namboodiris and Nairs, dowry was the most important source

Table 6.9

Caste-wise Sources of the Funds for Purchase 1957-90.

(Area in acres)

Castes Source	Christians	Brahmins	OHCH	OBC	SC	Muslims	Total
1.Personal Savings							
(a)Agricultural savings	24.28 (9.54)	2.09 (23.24)	0.93 (15.47)	10.76 (17.50)	--	2.74 (6.05)	40.80 (10.64)
(b)Non-agricultural Savings	42.02 (16.51)	4.32 (48.05)	2.67 (44.43)	12.73 (20.71)	0.78 (11.68)	7.48 (16.54)	70.20 (18.25)
2. Dowry	113.26 (44.51)	--	--	19.21 (31.25)	3.92 (58.68)	5.35 (11.83)	141.74 (36.95)
3.Remittances	54.55 (21.44)	--	0.78 (12.98)	9.15 (14.88)	--	20.61 (45.58)	85.09 (22.18)
4.Sellig of land	14.39 (5.65)	2.58 (28.70)	1.63 (27.12)	4.12 (6.70)	--	7.65 (16.92)	30.37 (7.92)
5. Others	5.97 (1.72)	--	--	6.21 (7.76)	1.98 (29.04)	1.39 (4.46)	15.55 (4.06)
Total	254.47 (100)	8.99 (100)	6.01 (100)	61.48 (100)	6.68 (100)	45.22 (100)	383.55 (100)

Figures in parantheses are the percentage of the total purchase by each caste category.

of funds for the purchase of land. Among the High Caste Hindus and Brahmins, the payment of women's share in cash is not so prominent a custom as compared to the Other Backward Castes and Christians. Dowry was not very important for Muslims also. For Christians, the second most important source of funds come from remittances. For the Brahmins, the most important sources were non-agricultural savings and sales proceeds of other land. The same was the case with Other Upper Caste Hindus. For Backward Caste Hindus, the most important source, apart from dowry, was the agricultural and non-agricultural savings. For Muslims, the major source was remittances.

Distributive Consequences of Land Transfers

This section attempts to work out the distributive consequences of the working of the rural land market on different social classes. To bring out this the data have been classified as under : (i) Growing and Decaying farms;(ii) Land ownership before and after transactions and (iii) Changes in the distribution of holdings and the area owned.

The classification of participants into growing and decaying farms according to whether the size of their owned land base has expanded or contracted as a result of purchase and sale of land is given in table 6.10.

Table 6.10

Growing and Decaying farms-

Size class-wise classification of Households

Size by initial holding(acres)	Growing	Decaying	Total
0 - 0-50	75 (64.66)	41 (35.34)	116 (100)
0.50-1.25	27 (40.91)	39 (59.09)	66 (100)
1.25-2.50	27 (55.10)	22 (44.90)	49 (100)
2.50-5.00	37 (58.73)	26 (41.27)	63 (100)
5.00+	8 (23.52)	26 (76.47)	34 (100)
Total	174 (53.05)	154 (46.95)	328 (100)

Figures in brackets are the percentages of the households to the total of each size class.

Source: Our survey.

Table shows that a larger number of the households were growing farm households. Even more striking perhaps is the evidence of persistence and stablity of the marginal peasants over time. Out of 116 households in this group, 75 households (65 percent) increased their land ownership base over time. In fact, the proportion of growing farmers was the highest among this

group. The other groups with larger proportion of growing farms were the ones with holdings between 1.25 - 2.50 and 2.50-5.00 acres. Among the rich households owning above 5 acres, 76 percent or 26 households were decaying farm households. The poor farmers had also larger proportion of decaying farms. One plausible explanation for the stability among the smallest size group of less than 0.50 acres, could be that their land ownership included 'homestead' land which are not sold normally. On the other hand, the poor peasants owning between 0.50-1.25 acres are able to maintain their homesteads even after selling few cents of their land, to meet unavoidable circumstances. The relatively rich farmers do not seem to consider land as a profitable means of production. The existence of ceiling laws and high cost of production especially in wet land forced them to sell their land.

Caste-wise distribution of growing and decaying farms is given in table 6.11

Brahmins and Other High Caste Hindus had the highest proportion of decaying farms. On the other hand, Christians, Muslims and Other Backward Caste Hindus had higher proportion of growing farms.

Table: 6.11

Growing and Decaying Farms'-

Caste-wise Distribution of Sample Households.

Castes	Growing	Decaying	Total
Christians	87 (59.59)	59 (40,41)	146 (100)
Barhmins	5 (23.81)	16 (76.19)	21 (100)
Other High Caste Hindus	5 (13.89)	31 (86.11)	36 (100)
Other Backward Caste	36 (63.16)	21 (36.84)	57 (100)
Scheduled Caste	16 (53.33)	14 (46.67)	30 (100)
Muslims	25 (65.79)	13 (34.21)	38 (100)
Total	174 (53.05)	154 (46.95)	328 (100)

Figures in brackets are the percentages of the total.

The number of growing and decaying farms among the participants does not reflect fully the changes in the ownership of land. The changing number of households does not reveal the changes in the distribution of area owned. Therefore, an attempt is made to examine the changes in the ownership of land before and after transactions among the different groups. To the extent

that buyers and sellers of land belong to the same class, land market is not likely to make any distributional consequences. Size-class wise changes in the ownership of land before and after transactions are presented in table 6.12.

Table 6.12

Size Class - Wise Initial Possession of Land before and after Transactions (1957-90)

Size Class. (acres)	Percentage to total households[a]	% of Land Owned			Average Land Owned		
		Before Trans-actions	After Trans-actions	% change	Before Trans-actions	After Trans-actions	% change
0.00-0.50	35.36	3.51	6.71	91.16	0.22	0.47	113.63
0.50-1.25	20.12	7.81	6.49	-16.90	0.87	0.81	-6.89
1.25-2.50	14.94	11.94	13.63	14.15	1.78	2.29	28.65
2.50-5.00	19.21	30.69	38.58	20.45	3.56	5.06	42.13
5.00+	10.37	46.05	34.59	-24.89	9.91	8.40	-15.20
All	100.00	100.00	100.00	--	2.24	2.51	--

[a] The total households consist of 328 participants in the land market.

A perusal of the table shows that the land owned by the marginal farmers owning below 0.50 acres increased from 3.51 percent to 6.71 percent of the total. The average land owned by them more than doubled from 0.22 acres to 0.47 acres. The status of poor peasants owning between 0-50-1.25 acres shows marginal decline. The lower middle class increased their land ownership by 14.15 percent and their average size of owned land increased from 1.78 to 2.29 acres. The upper middle class (owning between 2.50-5.00 acres) farmers also increased the area owned by them. The average land owned by them increased from 3.56 acres to 5.06 acres. Among the rich farmers, substantial decline in the land ownership can be noted after transactions.

Changes in ownership of land according to castes are shown in table 6.13. Among the caste categories,the traditional land owning castes such as Brahmins and Other High Caste Hindus were the major alienating groups. Their share in the area owned declined by 34.06 and 38.13 percent respectively. All the other castes and communities mostly belonging to the former tenant classes improved their land ownership over the period. These tendencies are thus suggestive of a more equal distribution of land through the land market.

Table 6.13

Caste-wise Possession of Land before and after Transactions 1957-90

Castes	% of Land owned				Average Land owned		
	% of Shh	Before transactions	After transactions	% Change	Before transactions	After transaction	% Change
Christians	44.51	45.09	53.39	18.41	2.26	3.02	+33.62
Brahmins	6.40	15.78	9.20	-41.69	5.49	3.62	-34.06
Other High Caste Hindus	10.92	16.38	8.97	-45.23	3.33	2.06	-38.13
Other Backward Castes	17.38	13.99	17.01	21.58	1.79	2.46	+37.43
Scheduled Castes	9.15	1.01	1.32	30.69	0.25	0.36	+44.00
Muslims	11.59	7.75	10.11	30.45	1.49	2.20	+47.65
All	100	100	100	--	2.24	2.51	+12.65

Shh - Sample of households. This consist of 328 participants in the land market.

It is evident that the direction of land market transfers had been in favour of marginal, lower and upper middle class farmers. Among the lower size classes, the only exception was

the poor peasants. The land acquisitive ethos of the rich farmers seems to have diminished. At least, some of the upper middle class farmers initially owning between 2.50-5.00 acres improved their status and became the rich farmers owning above 5 acres. This can be more clearly discerned from the change in the distribution of holdings and area operated among the size classes given in table 6.14.

Table 6.14

Changes in the Distribution of Holdings and Area Owned among the Size Classes - 1957-90.

Size by initial holding(acres)	Before transactions			After transactions			% Change		
	% of Sample house-holds	% of area	Averag land owned	% of house holds	% of area	Average land owned	% of house-holds	% of area	Average land owned
0-0.50	35.36	3.51	0.22	34.15	4.72	0.35	-3.42	34.47	59.09
0.50-1.25	20.12	7.81	0.87	20.42	6.73	0.82	1.49	-13.82	-5.74
1.25-2.50	14.94	11.94	1.78	14.33	11.78	2.06	-4.08	-1.34	+15.73
2.50-5.00	19.21	30.69	3.56	16.66	26.09	4.05	-13.27	-14.99	+13.76
5.00+	10.37	46.05	9.91	14.94	50.68	8.52	+ 44.06	-10.05	-14.02
Total	100	100	2.24	100	100	2.51	--	--	--

Source : Our survey.

Striking changes in the distribution of land occurred among the upper middle class and the rich farmers. The proportion of upper middle class farmers declined from 19.21 percent to 16.66 percent. Their average size of ownership of land however,increased from 3.56 acres to 4.05 acres. The percentage share of rich farmers increased from 10.37 percent to 14.94 percent and their share in area increased from 46.05 to 50.65 percent. However, their average size of owned land declined from 9.91 acre to 8.52 acres. It may be interesting to note that among the above two classes of farmers, initial percentage of households(29.58 percent) and their area (76.74 percent) remained more or less constant after transactions(is the percentages of households being 31.60 percent and the area owned was only 76.67 percent). This suggests that land was being transferred mostly among the middle and large cultivators. Among the three lower class households, percentage change in the number of holdings and their area was not substantial, though marginal increase in the average area was noted among the marginal and lower middle class peasants. It appears that there has been upward mobility among the marginal peasants and downward mobility among the poor peasants. Trends are not clear among the lower middle farmers.

The persistence or growth of relatively smaller farms becomes possible when income can also be earned from outside sources. Such outside income supplements an otherwise low farm income, allowing a significant number of these smaller farms to persist against a general trend of polarisation. Thus, the smaller the size of the owned farm the greater has to be the reliance on such outside income to be able to persist over time. This is clear from the sources of the funds for purchase of land given in table 6.8. It can be seen from this table that the smaller the ownership size, the greater is its reliance on outside income. Thus, the smallest size group (up to 0.50 acres) attains its stability by earning almost all funds for the purchase of land from outside sources. But as one goes up the land ownership groups, the reliance on outside funds tends to decrease. Summing up, the land market worked to lessen the concentration of ownership in the area of our study. In other words, the market tended to work along the lines desired by land reforms - land to the tenants and to the small and middle class owners.

Notes and references.

1. The following case study is illustrative: A Brahmin landlord, residing 50 kilometers away from one of our sample villages possessed 140 acres of land in 1957, comprising 75 acres of water-logged wet land, 40 acres of double cropped paddy land and 25 acres of dry land. At the time independence, the whole of wet land was given to the tenants under share-cropping system. These peasants were evicted in 1954 by giving a meagre compensation. The total land was then parted among the members of the households. Since the water-logged wet land was free from ceiling provisions of the land reform measures, not even a single cent of land was given as surplus. This land was utilised for pawn-fishing and was auctioned every year for huge sums of money. The major portion of the remaining land was sold during the period 1957-90. The fund, thus accumulated is invested in business, factories, shopping complexes etc.

2. For a detailed deecribtion of of this issue in the Indian context see, Srinivas,M,N, Social Change in Modern India, University of California press, 1976.

3. The Dowry Prohibition Act came into force on 1 July 1961 but the institution of dowry is so deep- rooted that legislation in this regard does not have the desired effect.

CHAPTER 7

PARTITIONING AND ALIENATION OF LAND

The causes and consequences of land market transactions during 1957-90 had been the focus of our analysis in the last chapter. A total picture of the land transfers,however, will be obtained only if we bring into our analysis the influence of partitioning on agrarian structure. Partitioning of land assumes added importance as it is a dominant tendency among all the socio-economic groups. However, there is no general consensus regarding the nature of partitioning among the different size classes and castes over a period of time. There is also no consensus on either the consequences of the process or the factors affecting the process. In this chapter, we are making an attempt to study these issues in the context of our selected villages.

This chapter is divided into four sections. In the first section, changes in the inheritance and partitioning systems prevalent among the different social groups in Kerala are explained. Section 2 deals with trends in area transferred through partitioning. Section 3 deals with the relationship between household partitioning and alienation of land. The last section traces the influence of demographic characteristics of family on partitioning.

Family and Inheritance Systems

Until recently, the families in Thrissur district like elsewhere in Kerala, could be classified into two broad groups according to their family organisation and system of inheritance. They are the Makkathayam (patrilineal) and Marumakkathayam (matrilineal) systems [1]. According to the 1951 census report, one third of the families in Kerala followed the matriarchal system completely, another one third the patriarchal system and the remaining one third, a mixed system combining the matriarchal and patriarchal features[2]. The high caste Hindus such as Naire, Ambalavasis, Kshatriyas and a few other castes had followed the Marumakkathayam system. The communities that had followed Makkathayam system were the Namboodiri Brahmins, Backward Castes and Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes. The Christians and Muslims also have been Makkathayis.

A series of legislations culminating in the Hindu Succession Act of 1956 and The Kerala Joint Hindu family Sytem (Abolition) Act,1975,30 of (1976) had accentuated the shift to the nuclear and patriarchal family. However, some of the old traditions are still present. What has emerged in recent years is a more flexible form of traditional family ties, rather than a truly nuclear family system.

As the Marumakkathayam system of inheritance is not very common in other parts of India, it may be interesting to mention here some of its salient features and the changes that occurred as a result of various laws enacted during this century.

A Marumakkthayam joint family is called a Tarwad. It consists of a female ancestor, her children, her daughter's children and all such other descendants, however remote in the female line. The male descendants themselves are its members but their children are not[3]. Tarwad membership arises by virtue of birth in the family. A female member of a Tarwad does not change her family by marriage, unlike in the other systems which follow the agnatic line of descent. The Madras Marumakkathayam Act defines a Tarwad as "a group of persons forming joint family with community of property governed by the Marumakkathayam law of inheritance". The corresponding enactments in Travancore and Cochin areas adopt more or less the same phraseology, emphasis being placed on "community of property". A Tarwad is joint in estate, food and worship as in the case of a joint Hindu family.

A branch of Tarwad is called a Tavazhi. It comprises of a group of descendants in the female line of a female common ancestor who is the member of Tarwad. It is one of the units of Tarwad. It may own separate properties as distinct from Tarwad properties.

Each member of a Tarwad acquires an interest in the Tarwad properties by reason of his or her birth alone, and when any member dies, the interest of that member devolves upon the other members of the Tarwad. Thus, the share of every member of a Tarwad in the family property is fluctuating; it increases by deaths of other members and reduces by new births in the Tarwad. Therefore, those female members with large number of children have higher share in the family property. At the same time, those female members who have no children could get only smaller share.

Impartabilty was an essential feature of the Marumakkathayam law. Since the family property was the joint property of all the members, each member was entitled to get maintenance from it but was not entitled to claim partition. A partition could be effected only with the consent of all the members. Though the joint properties belonged in law to the female members, they were considered incapable of family management and hence the eldest male member of the family called the Karnavar was vested with the power of managing it. The Karnavar had no power to alienate the family property unless all the junior members or Anataravans signfied their approval of the proposal.

A distinction has however been drawn between absolute sales and other transactions, like mortgages or leases. Mortgages

and leases could be created by the Karnavar alone when such mortgages or leases are either beneficial to the Tarwad or are necessary in its interests.

The Marumakkathayam system of inheritance among the superior Nair castes together with their peculiar system of marriage with Namboodiris also led to the concentration of landed property among the Namboodiri Brahmins. The eldest sons in the Namboodiri family alone could marry Namboodiri women and the others had to form sambandham (or marriage alliance) with women belonging to castes not below that of the Nairs. On the other hand, Namboodiri female could be married only in her own caste. The conjungal union of a Nair female, with a Namboodiri, though sanctioned by custom, was not regarded by the courts as a legal marriage and as a result, there was no legal obligation on the part of the husband or the father to provide maintainance to his wife or children. They were also not eligible to his property. This system of Namboodiri marriage with those who follow the Marumakkathayam system of inheritance enabled Namboodiri families not to alienate their family property by way of partitioning.

The situation changed with the Madras Namboodiri Act (1933) which gave every Namboodiri male member the right to marry from his own caste and his wife and children became legal heirs to the property. In the meantime, the women of the Nair and other

communities also began to shun sambandham union with Namboodiris as latter began to be looked upon as old fashioned and obnoxious.

The general law of alienation under the Marumakkathayam had undergone several changes as a result of the various enactments on the subject beginning with the Cochin Nair Act of 1920. This Act brought three major changes. Firstly, customary marriage with the Namboodiris was legalised and the wife and children were entitled to maintenance by the husband or father. The Act also provided that when a Non-Nair husband of a Nair female dies, half of his property is taken by the Nair wife, her children and descendants of predeceased daughters and the other half will go to his heirs under his personal law. The Act also gave rights to widows/children of Nair husbands/father. The relevant section of the Act states that " On the death of a Nair male, leaving behind him surviving a widow or children or both, she or they shall, if he has undivided Marumakkathayam heir be entitled to one half share of his self acquired and separate property left undisposed of at his death; and if there are no such heirs such widow or children or both shall be entitled to the whole of such property".

As regards the partitioning, relevant section of the Act was as follows: "After the death of the lineal ascendant, or with her consent, each collateral tavazhi represented by a

majority of the members there, may claim an outright partition of all properties common to all tavazhies over which the tarwad had a power of disposal". Property obtained from the husband or father by the wife or the widow and children shall belong to the wife and children in equal shares, they holding it as tenants in common. With respect to partitioning, the Cochin Nair Act of 1920 is undoubtedly a milestone in the annals of the institution of Marumakkathayam. It led to considerable progress in the direction of partitioning of tarwad property.

The Cochin Nair Act of 1937-38 retained the main provisions of the Act of 1920 and introduced more progressive changes with a view to doing away with the joint family system. According to the provisions of this Act, "On the death of the 'intestate'[4] of a Nair male, the widow or each of the widows shall be entitled to a share equal to that of a child. Every child (son or daughter) shall be entitled to an equal share." It is clear from this provision that the wife and children were entitled to get a share in the properties of the husband or father, they being his legal heirs. With regard to the partitioning, the Act provided that every member of a Tarwad should be entitled to claim his share of the properties of the tarwad. Thus individual partition was allowed to the junior members of the joint family and provision was made to transform the law of inheritance from Marumakkathayam to Makkathayam.

All these systems of inheritance and succession are now completely superseded by the operation of the Hindu Succession Act of 1956. The law of succession applicable to Marumakkathayis is uniform and is contained in the Hindu Succession Act itself. According to the Act, the share in the joint-family property will be now available for all the heirs. The share is determined on per capita basis. . The Act prescribes class I and class II heirs in the case of males and females. There are twelve types of heirs in class I. All these heirs succeed simultaneouly. In the absence of any heirs in class I, class II heirs will succeed. The rule is that the earlier heirs exclude the next. There are nine types of heirs in class II.

In the total absence of class II heirs, the next heirs from the male or female line will succeed simultaneously. It was the Kerala Joint Family System (Abolition) Act of 1975 which finally abolished the joint family system in the state. On and after, the commencement of this Act, there is no right to claim any interest in any property of an ancestor during his or her life-time which is founded on the mere fact that the claimant was born in the family of the ancestor. With effect from the date of the Act, partition can take place among all the members of the undivided Hindu family. All the members born in the joint family before the commencement of the Act, are entitled to get the share from the joint family property.

As a result of these changes, beginning from the first half of the present century the district experienced significant changes in the family structure and inheritance of landed property leading to the development of individual rights in land. This has led to a greater diffusion of land ownership through partition of the Tarwad property among the individual owners. Some of these partitioned properties were also alienated through the land market. Thus, the laws liberalising partitioning among the superior castes caused considerable weakening of their economic position.

Section II

Trends in Partitioning of Land

The changes in the distribution of land during the post-independence period in the district was noted in earlier chapters. This resulted in the growth of small holdings. Mutually reinforcing factors like land reforms, land market transfers and partitioning had contributed to this process. Partitioning always induces downward mobility of the newly formed households and a significant growth in small holdings can normally result in periods of high rates of partitioning.

The data for analysing the trends in partitioning was collected from the records of the Sub-registrar Offices of four

villages under our study. This data is related to the number of households parted, number of splits per household, area parted and the size class to which each parting households belongs. Information on these variables are given in table (7.1).

Table 7.1

Trends in Partitioning of Land 1967 - 1990

(Area in acres)

Year	No.Of hh parti -tioned	No.of split	No.Of split per hh	Area parted (Acres)	Area parted per hh	Area per split
1967	19	88	4.63	72	3.79	0.82
1968	16	74	4.62	55	3.44	0.74
1969	17	69	4.05	37	2.18	0.54
1970	31	106	3.41	108	3.48	1.02
1971	24	87	3.63	199	8.29	2.29
1972	18	55	3.06	48	2.67	0.87
1973	20	94	4.70	60	3.00	0.63
1974	21	65	3.10	55	2.62	0.84
1975	29	119	4.10	95	3.28	0.80
1976	31	106	3.42	91	2.94	0.86
1977	11	38	3.45	23	2.09	0.61
1978	19	60	3.16	48	2.53	0.80
1979	16	53	3.31	26	1.63	0.49
1980	25	91	3.64	44	1.76	0.48
1981	15	56	3.50	26	1.73	0.46
1982	24	89	3.71	53	2.21	0.60
1983	25	82	3.28	32	1.28	0.39
1984	38	126	3.32	40	1.05	0.32
1985	35	77	2.20	37	1.06	0.48
1986	28	80	2.86	48	1.71	0.60
1987	34	102	3.00	40	1.18	0.39
1988	30	126	4.20	58	1.93	0.46
1989	32	105	3.28	47	1.47	0.45
1990	28	115	4.12	46	1.64	0.40
Total	586	2063	3.52	1388	2.36	0.67

Source: Records of the Sub-registrar office.

Altogether 21 percent of the land possessed by the households in the villages was parted during the 24 year period. This is considerably lower than the land market transfers. By partitioning, number of households increased from 586 to 2063. The area parted per household was 2.4 acres and each member of the household on an average received 0.67 acres. The average number of split per household was 3.52. A clearer dimension of the process can be obtained from the estimated trend values given in table 7.2.

Table 7.2
Estimated Values of Trends in Partitioning (1967-90)

	Dependent Variable	Constant	Coefficient of X	t Value	Significance	R^2	F Value
1	No. of HH Partitioned	17.46	0.56	3.03	*	0.29	9.2
2	No.of Splits	71.47	1.16	1.68	NS	0.11	2.82
3	No.splits per HH	4.02	-0.04	2.14	**	0.17	4.58
4	Area Partitioned	84.66	-2.15	2.09	**	0.17	4.36
5	Area partitioned per HH	4.10	-0.13	3.79	*	0.4	14.42
6	Area Per Splits	1.06	-0.03	3.07	*	0.3	9.47

Form of estimated equation , Y = a + bX
where Y - No. of transfers, area parted etc.
X - Year (1,2.....24)
* Significant at 1% level
** Significant at 5% level
NS - Not significant.

The positive time coefficient of number of households partitioned suggests the upward trend in the number of households partitioned over the period. Significantly enough, the coefficient of number of transfers is positive but insignificant as shown by the ' t ' value, which in a way suggests that increase in the number of households partitioned did not result in the proportionate increase in the number of splits. Therefore, the annual growth rate of number of households partitioned (2.3 percent) is considerably higher than the growth in the number of splits(3 percent-See table 7.3).

The time coefficients of area partitioned, area transferred per household and percentage of total area transferred in the villages are negative, suggesting downward trend over the period. The decline in the average size of holding during the period, as already noted, can be attributed to the downward trend of area partitioned per household and area per transfer. The non-viable and uneconomic units of land that result from partitioning may sometimes force the households for settle the partitioning by giving cash or other assets in lieu of landed property. This economic rationality among the farmers may be one of the reasons for declining trend in total area parted. The low value of R^2 for all the variables of partitioning suggests that variations over the period are not significant. As was noted in chapter 5, the estimated values of R^2 in the case of area

transferred and number of transfers through the land market are much higher than that of partitioning. This may be because, as the size of owned land of the family is uneconomic for partitioning among the members, peasants find an alternative way of the family formation through the purchase of land and constructing their homesteads in it.

A comprehensive picture of the trend can be obtained from the compound growth rates of the different variables. This is given in table 7.3.

Table 7.3
Growth Rates of Trends in Partitioning (1967-90)

	Dependent Variable	Coefficient of X(b)	t value	Significance	R^2	F value	Growth Rate
1	No. of HH Partitioned	.0232	2.78	**	0.26	7.74	2.32
2	No.of Splits	.0131	1.47	NS	0.09	2.15	1.31
3	No.of Splits per HH	-.0100	2.08	**	0.16	4.34	-1.00
4	Area Partitioned	-.0287	2.11	**	0.17	4.46	-2.87
5	Area partitioned per HH	-.0526	5.54	*	0.58	30.74	-5.26
6	Area Per Splits	-.0421	4.52	*	0.48	20.51	-4.21
7	% of Total Area	-.0073	2.65	*	0.24	7.05	-0.73

* significant at 1% level
** significant at 5% level
NS Not significant.
form of estimated equation, Log Y = a + bX

It may be noted from the table that except number of transfers and number of households partitioned, all other variables showed negative growth rates over the period. These negative growth rates are highly pronounced in the cases of area partitioned per household and area per transfer. As already noted, the above trend can be attributed to the declining average size of holding among the households. A comparative higher growth rate in the number of splits and number of households parted can be due to the increase in the number of households in the villages. On the contrary, negative growth rate of the number of transfers per household may be due to the steady decline in the average size of the family from 1971. These can be seen from table 7.4.

Table 7.4

Number of Households and Average Size of the Family in the Selected Villages.

Year	Number of households	Average size of the households
1961	3666	5.84
1971	4516	6.26
1981	5453	5.92
1991	7034	5.60

Sources: Census of India, Kerala Series,1961,1971,1981,1991.

The number of households in the villages shows an increasing trend, whereas average size of the family shows a

declining trend from 1971 onwards. These trends are reflected in the partitioning process through the positive growth in the households' splits and negative growth in the number of split per household.

The total number of transfers and the area transferred through partitioning were much lower than that of sales. This can be seen from the table 7.5.

Table shows that during the period, 1967-90, partitioning accounted for only 13.8 percent of the total number of transfers and 21.3 percent of the total area transferred. It was only in one year(1971) that area partitioned was considerably more than area transferred through sale. Average area per split was also the highest in 1971 compared to other years. This may be due to high rate of partitioning among the rich farmers, immediately after the implementation of the land reform measures.

Table 7.5

Trends in Land Sales and Partitioning. (1967-90) (Area in acres)

Year	No. of Sale	No. of Partitioning.	Total Transfers.	Area Sold. (Acres)	Area Parted	Total Area	Area per split	Area per sale
1967	366	88	454	152	72	224	0.82	0.42
	(80.62)	(19.38)	(100)	(67.86)	(32.14)	(100)		
1968	377	74	451	172	55	227	0.74	0.46
	(83.59)	(16.41)	(100)	(75.77)	(24.23)	(100)		
1969	373	69	442	54	37	191	0.54	0.41
	(84.39)	(15.61)	(100)	(80.63)	(19.37)	(100)		
1970	388	106	494	201	108	309	1.02	0.52
	(78.54)	(21.46)	(100)	(65.05)	(34.95)	(100)		
1971	299	87	386	128	199	327	2.29	0.43
	(77.46)	(22.54)	(100)	(39.14)	(60.86)	(100)		
1972	402	55	457	160	48	208	0.87	0.40
	(87.96)	(12.04)	(100)	(76.92)	(23.08)	(100)		
1973	459	94	553	225	60	285	0.63	0.49
	(83.00)	(17.00)	(100)	(78.94)	(21.06)	(100)		
1974	539	65	604	271	55	326	0.84	0.50
	(89.24)	(10.76)	(100)	(83.13)	(16.87)	(100)		
1975	557	119	676	254	95	349	0.80	0.40
	(82.40)	(17.60)	(100)	(72.78)	(27.22)	(100)		
1976	488	106	594	202	91	293	0.86	0.41
	(82.15)	(17.85)	(100)	(68.94	(31.06)	(100)		
1977	379	38	417	162	23	185	0.61	0.43
	(90.89)	(9.11)	(100)	(87.57)	(12.43)	(100)		
1978	499	60	559	197	48	245	0.80	0.39
	(89.27)	(10.73)	(100)	(80.41)	(19.59)	(100)		
1979	640	53	693	275	26	301	0.49	0.43
	(92.35)	(7.65)	(100)	(91.36)	(8.64)	(100)		
1980	690	91	781	287	44	331	0.48	0.42
	(88.35)	(11.65)	(100)	(87.71)	(13.29)	(100)		
1981	639	56	695	247	26	273	0.46	0.39
	(91.94)	(8.06)	(100)	(90.48)	(9.52)	(100)		
1982	695	89	784	259	53	312	0.60	0.37
	(88.64)	(11.36)	(100)	(83.01)	(16.99)	(100)		
1983	666	82	748	269	32	301	0.39	0.40
	(89.03)	(10.97)	(100)	(89.37)	(10.63)	(100)		
1984	698	126	824	249	40	289	0.32	0.36
	(84.71)	(15.29)	(100)	(86.16)	(13.84)	(100)		
1985	657	77	734	218	37	255	0.48	0.33
	(89.51)	(10.49)	(100)	(85.49)	(14.51)	(100)		
1986	577	80	657	287	48	335	0.60	0.32
	(87.82)	(12.18)	(100)	(85.67)	(14.51)	(100)		
1987	554	102	656	158	40	198	0.39	0.29
	(84.45)	(15.55)	(100)	(79.80	(14.33)	(100)		
1988	580	126	706	209	58	267	0.46	0.36
	(82.15)	(17.85)	(100)	(78.28)	(20.20)	(100)		
1989	708	105	813	197	47	244	0.45	0.27
	(87.08)	(12.92)	(100)	(80.74)	(21.72)	(100)		
1990	703	115	818	207	46	253	0.40	0.29
	(85.94)	(14.06)	(100)	(81.82)	(19.26)	(100)		
	12933	2063	14996	5140	1388	6528	0.67	0.39
	(86.24)	(13.76)	(100)	(78.74)	(21.26)	(100)		

However, it can be noted from the table that average area per split is considerably higher than area per sale. This is true in almost all the years. Exceptions can be noted only during two years(1983 and 1984). Generally, partitioning will take place only once in the life time of the family. But whole family property is divided among its members. On the other hand, except under extreme circumstances, sale transfers by peasants constitute only a part of the total family property. Therefore, partitioning is more important than sale in the mobility of the households.

While partitioning of a plot of land can take place only once in the life time of a family, sale of small plots can be made several times during the same period. This is the reason for larger number of sales and area sold in the land market transfers compared to partitioning.

Section III

Partitioning and Alienation of land

It is not possible to discern from the records of the registry offices, the nature of partitioning among various classes and castes and its impact on the process of alienation of land. Therefore,additional data is collected through direct personal investigation from 92 housholds (an equal number of growing and

decaying farms i.e 46 each. The details of the selection of households were given in chapter 3). For the purpose of this analysis only those households which existed in the initial year of the study(1957) and, which survived until the end year of the survey (1990) were selected. Growing farms are defined as those farms which existed during the whole period, 1957-90 and expanded their land ownership base by accumulation of land through the land market. Decaying farms are those farms which existed as an independent family unit during this period and whose ownership of land contracted through the land alienation process. The analysis is based on the size-classes, castes and growing and decaying nature of farms and their structure of partitioning. The size class is defined in terms of the ownership of land at the time of partitioning.

Partitioning involves the creation of new households as a result of the splits in the membership and or property of parental units. Generally, the split of the household is either as consumption units or as production units or as both. Partitioning as consumption units takes place without taking any share in the landed property owned by the parental unit. Partitioning as production unit takes place as a result of the split in both the membership and property of the family. If the parents are still alive, parting members may form a new family, but may not urge for their due share of the property. The most important reason for

this behaviour is the need to provide independent and regular income to the parents in their old age. Secondly, there may be still unmarried girls and students in the family for whose marriages and education, the parents might retain family land with them. Thirdly, the partitioning of small parcels of land may not be viable and economically rational for independent cultivation.

In the analysis that follows, we propose to examine whether the rate of partitioning is higher among the poor peasants than among the rich peasants and whether it is deterrent to the growth of the farm itself. Our analysis of the structure of partitioning is in terms of the following variables.

$$\text{1) Rate of partitioning} = \frac{\text{Total number of new households}}{\text{Original households or parental units}}$$

2) Percentage of households experiencing partitioning (Pc).

3) Percentage of households experiencing partitioning as production unit (Pr).

4) Rate of partitioning as Pc.

5) Rate of partitioning as Pr.

6) Rate of partitioning as consumption unit(C)

7) Average number of splits per parted household as Pc.

8) Average number of splits per parted household as C

9) Average number of splits per parted household as Pr.

10) Area parted per parted household.

11) Area per split.

12) Area parted per sample of household.

13) Net land market transfers.

The structure of partitioning shows that there are significant differences among the size classes of land holdings. This can be see from table 7.6.

Table 7.6.

Size Class-wise Structure Partitioning among the Selected Households

(area in acres)

Size Class (acres)	% hh parted as pc	% hh parted as pr	Rate of p.as pc	Rate of p.as C	Rate of p.as pr	AV.No.of split per parted HH	A.V.No. of Split as Pr	Av. no. of Split as C	Average area divided per partedhh	Area per split	Area parted per Shh	Net. Market transf-ers.
0-0.50	88.24	17.64	2.29	1.94	0.35	2.60	2.00	2.20	0.34	0.17	0.06	+0.14
0.50-1.25	100.00	33.33	2.72	1.83	0.89	2.72	2.67	1.83	0.57	0.21	0.19	-0.02
1.25-250	94.12	35.29	3.82	3.06	0.76	4.06	2.17	3.25	0.76	0.35	0.27	+0.60
2.50-500	100.00	45.83	3.96	2.71	1.25	3.96	2.72	2.71	1.57	0.58	0.72	+1.46
5.00 + .	100.00	41.18	4.44	3.75	0.69	4.44	1.57	3.75	2.81	1.75	1.23	-0.61
All	96.74	35.87	3.47	2.64	0.83	3.58	2.30	2.73	1.39	0.60	0.50	+0.47

P - Partitioning.
Pc- Production plus consumption unit.
Pr- Production Unit.
HH- Household.

Note: Percentage of households parted as C is the same as Pc since all the households parted as production unit also experiencing partitioning as consumption unit.

Source :- Our survey.

While the rate of partitioning and percentage of households experiencing partitioning (Pc) was the highest among the rich farmer category, they are the lowest among the marginal farmers. It appears that there is no direct relationship between partitioning and alienation. The rich farmer category for whom the rate of partitioning is the highest happens to be the size group with largest net losers of land through the land market. The landed property parted per household and average number of splits per parted household are also considerably higher among the rich peasants. However, the rate of partitioning as production unit and average number of split as production unit are comparatively lower among the rich peasants. The members of the rich families are mostly employed in other occupations and therefore, do not insist on the division of the family property, if the parents are alive. It was not the economic advantage of large farm or family size, but their diversified interests and opportunities that tended to reduce the rate of partitioning as production unit among the rich farmers.

The rate of partitioning as production units are the highest among the upper middle class, the highest accumulating group. Among the lower middle peasants, rate of partitioning as production units are higher than among the upper middle farmers. They gained land, though less than the upper middle class farmers. Among the poor peasants, owning between 0.50 -1.25 acres,rate of

partitioning as production unit and average number of splits as production unit are high compared to the other lower groups. They were also the net losers of land. Therefore, partitioning among the poor peasants, can to a certain extent, be said to have contributed to the alienation of land. The low rate of partitioning as already noted among the marginal farmers is either due to insufficient land to divide among the members or due to uneconomic size of land after partitioning. Therefore, the members of these households form their independent family unit through the purchase of land.

The nature of partitioning among the various castes also shows(table and 7.7) that partitioning and alienation of land are not positively related.

The Christians,the principal land gainers, had exhibited the highest values of rate of partitioning as production unit. For the highest alienating castes such as the Brahmin and Other High Caste Hindus, the values of Pr and Pc are lower than those of other castes.

The above analysis of the structure of partitioning among the various classes and castes, however, fails to unravel fully the process of partitioning and its effects on alienation or accumulation of land. Households within each class and caste

Table 7.7

Caste-wise Structure of Partitioning - 1957-90

Caste	% HH P as Pc	% HH P as Pr	Rate of P.as Pc	Rate of P.as C	Rate of P.as Pr	Av.No.of split as Pc	Av No. of Split as Pr	Av No. of Split as C	Area divided per parted HH	Area Per Split	Av.Area Parted per shh	Net market transfers
Christians	100.00	43.59	4.23	3.10	1.13	4.23	2.59	3.10	0.95	0.45	0.51	+1.12
Brahmins	88.89	33.33	3.33	2.89	0.44	3.75	1.33	3.25	0.60	0.45	0.20	-1.17
OHGH	91.67	16.67	2.75	2.08	0.67	3.00	4.00	2.27	8.85	2.21	1.48	-1.19
OBC	93.33	26.67	3.00	2.33	0.67	3.21	2.50	2.50	0.39	0.15	0.10	+0.54
SC/ST	100.00	37.50	2.25	1.88	0.37	2.25	1.00	1.88	0.15	0.15	0.06	+0.36
Muslims	100.00	44.44	3.11	2.33	0.78	3.11	1.75	2.33	1.16	0.66	0.52	1.12
All	96.74	35.87	3.47	2.64	0.83	3.58	2.30	2.73	1.39	0.60	0.50	+0.47

C=consumption unit.
P= Partitioning
Pc=Production plus consumption unit
Pr=production unit
hh=Households.

Source :- Our survey.

are not uniform in their structure of partitioning and alienation of land. Within each group, there are accumulating and alienating households. Disaggregation of various classes and castes into growing and decaying farm households is therefore critical for understanding the nature of partitioning and land alienation process. A comparison of the structure of partitioning among the growing and decaying farms is shown in table 7.8.

Table shows that the rate of partitioning, average number of splits as pc and pr, and average area parted per household are the highest among the growing farms. However, the area parted per divided household and area per split are comparatively higher among the decaying farm households. This is mainly because of the large farm size among the decaying farms(for details see chapter 8) compared to the growing farms. Among the decaying farms, rate of partitioning as consumption units and average number of splits as consumption units are higher than among the growing farms. Since rate of partitioning as production unit is lower among them, it may be the high rate of partitioning as consumption units that may be the important reason for land alienation. As already noted, rate of partitioning as consumption units largely take place on the marriage of daughters. Therefore, expenses incurred as dowry and other marriage expenses may be the reason for land alienation among the decaying farm households.

Table 7.8

Partitioning among the Growing and Decaying Farms,1957-90

	Growing Farms (G)	Decaying Farms (D)	Difference G - D
1. Percentage of HH* Experienced Partitioning as PC*	100.00	93.47	+6.53
2. Percentage of HH Experienced partitioning as Pr	45.65	26.09	+19.56
3. Rate of Partitioning as PC	3.65	3.28	+0.37
4. Rate of partitioning as C	2.45	2.87	-0.42
5. Rate of Partitioning as Pr	1.11	0.54	+0.57
6. Average No. of Splits as Pc	3.65	3.51	+0.14
7. Average No. of Splits asPr	2.43	2.08	+0.35
8. Average No.of Splits as C	2 .45	3.02	-0.57
9. Average area Parted Per HH (Acres)	1.16	1.79	-0.63
10 Area per Split(Acres)	0.48	0.86	-0.38
11 Av:Area Parted per eample of HH (Acres)	0.53	0.47	+0.06
12. Net market tranefers (Acres)	2.34	-1.40	+0.94

HH - Houseeholds
PC - Production Plus Consumption unit.
Pr - Production Unit.
Source :- Our survey.

This aggregative comparison again does not reveal the class-wise and caste-wise differences in the nature of partitioning within the two groups-growing and decaying farms. Table 7.9 shows the partitioning of growing and decaying farms belonging to different size classes.

Rate of partitioning as Pc and Pr, and average number of splits as Pc and Pr are higher among the decaying farms of marginal peasants (owning below 0.50 acre) and lower middle peasants (owning between 1.25 and 2.50 acres).

Since growing and decaying farms are defined only in terms of current ownership of land, it is possible that some of the upper middle class and rich peasants slided down the ladder of mobility and became lower middle farmers. This is clear from the area parted per divided household(7.55 acres) among the lower middle peasants. It may that partititioning and the downward movement of the middle and rich classes intensify the process of forced sale of land, to maintain their living standards previously enjoyed.

Table 7.9.

Size Class-wise Growing and Decaying Farms Structure of Partitioning (1957-90)

(Area in acres)

Size Class (current)	% HH P as Pr	% HH P as Pr	Rate of P.as Pc	Rate of P.as C	Rate of P.as Pr	Av.No.of split as Pc	Av No. of Split as Pr	Av.No.of split as C	Area di-vided per P.HH	Area per spilt	Area parted per SHH	Net market transfer
0 - 0.50												
Growing Farms	100.00	28.57	2.85	1.71	0.85	2.85	4.00	1.71	1.60	0.40	0.46	+0.63
Decaying Farms	84.62	46.15	3.00	2.15	1.10	3.56	1.83	2.56	0.26	0.14	0.12	-0.41
0.50 - 1.25												
Growing Farms	100.00	72.73	3.45	1.63	1.82	3.45	2.50	1.63	0.69	0.28	0.50	+0.94
Decaying Farms	100.00	33.33	2.67	2.25	0.42	2.67	1.25	2.25	1.20	0.96	0.40	-1.23
1.25 - 2.50												
Growing Farms	100.00	60.00	4.00	3.20	0.80	4.00	1.33	3.20	1.30	0.97	0.78	+1.54
Decaying Farms	83.33	33.33	4.67	3.17	1.50	5.60	4.50	3.80	7.55	1.68	2.52	-1.25
2.50 - 5.00												
Growing Farms	100.00	38.46	3.69	2.54	1.15	3.69	3.00	2.54	1.36	0.45	0.52	+2.62
Decaying Farms	100.00	-----	2.40	2.40	----	2.40	----	2.40	---	---	---	-0.93
5.00+												
Growing Farms	100.00	30.00	4.20	3.80	0.40	4.20	1.33	3.80	1.66	1.24	0.50	5.12
Decaying Farms	100.00	----	4.00	4.00	---	4.00	----	4.00	---	---	---	-3.01
All Class												
Growing Farms	100.00	45.65	3.65	2.45	1.11	3.65	2.43	2.45	1.16	0.48	0.53	+2.34
Decaying Farms	93.47	26.09	3.28	2.87	0.54	3.51	2.08	3.02	1.79	0.86	0.47	-1.40

Source : Our Survey.

P=Partitioning

Pc=Production plus consumption unit

Pr=production unit

HH=Households.

The comparison of the area parted and net gain in land through the land market transfers shows that among the growing farms the average net gain in land is higher than the average amount of land parted among the members of the households. Among the decaying farms, except among the lower middle peasants,the net loss of land in the land market is higher than area parted per household. Therefore, it can be said that partitioning cannot be generally treated as a reason for land alienation among the majority of classes. The caste-wise partitioning and alienation of land among the growing and decaying farms are given table 7.10.

The table shows that the percentage of households parted as Pc are higher among the growing farms. On the other hand, the percentage of households divided as production unit and rate of partitioning as production unit are not uniformly higher among the growing farms. These are higher among the growing farms of Christians, Brahmins and Muslims; lower among the Scheduled Castes and completly absent among the Other High Caste Hindus and Other Backward Castes. The average area divided per parted households among the Other High Caste Hindus is 8.5 acres. Therefore, the parted households among them belong to rich peasants owning above 5 acres. Since partitioning and alienation of land among the rich peasants are not positively related, it is not the high rate of partitioning among the High Caste Hindus that is the direct cause

of land alienation. On the other hand,the average area parted among the Other Backward Castes and Scheduled Castes are below half an acre. Therefore, the parted households belong to the poor peasants. As already noted, among them, the rate of partitioning and alienation of land are positively related. It may be noted from the table that the rate of partitioning as consumption units and average number of splits as consumption units are higher among the decaying farms, except among the Other Backward Castes. Therefore,among the decaying farms of the majority of castes,average number of splits as consumption units is higher than among the growing farms. This is also a phenomenon occuring among the decaying farms of various classes. The high rates of partitioning as consumption units take place as a result of the marriage of the daughters. Generally, among the majority of the castes, daughters are given their share as cash or as ornaments or as both. Therefore, alienation of land among the decaying farms can be attributed to the larger number of female members in the family. This will be clearer from an analysis of the demographic structure of the growing and decaying farms.

Table 7.10

Caste-wise Growing and Decaying Farms Structure of Partitioning.

(1957-90)

Caste	% HH P AS Pc	% HH P AS Pr	Rate of P AS Pc	Rate of P As C	Rate of P As Pr	Av.No.of split as Pc	Av. No. of Split as Pr	Av. No. of. Split as C	Area divided per P,HH	Area per spilt	Area parted per SHH	Net market transfer
Christians												
Growing Farms	100.00	86.36	4.54	2.63	1.91	4.54	2.21	2.63	1.02	0.46	0.87	+3.54
Decaying Farms	100.00	11.76	3.82	3.70	0.12	3.82	1.00	3.70	0.26	0.26	0.03	-1.81
Brahmins												
Growing Farms	100.00	50.00	3.50	3.00	0.50	3.50	1.00	3.00	0.50	0.50	0.25	+0.82
Decaying Farms	85.71	28.57	3.28	2.85	0.43	3.83	1.50	3.33	0.65	0.43	0.19	-1.77
OHCH												
Growing Farms	100.00	--	2.00	2.00	--	2.00	--	2.00	---	---	---	+0.50
Decaying Farms	90.00	20.00	2.90	2.10	0.80	3.22	4.00	2.33	8.85	2.21	1.77	-1.54
OBC												
Growing Farms	100.00	--	3.00	3.00	--	3.00	--	3.00	---	---	---	+1.55
Decaying Farms	85.71	57.14	3.00	1.57	1.43	3.50	2.50	1.83	0.39	0.15	0.22	-0.64
SC/ST												
Growing Farms	100.00	33.33	2.00	1.67	0.33	2.00	1.00	1.67	0.08	0.08	0.03	+0.59
Decaying Farms	100.00	50.00	3.00	2.50	0.50	3.00	1.00	2.50	0.30	0.30	0.15	-0.50
Muslims												
Growing Farms	100.00	50.00	2.83	1.83	1.00	2.83	2.00	1.83	1.50	0.75	0.75	+1.86
Decaying Farms	100.00	33.33	3.67	3.34	0.33	3.67	1.00	3.34	0.15	0.15	0.05	-0.23
All Caste												
Growing Farms	100.00	45.65	3.65	2.45	1.11	3.65	2.43	2.45	1.16	0.48	0.53	+2.34
Decaying Farm	93.47	26.09	3.28	2.87	0.54	3.51	2.08	3.02	1.79	0.86	0.47	-1.40

Sources: Our Survey

Demographic Structure and Partitioning.

Correlation between the size of land holdings and the size of the farm households can be seen in Kerala(7.11). Our data also shows the same positive relation between family size and size of land holding(table 7.12) except in the case of poor farmers(owning between 0-50-1,25).

Table 7.11

Family Size and Size of Land Holdings, Kerala 1970-71.

Size of operational holdings (hectares)	Average size of household
0.04 - 0.25	5.97
0.25 - 0.50	6.38
0.50 - 1.00	6.73
1.00 - 2.00	7.24
2.00 - 3.00	7.39
3.00 - 4.00	7.59
above 4.00	8.38

Source : Government of Kerala (1972), Third Decennial World Census of Agriculture,1970-71, Bureau of Economics and Statistics, Thriuvanathapuram,1972.

Table 7.12

Family Size and Size of Land Holdings among the Selected Households.

Size class. (Acres)	Average family size
0-0.50	6.95
0.50-1.25	6.86
1.25-2.50	8.19
2.50-5.00	8.21
5 .00+	8.51
Total	7.70

Source: Our Survey

A comparison of the demographic structure of the growing and decaying farms shows that growing farms have larger family and their size rises with the size of land holdings. This can be seen from the table 7.13. The high rate of partitioning among the growing farms,as noted earlier, therefore, is due to their larger family size. There is some positive relation between family size and farm size among the decaying farms also, though it is not as clear cut as in the case of growing farms.

The demographic composition of the households shows that females out-number males in decaying farm households. Families with large number of female members alienate land for providing

dowry at the time of their marriage. This may be the reason for the decline in their farm size. This higher proportion of females among the decaying farm households is one of the important reasons for the low rate of partitioning as production unit, despite of the higher rates of partitioning as consumption units. It is possible that when there are unmarried sisters, the male married members may not insist on the division of family property, so as to enable the parents to acquire sufficient income for the marriage of the daughters. Growing farm households, on the other hand, have larger number of males in the family.The higher number of males among the growing farms enable them to get money and other assets from the brides' families. This fund is utilised by most of them especially the poor and middle peasants to accumulate land. There are also instances of the use of funds received by the male members as dowry to meet the expenses of the marriage of the female members. To compensate, such male members who contribute to the expenses of the marriage of their sisters, larger share in the family property is generally given to them later. Therefore, within the socio-institutional framework in Kerala, family with larger number of males can better withstand the pressures of alienation of land and downward mobility.

Table 7.13.

Demographic Structure among the Growing and Decaying Farm Households.

Size - Class	Average Family Size			Mean age at Marriage		% hh	Mean age at death of hh
	males	females	total	male	female	died	
0 - 0.50 Growing farms	4.00	3.14	7.14	27.06	25.23	14.28	68
Decaying farms	3.15	3.69	6.84	27.65	25.14	23.08	65.55
0.50 - 1.25 Growing farms	4.72	2.91	7.63	27.49	24.14	9.09	72
Decaying farms	2.67	3.50	6.17	28.47	24.43	25.00	71
1.25 - 2.50 Growing farms	4.60	3.60	8.20	27.94	22.56	20.00	67.5
Decaying farms	3.00	5.16	8.16	27.68	23.41	50.00	66
2.50 - 5.00 Growing farm	5.00	3.23	8.23	28.30	22.54	15.38	64.5
Decaying farms	3.60	4.60	8.20	28.70	22.42	40.00	64
5.00 & above Growing farms	4.80	4.12	8.92	28.75	21.88	20.00	68.5
Decaying farms	2.90	5.20	8.10	28.88	21.44	30.00	67.5
All classes Growing farms	4.72	3.52	8.24	27.93	23.18	21.73	68.10
Decaying farms	3.04	4.15	7.19	28.43	23.46	30.43	66.81

hh - Head of the households

Another important variable in family formation and partitioning is the age at marriage. It may be noted that the age at marriage has been consistently higher in Kerala than in the country as a whole, even at the turn of the century. In recent decades, the age at marriage has shown a tendency to increase even further. Our data from the sample of households given in table 7.13 shows that the mean age at marriage of males is comparatively lower among the growing farm households(except among the lower middle peasants) than among the decaying farm households. As for marriage age of women, not much difference can be noted within the growing and decaying farms of each class. Age at marriage of females decreases as the farm size increases. This is true of both growing and decaying farms. The rich farmers are able to find suitable brides to their daughters earlier than the farmers belonging to other classes since they have adequate funds (or property to alienate in the case of decaying farms) to meet the marriage expenses. On the other hand, lack of funds to meet these expenses may be the reason for the high age at marriage and low rate of partitioning among the lower classes. As against this trend, the mean age at marriage of men increases according to the size of the farms. This is true of both among the growing and decaying farms.

It is generally believed that, partitioning gets postponed either till one or more of the parents are dead or are

in an advanced age. This is because, division of property wil leave the parents in difficult conditions in their old age. Th situation gets worse if the aged belong to the marginal and poo classe. Those who are agricultural labourers or casual wag labourers have access to income only during their working life. Once they cease working, they become totally dependent on their children for support. The arrangements for the parents here is usually a pooled arrangement. All the working members parted from the family, especially males, contribute towards the support of their non-working parents. Even after the death of the head of the household, partitioning of family property generally will not take place, if the mother is still alive or junior members have no alternative source of income.

For these above reasons, mortality rates among parents an their age at death can be important variables affecting partitioning. A comparison of the mortality rates among the heads of the growing and decaying farm households reveals that (see table 7.13) age at death of the head of the household is higher than among the growing farms. The percentage of families where the head of the household died is lower substantially in this group. But the rate of partitioning, as already noted, was higher among them. Thus there is no positive relation between mortality rate of the head of the household and the rates of partitioning. However,

decaying farms belonging to marginal and lower middle classes which experienced high rate of partitioning exhibited high mortality rates and low mean age at death of the head of the households.

Our analysis shows that some of the demographic characteristics such as the family size, male - female composition and age at marriage tend to have considerable influence on both the nature and the rate of partitioning. Some of these factors require added importance in the region due to social customs like arranged marriages, payment of dowry, costly marriage ceremonies etc. Thus, the specific social structure and institutional set up of the region under study are perhaps the most important variables that influence partitioning and alienation of land.

Chart 7.1 Trends in Number of Sales and Partitioning - 1967-90

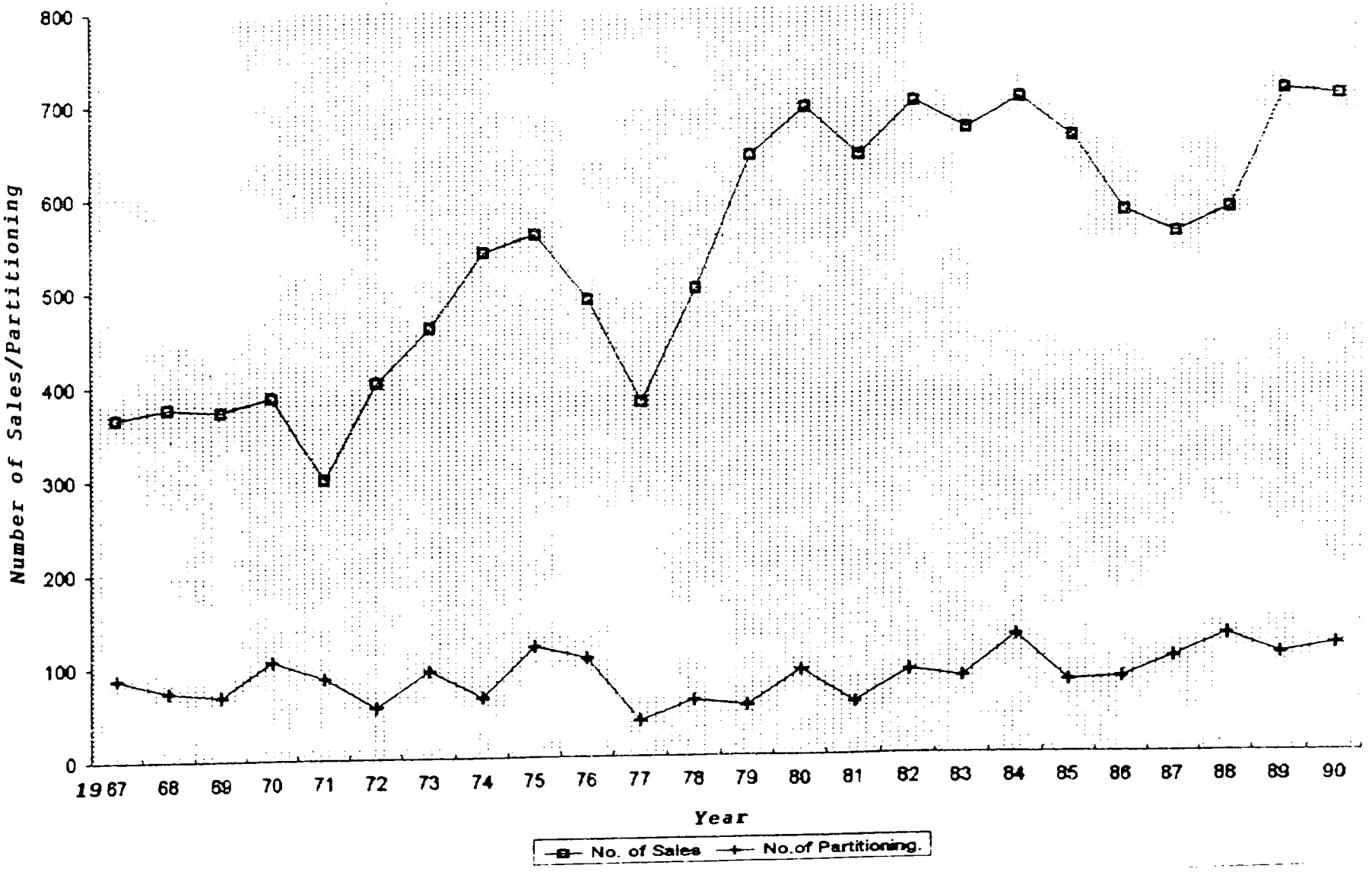
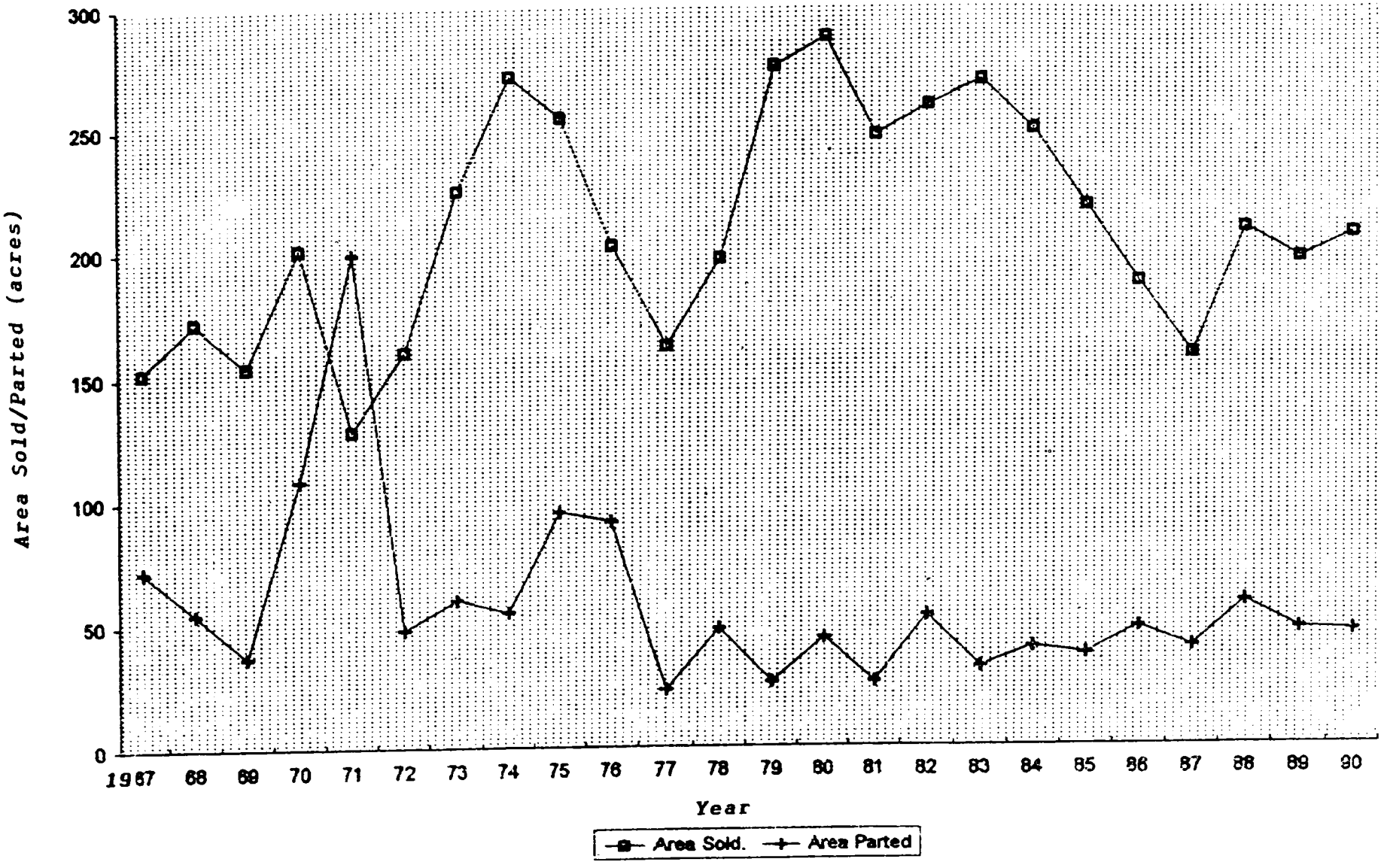


Chart 7.2 Trends in Area Sold and Parted - 1967-90



Notes and References

1. Marumakkathayam literally means descent through sister's children. It is a body of customs and usages. There is a fundamental difference between the Hindu law and Marumakkathayam law, in that the former is founded on the agnatic family and the latter is based on the matriarchate. The marumakkathayam family consists of all the descendants of the family line of one common female ancestor.

2. Census of India 1951, Travancore-Cochin, Delhi, 1953

3. Joint possession does not imply equality of household members;inequality by both gender and age are typical. Yet relation to the means of production through membership in the domestic group confers a unitary character to the group. For details of Hindu Succession Laws See Sredhara Variar, Marumakkathayam and Allied Systems of Laws in the Kerala State,U.M. Press, Cochin 1969.

4. A man is considered to die intestate if he has not made a testamentary disposition which is capable of taking effect.

5. For details of the consequences of the disintegration of the joint family system and rise of individual ownership rights in land see:

   a) Jeffery, Robin, Decline of Nayar Dominance: Society and Politics in Travancore, 1847-1908, Vikas Publishing House, New Delhi, 1976.

   b) Namboodiripad,E,M,S, National Question in Kerala, Peoples Publishing House, Bombay, 1952.

   c) Varghese,T.C, Agrarian Change and Economic Consequences, Land Tenures in Kerala, 1857-1960, Allied publishers, Bombay,1970.

CHAPTER 8

DYNAMICS OF LAND OWNERSHIP AND PEASANT MOBILITY

The changes in the structure of an agrarian economy as a result of land market transfers and partitioning of land was the focus of our analysis till now. In the present chapter, we present the totality of these changes and their impact on the pattern of mobility of households over the last three decades. The questions that pose here are: What are the demographic and economic factors influencing mobility within the peasantry? How do these factors influence partitioning and market transfers of land? Does increasing socio-economic and demographic differentiation lead to growing concentration of land?. Each of these questions has repeatedly been posed and answered in literature on the subject(for details see chapter 2). Very often these answers were based on general theories[1]. In this chapter we plan to examine empirically the hypotheses on differentiation and mobility advanced by Lenin,Chaynov,Shanin and others using data collected from the four villages of Kerala.

Demographic Differentiation and Mobility.

This section examines how far demographic differences of the peasant households studied by us influence the pattern of moblity among them during the last three decades. Firstly, the

dynamic part of the Chaynovian hypothesis viz.,the positive relation between family size, consumer worker ratio and the size of owned land will be tested[2]. This will be followed by an examination of the mobility of the households studied by us, following largely Shanin's mobility schema.

According to Chaynov, the chief cause of differences in farm size is the demographic process of family growth and not socio-economic factors. It is the demographic factors that cause peasant households to accumulate or alienate land. Farm size expands and contracts as the size of the households change with the arrival and departure of children. This process is repeated in a stable fashion from generation to generation.

Chaynovian demographic differentiation and mobility occur over the life cycle of the family. The first stage of a peasant family's life cycle is defined as the early years after constitution of the household when children are too young to enter the labour process. Consumption needs increase while the number of workers remain constant and the consumer-worker ratio consequently increases. This leads to greater exploitation of the family members. The number of days (or more accurately hours) devoted to farm work per family worker would vary directly with the consumer-worker ratio. The size of the area sown would vary directly with family size. There might be problems of causality

here; according to Chaynov increasing family size causes a larger area to be sown. But in a land scarce economy, the size of farm itself might impose limits on family size.

During the second stage, consumption needs increase to a maximum, but the number of workers also increases as children start participating in the labour process. Farm size increases due to growing family labour force, while the degree of self-exploitation of family labour decreases. In the third stage, no more children are born into the household and the consumer-worker ratio falls rapidly as the children grow up. Some children begin leaving the household by this stage, but the work capacity of the household remains constant as other children keep reaching adult's work capacity. The farm size also adjusts itself to the requirements of the family. At the beginning of the fourth stage, the consumer-worker ratio drops to one and it is here that farm size begins to decrease. If all children eventually leave the household, the demographic cycle is completed and farm size returns to its initial state.

To test these hypotheses, the demographic and economic profile of the households studied by us are analysed during their years of existence (i.e., years since their inception as independent family units) at certain frequency intervals. In each case, corresponding consumer-worker ratio and family size are

computed and their percentage changes observed. One would expect the following:

i) The family size and consumer-worker ratio shall increase up to 18-20 years of the family's existence.

ii) After reaching 18-20 years of existence,the size of the family and the consumer-worker ratio shall start declining and the magnitude of the negative change shall be higher as the household matures.

iii) Peasant households positively adjust their land, labour, output and income to the growth of the family size and the consumer-worker ratio.

Our empirical procedure begins with the selection of those households which had been in existence for a long time, and had gone through different phases of family size, and consumer-worker ratios and land holding size. The comparison of the demographic composition and the size of the owned land among the households studied by us are given in table 8.1.

The family size, consumer-worker ratio and owned land are all increasing upto 19 years of the household's age. The net gain through land market transfers also increases during this period. There is a negative change in all the variables in the next stage,

Table 8.1

Demographic Structure and Mobility.

	At inception	1957	1969	1979	1990	Total change
1. Age of the house hold.	0	7.29	19.29	29.29	40.29	-
2. Average number of family members in the family.	4.31	5.59 (29.47)	7.12 (27.60)	5.58 -(19.95)	5.76 (3.23)	1.58 (33.64)
3. male-female ratio.	1.03	1.09 (5.83)	1.16 (6.42)	1.46 (25.86)	0.96 -(34.66)	-0.07 -(6.79)
4. Average number of adult worker	1.80	1.80 --	2.60 (44.44)	4.66 (79.23)	4.45 -(4.50)	2.65 (147.22)
5. Average number of consumers.	2.96	3.54 (19.59)	5.36 (51.41)	5.01 -(6.52)	4.96 (1.00)	2.00 (67.56)
6. Consumer-worker ratio.	1.64	1.96 (19.51)	2.06 (5.10)	1.08 (-47.57)	1.11 (2.78)	-0.53 -(32.31)
7. Average land owned (acres)	3.12	3.23 (3.41)	3.57 (10.53)	3.28 -(8.12)	3.09 -(5.79)	-0.03 -(0.96)
8. Average land owned per capita.(acres)	0.72	0.58 -(19.44)	0.50 -(13.79)	0.56 (12.00)	0.54 -(3.57)	- 0.18 -(25.00)
9. Average net gain through land market transfers.(acres)		+0.11	+0.38	-0.12	+0.10	+0.47
10. Average area parted.(acres)		--	0.04	0.17	0.29	0.50

Figures in brackets are the percentage change between two points of time
Source:-Our Survey

i.e. upto 29 years of a family's existence. At the next stage, after 29 years of exietence, the variables move in different

directions. There is a net gain in land during this phase. But the average size of farm declines. The family size and consumer-worker ratio starts rising.

As for partitioning, before 20 years of existence as an independent family unit, area parted by the household was insignificant. But this increases in subsequent periods. The area parted among the households reaches the maximum between 29-40 years of family's existence. After 30 years, net accumulaiton of land is positive, when the area parted per household is also the maximum. Therefore, the alienation tendency is not higher among the households which experience break- up as production units. It can be noted from the table(8.1) that the alienation tendency is strong when the male-female ratio is the higheet. The ratio goes up due to marriage of female members. The ratio goes down once again after 29 years, when the male members leave the family after partitioning.

Generally, the female members get married after the age of 20 irrespective of the class they belong. In order to meet the huge marriage expenses and to pay dowry, the peasants are forced to alienate land, a tendency noted in earlier chapters. This social custom thus leads to alienation and downward mobility. Thus, the demographic structure as explained by Chaynov in itself cannot fully explain the dynamics of land ownership and social mobility in our villages. It should be complemented with the

social dynamics and institutional set-up of the region under study.

The second part of the Chaynovian hypothesis envisages that the degree of positive changes shall be relatively higher in successive stages of a family's evolution as it moves from zero year to the 18-20 year stage. This part of the hypothesis is not always supported by our survey data. The family size and consumer-worker ratio are continuously rising up to 19 years of existence of a family unit. Although there was a positive change in family size, consumer-worker ratio and the ownership of land, percentage changes were dissimilar.

The third part of the hypothesis emphasises that after reaching the 18-20 years stage, the family size and consumer-worker ratio shall start declining and as the age of households mature, the magnitude of the negative change shall be higher. This assumption does not seem to hold fully. It may be noted from the table 8.1 that both family size and consumer-worker ratio declined by 47.57 percent between 19 and 29 years of existence of the family. But it slightly increased (2.78 percent) during the last phase. This increase in the consumer worker ratio was due to the addition of females and children through marriage of non-parted males in the family. The change in the ownership of land did not follow the increase in family size and consumer worker

ratio during the last phase. The change in ownership of land was negative during both the phases(8.12 and 5.79 percent). Thus, there is a lack of correspondence between the direction and degree of change in the family size, consumer-worker ratio and ownership of land during the last phase. Therefore, this part of the Chaynovian hypothesis does not hold good in the fourth phase of our families.

Disaggregation of the total households into growing and decaying farm households and a comparison of their demographic structures can better reveal the impact of demograhic features on the upward or downward mobility. This comparison is shown in tables 8.2 and 8.3. The average family size, number of adult workers, number of consumers and consumer-worker ratio are higher among the growing farms at almost all the intermittent points. The owned land per household, and per capita land owned,however, are considerably lower among the growing farms up to 30 years of existence of the family. A significant difference between these two groups of farms lie in the male-female ratio that is considerably lower among the decaying farms.

The preponderance of females and their marriages result in a high rate of alienation of land among the decaying farms at all phases. Among the growing farm households, higher ratio of males and the resulting inflow of funds led to net gain in area through

land market transfers. But the rate of increase in average land owned per household shows a downward trend even in the case of growing farms when the male-female ratio was increasing as a result of marriages of female children.

Generally, families with large number of females may try to limit the family size because of the future liability of providing dowry to the female members(see chapter 7 table 7.13). The possible limit imposed on family size might have led to a low consumer-worker ratio among the decaying farm households. This low consumer-worker ratio however, did not lead to low family expenditure because females are generally more expensive than the male members. They should be better dressed, must wear ornaments and should be provided with good education to get a suitable bridegroom in the future. Therefore, even though the consumer-worker ratio was lower among the decaying farm households, it was noticed that they were forced to sell land to incur these additional expenditure from the initial phases itself. These initial expenditure incurred are comparatively less than the payment of dowry and therefore, average quantum of land alienated during the initial stages of the family is considerably lower than in the subsequent stages of a family's existence. Though, the decaying farm households had higher initial ownership of land, the large number of females forced them to save the

Table 8.2.

Demographic Structure and Mobility among the Growing Farms.

	At inception	1957	1969	1979	1990	Total change.
1. Age of the house hold.	0	7.61	19.61	29.61	40.61	-
2. Average number of members in the family.	4.63	5.91 (27.65)	7.80 (31.98)	6.02 -(22.82)	6.22 (3.32)	1.59 (34.34)
3. Male-female ratio.	1.37	1.41 (2.92)	1.48 (4.96)	1.83 (23.65)	1.11 -(39.34)	-0.26 -(18.98)
4. Average number of adult workers.	1.80	1.80 --	2.03 (12.78)	5.30 (161.08)	4.71 -(11.13)	2.91 (161.67)
5. Average number of consumers.	3.11	3.66 (17.68)	6.17 (68.57)	5.63 -(8.75)	5.28 -(6.21)	2.17 (69.77)
6. Consumer-worker ratio.	1.73	2.03 (18.02)	3.04 (49.75)	1.06 (-65.13)	1.12 (5.36)	-0.61 -(35.26)
7. Average land owned (acres)	1.60	1.81 (13.13)	2.86 (58.01)	3.03 (5.94)	3.41 (12.54)	1.81 (113.13)
8. Average land owned per capita.	0.35	0.31 -(11.43)	0.36 (16.13)	0.50 (38.88)	0.55 (10.00)	0.20 (57.14)
9. Net market transfers	0.21	1.14	0.29	0.70	2.34	
10.Average area parted	--	0.09	0.12	0.32	0.53	

Figures in brackets are the percentage change between two points of time.

Source:-Our survey.

Table 8.3.

Demographic Strucutre and Mobility among the Decaying Farms.

	At inception	1957	1969	1979	1990	Total change
1. Age of the house hold.	0	6.96	18.96	28.96	39.96	
2. Average number of members in the family.	4.00	5.24 (31.00)	6.43 (22.71)	5.13 -(20.21)	5.28 (2.92)	1.28 (32.00)
3. Male-female ratio.	0.69	0.77 (11.59)	0.84 (9.09)	1.09 (29.76)	0.81 -(25.69)	0.12 (17.39)
4. Average number of adult workers.	1.80	1.80 --	3.17 (76.11)	4.01 (26.50)	4.18 (4.24)	2.38 (132.22)
5. Average number of consumers.	2.80	3.41 (21.79)	4.55 (33.43)	4.38 -(3.74)	4.63 (5.71)	1.83 (65.36)
6. Consumer-worker ratio.	1.56	1.89 (21.15)	1.44 -(23.80)	1.09 -(24.30)	1.11 (1.80)	-0.45 -(28.85)
7. Average land owned (acres)	4.64	4.65 (0.02)	4.28 -(0.79)	3.53 -(17.52)	2.77 -(21.52)	-1.87 -(40.30)
8. Average land owned per capita.	1.16	0.89 -(23.38)	0.64 -(28.09)	0.60 -(6.25)	0.52 -(13.33)	-0.64 -(55.17)
9. Net market transfers		+0.01	-0.37	-0.54	-0.50	-1.40
10. Average area parted		--	--	0.21	0.26	0.47

Figures in brackets are the % change
Source:- Our Survey.

surplus income for the future expected expenditure on dowry. Therefore, it was the number of females and the consequent expenditure on dowry which was the fundamental cause of alienation of land among the decaying farm households. The expenses on female members continue even after marriage. A daughter was therefore, seen as an expense (pennungal chelavannu - females are expenses). The old values attributed to family name and bride's character which were once the most important criteria for marriage alliance are increasingly being replaced by the new criteria of money.

We conclude that Chaynovian hypothesis of demographic differentiation holds good during the initial phases of a family life cycle. But it does not fully hold good in the last phase of family's life cycle. This is because of region specific socio-economic and institutional factors that often override the purely demographic factors.

Land Mobility Matrix.

Teodar Shanin, while extending the Chaynovian views on demograhic differentiation and mobility, hypothesises that rich families are becoming poor over time by partitioning and other demograhic processes and poor families are becoming rich as their family size increases. In accordance with Shanin's hypothesis formulated in terms of his mobility schema, a group of peasants cannot stay long enough in the same position of social ladder so

as to consolidate as a class entity. The population pressures, laws of inheritance, migration, partition etc, always influence the mobility of the household and its continuance in the same position is always under attack.

To test Shanin's mobility hypothesis in our context, a mobility matrix was constructed for each of the 92 households based on their shifting position from one size class to another over the 33 year period (1957-90) covered by our study. Since information was available for 1957, 1969, 1979, and 1990, a number of mobility matrices could be constructed for different periods 1957-1990, 1957-69,1970-90. They are given in table 8.4, 8.5 and 8.6. In the matrices that follow, we are attempting the two way movement of households. Figures given first indicate the present position of households that existed in 1957 in a particular class. Figures in brackets show the size-wise distribution of households in 1990 and their original class position in 1957.

The following are the important observations from the land mobility matrices.

1) Among the marginal households of 1957, 52.9 percent remained in the same class in 1990; rest climbed up the ladder to settle in the poor and middle classes. None of them however, reached the rich class during the period. The percentage of households that

remained in the same position during the land reform period and post-reform period was 64.7 and 75 percent reespectively, which suggests that mobility of this class was higher during the former period than in the latter period.

Seen from the present, only 45 percent among the marginal farmers of 1990, belonged to the same group in 1957; the rest came from the lower middle and poor peasant class. During the pre-land reform period(1957-69), 91.7 percent remained in the same class

Table 8.4

Size Class-wise Land Mobility Matrix 1957-90

(Figures in percentages)

Size class 1957	Size class 1990					
	0-0.50	0.50-1.25	1.25-2.50	2.50-5.00	5.00+	Total
0-0.50	52.9 (45.0)	23.5 (17.4)	11.8 (18.2)	11.8 (11.1)	--	100
50.1.25	38.9 (35.0)	44.4 (30.4)	5.6 (9.1)	11.1 (11.1)	--	100
1.25-2.50	23.5 (20.0)	47.1 (34.8)	11.8 (18.2)	23.6 (22.3)	--	100
2.50-5.00	--	12.5 (13.0)	16.7 (36.3)	33.3 (44.4)	37.5 (45.0)	100
5.00+	--	6.3 (4.4)	12.5 (18.2)	12.5 (11.1)	68.7 (55.0	100
Total	(100)	(100)	(100)	(100)	(100)	

Source:- Our Survey.

Figures without brackets are the figures of the households that existed in 1957 and their class position in 1990.

Figures in brackets are the figures of the households(%) in 1990 and their position in 1957.

Table 8.5

Size Class-wise Land Mobility Matrix 1957-69

(Figures in percentages)

Size class 1957	Size class 1969					
	0-0.50	0.50-1.25	1.25-2.50	2.50-5.00	5.00+	Total
0-0.50	64.7 (91.7)	17.6 (15.8)	11.8 (10.5)	5.9 (4.2)	--	100
50.1.25	5.5 (8.3)	77.8 (73.7)	16.7 (15.8)	-- --	-- --	100
1.25-2.50	-- --	11.8 (10.5)	76.4 (68.4)	11.8 (8.3)	--	100
2.50-5.00	--	-- --	4.1 (5.3)	79.2 (79.2)	16.7 (22.2)	100
5.00+	--	-- --	-- --	12.5 (8.3)	87.5 (77.8)	100
Total	(100)	(100)	(100)	(100)	(100)	

Source:- Our Survey.

Figures without brackets are the figures of the households that existed in 1957 and their class position in 1990.
Figures in brackets are the figures of the households(%) in 1990 and their position in 1957.

Table 8.6

Size Class-wise Land Mobility Matrix - 1969-90

(Figures in percentages)

Size class 1969	Size class 1990					
	0-0.50	0.50-1.25	1.25-2.50	2.50-5.00	5.00+	Total
0-0.50	75.0 (45.0)	25.0 (13.0)	----	----	--	100
50.1.25	42.1 (40.0)	42.1 (34.8)	5.3 (9.1)	10.5 (11.1)	--	100
1.25-2.50	15.8 (15.0)	47.4 (39.2)	21.1 (36.4)	15.8 (16.7)	--	100
2.50-5.00	--	12.5 (13.0)	20.8 (45.4)	41.7 (55.6)	25.0 (30.0)	100
5.00+	--	---	5.6 (9.1)	16.6 (16.6)	77.8 (70.0)	100
Total	(100)	(100)	(100)	(100)	(100)	

Source:- Our Survey.

Figures without brackets are the figures of the households that existed in 1957 and their class position in 1990.

Figures in brackets are the figures of the households(%) in 1990 and their position in 1957.

and the downward movement of other classes to the marginal class was marginal(8.3 per cent). The post land reform period(1969-90),however, witnessed considerable additions to this class from the poor and lower middle class farmers.

2) Among the poor peasants of 1957, only 44.4 percent have remained in the same group even in 1990; 38.9 percent had fallen down to the marginal group and only 16.7 percent went up to the middle class. The instability and downward mobility of this class was strikingly more during the post-land reform period. During this period, only 42.1 percent remained in the same position and an equal number of households(42.1 percent) fell down the ladder. It may be noted that during the land reform period, 77.8 per cent remained in their position and the upward movement (16.7 percent) was considerably higher than the downward movement(5.5 percent).

Of all the poor peasants of 1990,only 30.4 percent belonged to the same group in 1957. The remaining came to this class from the lower middle class(34.8 percent); upper middle class(13 percent) and from the rich class(4.4 percent). There was also upward mobility to this class from the marginal group(17.4 percent). The downward movement to this class was more pronounced during the post land reform period.

3) Of all the lower middle class households of 1957, only 11.8 percent remained in the same group and only 23.6 percent improved their position to the upper middle class. The remaining 70 percent

moved down to the lower classes. A larger percentage of households remained in the same position during 1957-69 than in 1970-90, indicating that instability of this class was conspicuously more during the post-reform period. During this period, more than three fifths of the households slided down.

The lower middle class households of 1990 are of recent origin. Only 18.2 percent came from the same category of 1957. A majority came from the Upper middle class (36.3 percent) and the rich class(18.2 percent). Only the rest (27.3 percent)came up from the lower groups. The swelling of the ranks in this class took place more during the post-land reform period, mainly due to the downward mobility of the upper middle class. During the earlier(land reform) period, there was more accretion to this group due to upward mobility of the poor and marginal peasants.

4) Of all the Upper middle class farmers of 1957, only one third remained in the same position in 1990. The upward mobility(37.5 percent) of this class was higher than its downward mobility(29.2 percent). The instability of this class was considerably larger during the post-reform period than during the land reform period.

Among the upper middle households of 1990, only 44.4 percent belonged to the same group in 1957. Accretion to this

class was more due to upward mobility from lower classes. An equal number came from the marginal and poor class(11.1 percent). Another 22.3 percent came from the lower middle class. Only 11.1 percent came as a result of downward mobility of the rich class. Upward and downward mobility to this class was more during the post-land reform period.

5) Of all the size classes, it was the class of rich peasants which showed the maximum stability. Among the rich peasants of 1957, 68.7 percent remained in the same group in 1990. The others fell down the ladder but none fell to the position of the marginal farmers. Paradoxically, the stability among them was also more pronounced during the land reform period (87.5 percent) than during the post-land reform period(77.8 percent).

Of all the rich households of 1990, 55 percent had a similar land ownership background in 1957. The remaining 45 percent came from the upper middle households. It may be noted that the upward movement to the rich claes was confined to the upper middle class. The movement of the upper middle class to the rich class was comparatively higher during the post- land reform period (30 percent) than in the land reform period (22 percent).

Summing up this discussion, the classes which showed the maximum stability were the rich and the marginal classes. Although nearly one third of the richer households(31.3%) of 1957 became

poorer during the span of 33 years (1957-90), the majority of them remained in the same class. Similarly more than half(52.9%) of the marginal peasants of 1957,have remained in the same position. Thus, for the two extreme groups, the staying power seems to be quite high. The process of depeasantization of the maginal peasants is checked by the tenacity with which they cling to their land. One of the main reasons for their tenacity may be due to the fact that their returns from working the land with their own family labour exceed the returns they would get from any investment of the sale proceeds from land. Secondly, their holdings are mostly their homesteads.

It is the poor and the lower middle groups that are found to be more mobile. But the downward mobility in their case is much larger than their upward mobility. Though the the upper middle class too was very unstable, it was due to their considerable upward mobility. Thus, the modern version of the Chaynovian ideas formulated by Shanin in the form of his mobility schema was found to apply only to some extent in the case of peasantry of this region of Kerala. Although, the instability that was noted among the poor and lower middle groups, was not leading to depeasantization, their mobility was largely downward. The considerable staying power among the richer class and the upward movement of the upper middle class prevented the possibility of the weakening of the rich class as anticipated by Shanin. Again,

the directions and extent of mobility noted above prevented the emergence of an homogeneous peasantry as visualised by Shanin.

Initial Ownership of Land and Mobility

According to Lenin, the differentiation process ultimately leads to the destruction of small holders. The major hypothesis of Lenin on social differentiation predicts that the concentration of land would get worse over time with dispossession of the land from the majority of their owners leading to the impoverishment of the many. To test this hypothesis villages studied, we present the distribution of households and area owned at four cut off years, 1957, 1969,1979 and 1990. The extreme inequality in the pattern of land distribtion among the sample of households can be seen very clearly from table 8.7. At the bottom of the scale, 21.74 percent of the households own barely 2.29 percent of the total area in 1990 though their area was increasing. At the other end, the same percentage of households owned 59.50 percent of the total area.

The share of the rich farmers owning above 5 acres in the owned area declined from 55.6 percent in 1957 to 52.4 percent in 1969 and then increased to 54.3 and 59.5 percent in 1979 and 1990 respectively. Thus, the decline in area among the rich class noted

Table 8.7
Size Class-wise Percentage Distribution of Households and Area(1957-90)

Size class.	Percentage of Total Area. Family size.	1957	1969	1979	1990	Total change.	Percentage of households. 1957	1969	1979	1990	Total change.	Average area parted. (acres)	Net market transactions.(acres)
0-0.50	6.95	1.46	1.14	1.15	2.29	+56.84	18.48	13.04	14.13	21.74	+17.64	0.06	+0.14
0.50-1.25	6.86	7.24	6.24	5.50	7.84	+8.29	19.57	20.66	18.48	25.00	+27.75	0.19	-0.02
1.25-2.50	8.19	9.03	10.87	11.63	7.05	-21.92	18.48	20.66	20.65	11.96	-35.28	0.27	+0.08
2.50-5.00	8.21	26.70	29.35	27.47	23.32	-12.66	26.08	26.08	22.83	19.56	-25.00	0.72	+1.46
5.00+	8.51	55.57	52.40	54.25	59.50	+7.07	17.39	19.56	23.91	21.74	+25.01	1.23	-0.61
Total	7.70	100	100	100	100	-	100	100	100	100	-	0.50	+0.47

Source: Our Survey

above was sharper during the land reform period (1957- 69).This may be due to the large scale selling of land in order to escape from the land ceiling provisions. If we take the entire period, there was some increase in concentration of land. But it needs to be added here that distribution of land per head is not quite as unequal as the distribution of land per household since the larger size of holding tends to be partly offset by the larger family size of the rich class. Despite this observation, the first part of the Leninist hypothesis viz., unequal distribution of land at any point of time is supported by our data.

The second part of the Leninist hypothesis envisages that concentration of land would get worse over time. This is not supported by our data. Among the marginal group, owning below 0.50 acre, the percentage of area owned increased from 1.46 percent in 1957 to 2.29 percent in 1990. Among poor peasants, owning between 0.50-1.25 acres also marginal increase in the area can be noted during the last decade of the period. It was only in the middle classes - lower middle and upper middle - that substantial decline in area and number of households can be observed.

While the general picture of a highly unequal pattern of land distribution has remained unchanged over the period, interesting changes have occurred within this overall structure which are quite crucial for an understanding of the dynamics which are at work. Firstly, significant intra-class movements as well as entry to and exit from different size groups have taken place during this period as noted from the land mobility matrix constructed earlier. Secondly, there was a decline in average area owned by the rich farmer households from 10.30 acres to 8.46 acres(see table 8.8). In contrast, except the poor peasants, all other classes improved their average ownership of land. Therefore, Leninist prediction of depeasantization process did not come true.

Table 8.8

Size Class-wise Average Ownership of Land and Mobility.(1957-90)

(Area in acres)

Size class	Average Land Owned. At inception.	1957	1969	1979	1990	Total change.	Average area parted	Net Market Transactions.
0-0.50	0.25	0.25	0.31	0.27	0.33	+0.08 (32.0)	0.06	+0.14
0.50-1.25	1.18	1.19	1.08	1.05	0.97	-0.21 -(17.79)	0.19	-0.02
1.25-2.50	1.49	1.57	1.88	1.86	1.82	+0.33 (22.15)	0.27	+0.60
2.50-5.00	2.95	3.30	4.01	3.97	3.69	+0.74 (25.08)	0.72	+1.46
5.00+	10.15	10.30	9.57	7.47	8.46	-1.69 -(16.65)	1.23	-0.61
All	3.12	3.23	3.57	3.28	3.09	-0.03	0.50	+0.47

Figures in brackets are the percentage change.

Source: Our Survey

The third part of the Leninist hypothesis envisages that the growth and decay of farm enterprise depend on their initial means of production. It was seen from our earlier discussion that decaying farms had a larger initial ownership of land than the growing farms. In order to test this hypothesis further, average owned land among the growing and decaying farms are compared at the time of inception and at four cut-off periods. Size classes

are defined in terms of their current ownership of land. This comparison is given in table 8.9.

Among the growing farm households, irrespective of class, average initial ownership of land was less compared to the decaying farm households. At the time of inception, growing and decaying farms on an average possessed 1.60 acres and 4.64 acres respectively. Average owned land among the growing farms increased from 1.60 acres to 3.41 acres between their inception to 1990. Among the decaying farms, average owned land declined from 4.64 acres to 2.77 acres showing 40.30 percent decline during the period.

Among the growing farms, net gain in land through land market transfers was larger than the net loss through partitioning. The net gain through land maket transfers was 2.34 acres and the net loss of land through partitioning was only 0.53 acres. However, the area parted per household among the growing farms is generally higher than among the decaying farms. The average area parted per household among the decaying farms is only 0.47 acres. Among the decaying farm households, irrespective of class (the only exception is the lower middle class) the net loss of land through land market transfers is higher than the average area parted. Therefore, it can be concluded that the higher rate of dispossession of land through partitioing was not the principal cause of alienation of land and the downward mobility.

Table 8.9
Size Class-wise Growing and Decaying Farms Ownership of Land and Mobility

Size Class (current-acres)	Average area owned (acres) At Inception	1957	1969	1979	1990	Av:area Transfered (acres) Total change	Area Parted	Net market transfer
1	2	3	4	5	6	7(6-2)	8	9(7+8)
(Below 0.50)								
Growing	0.21	0.34	0.46	0.40	0.38	0.17	0.46	+0.63
		(61.90)	(35.29)	-(13.04)	-(5.00)	(80.95)		
Decaying	0.83	0.87	0.67	0.49	0.30	-0.53	0.12	-0.41
		(4.81)	(-22.99)	(-26.87)	(-38.77)	(-63.86)		
(0.50-1.25)								
Growing	0.53	0.59	0.81	0.77	0.97	0.44	0.50	0.94
		(11.32)	(37.29)	-(4.93)	(25.97)	(83.02)		
Decaying	2.60	2.60	2.14	1.41	0.97	-1.63	0.40	-1.23
		--	(-17..69)	(-34.11)	(-31.20)	(-62.69)		
(1.25-2.50)								
Growing	1.28	1.36	1.76	1.69	2.04	0.76	0.78	1.54
		(6.25)	(29.41)	(-3.97)	(20.71)	(59.38)		
Decaying	5.41	5.41	4.32	3.13	1.64	-3.77	2.52	-1.25
		--	(-20.15)	(-27.55)	(-47.60)	(-66.02)		
(2.50-5.00)								
Growing	1.65	2.19	3.87	3.94	3.75	2.10	0.52	2.62
		(32.73)	(76.71)	(1.81)	(-4.82)	(127.27)		
Decaying	4.84	4.84	4.64	4.08	3.91	-0.93	--	-0.93
		--	(-4.13)	(-12.07)	(-4.17)	(-19.21)		
(5.00+)								
Growing	3.85	3.89	5.73	6.57	8.47	4.62	0.50	5.12
		(1.04)	(47.30)	(14.65)	(28.91)	(120.00)		
Decaying	11.46	11.46	10.50	8.93	8.45	-3.01	--	-3.01
		--	(-8.38)	(-14.95)	(-5.69)	(-26.26)		
All Class								
Growing	1.60	1.81	2.86	3.03	3.41	1.81	0.53	2.34
		(13.13)	(58.01)	(5.94)	(12.54)	(113.13)		
Decaying	4.64	4.65	4.28	3.53	2.77	-1.87	0.47	-1.40
		(0.02)	(-0.79)	(-17.52)	(-21.52)	(-40.30)		

Figures in brackets are the percentage change.
Source: Our Survey

The comparison of the initial ownership of land among the castes is given in table 8.10. This table also shows that initial ownership of land was higher among the decaying farms. Exceptions can however, be noted among the Other Backward Castes and Muslims. The difference between the initial ownership of land among the growing and decaying farms of the Other Backward Caste is meagre. But, among the Muslims, substantial difference can be noted. The growing farms among the Muslims on an average possessed 1.96 acres initially and that of decaying farms possessed only 0.71 acre.

The comparison of area accumulated and area parted per household shows that among the growing farms of various castes, average area accumulated is comparatively higher than area parted. Among the decaying farms, area alienated is higher than the area parted among the majority of the castes. The only exception is in the case of Other High Caste Hindus; among them,the net area lost through land market transfers is less than the net area parted. This is due to the presence, in our sample, of two very rich households which parted during the period and came down to the lower middle class. On the whole, dispossession of land through partitioning was not the major cause of upward/downward moblity among the majority of castes.

Table 8.10

Caste-wise Growing and Decaying Farms Ownership of Land and Mobility

Size Class	Average area owned (acres) At Inception	1957	1969	1979	1990	Total change	Average Area Parted	Net market transfer
1	2	3	4	5	6	7(6-2)	8	9(7+8)
Christians								
Growing	1.69	1.90 (12.43)	3.74 (96.85)	3.99 (6.08)	4.36 (9.27)	2.67 (157.99)	0.87	3.54
Decaying	5.59	5.59 --	4.92 (-11.99)	4.20 (-14.63)	3.75 (-10.71)	-1.84 (-32.92)	0.03	-1.81
Brahmins								
Growing	1.30	1.30 --	1.30 --	1.37 (5.38)	1.87 (36.49)	0.57 (43.85)	0.25	0.82
Decaying	6.09	6.09 --	5.52 (-9.36)	4.88 (-11.59)	4.13 (-15.37)	-1.96 (-32.80)	0.19	-1.77
OHCH								
Growing	1.28	1.28 --	1.28 --	1.43 (11.72)	1.78 (24.48)	0.50 (39.06)	--	0.50
Decaying	5.70	5.70 --	4.93 (-13.51)	3.23 (-34.48)	2.39 (-26.01)	-3.31 (-58.07)	1.77	-1.54
OBC								
Growing	2.30	2.45 (6.52)	3.00 (22.45)	2.86 (-11.67)	3.85 (34.62)	1.55 (67.39)	--	1.55
Decaying	2.18	2.18 --	1.97 (-9.63)	1.77 (-10.16)	1.32 (-25.42)	-0.86 (-39.45)	0.22	-0.64
SC/ST								
Growing	0.15	0.18 (20.00)	0.55 (205.55)	0.52 (-5.45)	0.77 (48.07)	0.62 (413.33)	0.03	0.59
Decaying	0.86	0.86 --	0.49 (-43.02)	0.36 (-26.53)	0.21 (-41.67)	-0.65 (-75.58)	0.15	-0.50
Muslims								
Growing	1.96	2.57 (31.12)	2.29 -(10.9)	2.98 (30.26)	3.07 (3.02)	1.11 (56.63)	0.75	1.86
Decaying	0.71	0.87 (22.54)	0.69 (-20.69)	0.59 (-14.49)	0.43 (-27.12)	-0.28 (39.43)	0.05	-0.23
All Class								
Growing	1.60	1.81 (13.13)	2.86 (58.01)	3.03 (5.94)	3.41 (12.54)	1.81 (113.13)	0.53	2.34
Decaying	4.64	4.65 (0.02)	4.28 (-0.79)	3.53 (-17.52)	2.77 (-21.52)	-1.87 (-40.30)	0.47	-1.40

Figures in brackets are the percentage change. Source:- Our Survey.

To summarize, the concentration of land in a few hands still prevails in the area studied by us. But this concentration was not because of the accumulation of the initially rich farmers but due to the upward movement of the upper middle class farmers. It can be seen that downward mobility is going on in the rural areas among the poor and lower middle peasants. However, not all households belonging to these groups suffered downward mobility. In fact, a section moved up.

Our analysis yields little support for the Marxist view that it is the initial area owned or the higher rate of dispossession of land through partitioning by a family that matters in determining its chances of gaining or losing land via. land market. Families of decaying farms started with a larger average area of land (at the time of inception) and lower rate of partitioning than families of growing farms. Our analysis suggests that a number of factors like the growth of the family, the large number of male members in it, their urge to form nuclear families, their diversified activities, inflow of wealth in the form of dowry and the family's motivation to provide inheritance, determine the chances of a peasant family gaining land through the land market.

As for the Neo-Populists hypothesis, it may be noted that the family size and number of adult workers did not differ

significantly among the growing and decaying households at the time of their respective births as independent socio-economic units. No significant difference was observed among the groups in initial consumer-worker ratio also. But there is a significant difference in the male-female ratio which was higher among the growing farms. An increase in the male-female ratio or the decline in the number of females was accompanied by higher rate of dispossession of land both among the growing and decaying farms. Thus, it is the social customs to provide dowry to females at the time of their marriage and to incur huge marriage expenses that forced many farmers to sell their land. Thus, the demographic structure envisaged by Chaynov in itself cannot fully explain the dynamics of land ownership and mobility among the peasant households. Rather, it should be complemented with the social dynamics and institutional set up of the specific region. This should be more so when we study tradition bound agrarian societies in the third world countries.

Notes and References

1. For empirical evidence for the hypotheses of Lenin-chaynov, in the Indian context, see Sivakumar,S,S,"Family Size, Consumption Expenditure, Income and Landholding in an Agrarian Economy: A Critique of Some Populist Notions", Economic and Political Weekly ,July, 24,1976.

2. Chaynov tries to make his argument dynamic by showing that, over time, there is a relationship beween changing family size and the amount of land under cultivation.Drawing on census data for a 30 year period, he tries to show that the majority of small farms in the initial census acquired more land over the period, while the majority of large farms lost land. While he concludes that the data demonstrate that the demographic process of family growth explains the distribution of farms according to size. His conclusion is not supported by the data. In table 1-10 (Chaynov,A,V,1966:67) only in the case of the smallest farms did the majority increased their holdings over the 30 year period. The majority of farms in the next 2 categories either remained in the same category or lost land over the period. While the majority of the large size farms did lose land, the majority of those remained concentrated among the larger farm size categories. In his empirical work, Chaynov really cannot show that the family life cycle alone propels households from one farm size to another.

CHAPTER 10

MAJOR FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

Change in ownership of land is one of the important variables inducing vertical mobility of farm households in an agrarian economy. This change is influenced by factors like land reforms, land market transfers and partitioning. These, in turn, are affected by a number of inter-related social, economic and demographic factors. Our attempt in the present study, is to assess the relative role of these factors, individually and collectively, in influencing land transfers among the peasant households in the rural agrarian economy of Thrissur district, in Kerala, during the period 1957-90. We also make an attempt to capture the impact of land reforms, land market transfers and partitioning on agrarian structure and peasant mobility. Our analysis is largely based on information and data collected by an intensive survey of 328 sample households in four villages.

We identified two major tendencies of agrarian change in the district viz.strengthening of the class of owner cultivators (thanks to land reforms abolishing tenancy and giving ownership right to hutment dwellers) and the growing commercialisation of agriculture. These inter-alia led to an increasing volume of land market transfers and partitioning.

The quantum of area transacted in the market formed three-fourth of the total occupied area in the four villages studied by us, during the period 1966-67 to 1989 -90, indicating a vibrant land market. In addition to land reforms, the decline of joint family system culminating in its abolition by legislation in 1976 contributed to this vibrancy of the land market. Though distribution of surplus land was not very sizeable, the land reforms blunted the urge of upper classes to accumulate land. The fear of land reforms also led to large scale partitioning and alienation of land. Conferment of ownership on tenants and Kudikidappukars permitted their entry in the land market. The decline of joint family led to large scale partitioning which eventually led to increased land sales. On the demand side, growing commercialisation of agriculture and increasing commodity prices provided the stimuli. Steady increase in land prices gave stimuli to supply. Paradoxically, demand too increased, despite increase in land prices, because land was increasingly becoming not merely a means of production, but also a speculative asset.

Trends in land sales show an increase over the period. No doubt, there were upswing and downswing phases in land sales. But land prices kept on increasing. The growth rates in land sales and land prices were higher for dry land than for wet land. Trends in land sales, land prices and commodity prices were

related to each other. Growth of population also had tremendous impact on land sales and land prices.

The higher growth rate in land prices resulted in the conversion of wet land (paddy) to dry land for cultivation of commercial crops, for non-agricultural uses and for speculative purposes.

The quantum of land transacted in the market was more than sufficient for creating either concentration or diffusion of land in these villages. The logic of the economic change viz., growing commercialisation, rising land prices and attractiveness of speculative investment in land may suggest the possibility of transfers from the small and marginal peasants to the larger cultivators. But this has not happened. Our findings show that it was the middle class cultivators (especially those belonging to the previous tenant castes like Christians, Muslims and backward castes among the Hindus) were the principal net gainers of land. The former landlord castes such as Brahmins and Other High Caste Hindus were the losers of land. The marginal peasants of all castes gained land. Both the rich class (with holding above 5 acres) and the poor peasants (with holdings between 0.50-1.25 acres) lost land. Among the poor peasants, however, the net loss of land was marginal.

Our study shows that the changes induced by land market transfers and land reforms were in the same direction. That selling pressures continued even after land reforms among rich peasants indicate the presence of other strong economic reasons.

As for the pressures for the sale of land, consumption pressures especially expenses on marriage, dowry etc., were most important among the poor and marginal cultivators. Among the rich farmers, the need to escape ceiling legislation (during the land reform period), managerial difficulties and unprofitability of cultivataion using hired labour, (especially in wet land) turned out to be the major reasons for the sale of land.

Regarding the sources of funds for the purchase, agricultural savings were not important except perhaps for the large farmers. Dowry (both cash and ornaments) was found to be the most important source among the poor farmers. Savings from agricultural and non-agricultural occupations constituted the important source among the large and upper middle class farmers. Remittances from outside were also important.

As was noted earlier, the decline in the joint family spurred the partitioning process. But the quantum of area parted was much less than the area transacted through the land market. A comparison of the nature of partitioning and the net gain/loss through the land market has shown that there was no positive

relationship between the rate of partitioning and the alienation process. Growing farm households, on an average, had high rate of partitioning and their net gain through land market transfers was higher than the area dispossessed through partitioning. In contrast, net loss in the land market among the decaying farm households was greater than the area divided among the members of their household.

The demographic characteristics such as family size, male-female ratio, age at marriage and mortality rate of the head of the household were also important factors in the determination of the nature of partitioning. There is a relationship between the size of land holdings and size of the households. This relation however, has not led to higher rate of partitioning of family property among the rich farmers. Generally, among the majority of the castes, family property is divided among the male members and the female members are given their share as cash or as ornaments at the time of their marriage. Since the rich peasants are in a position to accumulate surpluses to meet these expenses, the family property can be divided among the male members. But the poor peasants are either forced to alienate land or give share of the family property to the bridegrooms. The low rate of partitioning among the marginal peasants was also because of the need to provide the means of subsistence to the parents in their old age.

Basically, there have been two points of view on the causes of polarization and inequality among the peasant households. One group of scholars thinks that demographic variables are the most crucial. The other group highlights socio-economic factors. But our study shows that nature of family, family mores, inheritance systems and social customs are equally important, for explaining the process of mobility and inequality in a traditional society.

We have made an attempt to test both Chaynovian and Leninist hypotheses in the context of the villages studied. Chaynovian hypothesis of demographic differentiation, determined by purely biological factors, does not hold good in the rural areas studied by us. Our data also did not lend full support to the Chaynovian notion of homogeneous peasantry. We did find some correlation as envisaged by Chaynov, between the size of the family, consumer-worker ratio and the ownership of land during the first three phases of a family's life cycle. But the Chaynov's hypothesis did not hold good during the last phase.

We also did not find strong support for the social mobility schema of Shanin, a modern advocate of Chaynovian views. No doubt, the mobility matrices constructed by us with the help of the past and present land ownership data did reveal two-way mobility of households, a situation foreseen by Shanin. But contrary to what Shanin envisaged, there was a high degree of stability among

classes on both ends of the spectrum. We found that the majority of today's rich households had rich background even in the past. Thus, the rich households had persisted long enough as a social group. Similarly, more than half of the marginal peasants owning below 0.50 acres have remained at the same position during the long 33 year period. This means that for the two extreme groups, the staying power is quite high, although for different reasons. Among the poor and lower middle groups, downward mobility is much greater than upward mobility. However, among the upper middle class, considerable upward mobility was noted.

One interesting finding is that the stability among all the classes including the rich was more during the land reform period. The higher mobility of all classes in both directions during the post land reform period suggests the operation of strong social and economic forces, stronger perhaps than the land reform forces.

A comparison of the role of economic, demographic and social factors in determining the upward or downward mobility of peasant households between five intermittent points of time since their inception shows that growing farms, on an average, had bigger family sizes and had more adult workers than the decaying farms. The family size and the number of adult workers did not differ significantly among these two groups of households at the time of their origin. There was no significant difference among

these groups in their initial consumer-worker ratio also. But the average area parted per household and male-female ratio were higher among the growing farms. The decline in the number of females due to marriage or an increase in male-female ratio during the 20-30 year phase of a family's life cycle was accompanied by higher rates of dispossession of land both among the growing and decaying farms. Thus, it is the social custom to provide dowry to females and to incur huge expenditure at the time of their marriage that forced many households to sell their land. Conversely, familes with larger number of males could bring in dowry and consequently their farm size grew. Thus, the biological factors in demographic structure in itself cannot fully explain the dynamics of land ownership and mobility among the peasant households as envisaged by Neo-Populists. Rather, it should be complemented with the specific social and institutional set- up of the region.

Lenin argued that the quantum of land owned per household initially is a major determinant of the survival and growth of a peasant farm in competitive market environment. However, growing farm households in our sample owned less land at its inception as an independent unit. In contrast, an average decaying farm household owned more land at the time of its inception.

As envisaged by Lenin, we did observe striking inequality of land ownership among the rural households. But inequalities are not growing. Besides, there is a good deal of mobility in both directions. Not all households belonging to the poor strata suffered downward mobility. A section moved up in the land ownership ladder. Conversely, a section of the upper middle class and rich farmers moved down. This shows that there were certain farm and family level dynamics other than their initial ownership of land that enabled some households to accumulate land while forcing others to alienate.

Our study lends little support for the view that the higher rates of dispossession of land through partitioning lead to loss of land through the land market. Families of decaying farms had lower rates of partitioning than families of growing farms. Our analysis suggests that there is a number of other factors like the growth of a family, its diversified activities, large number of male members in it, inflow of funds in the form of dowry and the urge to form nuclear families and to provide inheritance that determine the accumulation of a peasant family through the land market. These, in turn are influenced by the nature of family, family values, inheritance systems and social customs of the region studied.

Summing up, our study shows that sweeping changes in the agrarian structure have been taking place in the state and the district. The four villages studied by us have not been immune to these changes. These changes were triggered of by a series of land reform legislations introduced from the beginning of this century. The decline in the joint family system was yet another contributory cause. There were other social and economic factors too which kept up the momentum of changes in the post-land reform period.

Despite the concentration of land which still prevails, the process of accumulation by the richer classes has been arrested. The land owning caste hierarchy has suffered a grievous blow during the period. Land ownership has shifted from non-cultivating castes to the cultivating castes who belonged to the erstwhile tenant classes. There has been considerable mobility in both directions among all classes and castes. There has been very little depeasantisation taking place in the country sids. Concentration of land has not been increasing. All these changes have triggered of agricultural production and productivity in other countries. But Kerala is witnessing the paradox of agricultural stagnation despite these welcome changes. Though the reasons for this paradox was not the focus of our enquiry, a few tentative lines of enquiry suggest themselves.

As a result of the above changes as well as the increasing deneity of population, the rural society of Kerala is increasingly getting dominated by the class of small holders. The average area of holdings of all size classes had been coming down. Given the level of agricultural technology and farm prices, farming today cannot sustain the majority of holders. Therefore, members of the household belonging to almost all classes are forced to rely on outside occupations, often making agriculture a part-time job. Though absentee landlordism has been abolished, a new class of absentee owner cultivators sometimes referred to as the 'Sunday farmers'is emerging. Many of these part-time farmers still retain their land as a source of supplementary income only . Economic logic suggests that they seek to maximise their total income from all sources rather than maximising income from agriculture. Given this objective and given the fear of letting out land on lease and share cropping, it is no wonder that they go for less labour intensive cultivation which is also more easy to manage. Many of them retain land as an ever appreciating speculative asset and as an insurance.

With very high land prices fuelled largely by the infusion of funds from non-agricultural sources, attractiveness of land as a means of production has come down. Land bought at high prices can become profitable for cultivation only if productivity

and commodity prices are increasing very steeply. But these have not been happening in Kerala. Therefore, land is increasingly being diverted for non-agricultural uses or is just retained as a hedge against inflation or merely as a speculative asset. In this situation, putting land to less intensive cultivation or just keeping it fallow also makes good economic sense. This may possibly be one of the reasons for the Kerala's current paradox of agricultural stagnation despite the most progressive land reforms in India.

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