

Transformation in the Pattern of Asset Holding of Rural Households in West Bengal During 1961-62 to 1981-82

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This paper attempts to investigate the degree of transformation in the asset holding structure of rural households in West Bengal during 1961-62 to 1981-82. While the cultivators and all rural households have improved their asset holding position by achieving a positive real rate of growth of assets, the asset holding position of non-cultivators households has deteriorated. The basic pattern of the distribution and composition of asset have not undergone any radical change. There is still high degree of inequality in the distribution of assets with heaviest concentration of assets in the hands of the households belonging to top asset size group.

Introduction

More than fortyfive years and Seven major Five Year Plans after independence have been elapsed. Different policy measures have been adopted for bringing about rapid rural development through institutional and technological transformation of agriculture in the State. The impact of such measures is likely to be reflected in the asset holding structure of the rural households through their effect on the distribution of income of rural households. Therefore, it seems to be relevant to examine the changes in the pattern of asset holding of rural households in the State.

As far as the literature on this subject is concerned, very few studies are available so far. The most important of which are Basu, (1976); Pathak, Ganapathy and Sharma, (1977); Kulkarni, Gill and Dayal, (1984); Bhalla, (1987); Dantwala, (1987); etc. Almost all the studies have concentrated on examining the overall inequality in the distribution of assets by using different measures