

Boringram: An Economic and Social Analysis of a Village in Bangladesh
(Published in June 1980)**a) Researcher's Identity**

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b) Objectives

- i. To explore the socio-economic condition of study area; and
- ii. To make recommendations for improving socio-economic condition of the areas.

c) Executive summary

This analysis of a village in the Barind tract has shown that the majority of the peasants live in great poverty, 36% of all households live below the poverty level, 45% between the poverty and the subsistence level, and 19% live at or above the subsistence level.

There are definite economic differences among the individual households which can be divided into four distinct groups on the basis of land ownership. It was argued that the process at work in the rural area was one of pauperization and that the relations of production perpetuate poverty and agricultural backwardness.

The village is not an isolated entity. Through the integration in the market economy the villagers are integrated in the national economy. The livelihood of the peasants is entirely dependent on the cultivation of rice, which is not only cultivated for home consumption but also constitutes a cash crop, as the cultivators are dependent on the income from sale of rice in order to buy their basic necessities. A considerable part of the harvest is siphoned out of the village, despite the fact that the rice consumption requirements of all inhabitants are not met.

It is the area associated with the market place and the Union Parishads which constitutes the villagers' local community. Most villagers have few occasions to go outside this community to conduct their business. It is within this area that most family alliances are made through marriage.

Consciousness about political affairs outside the local community is low. This can be due to several factors. One is the predominance of the rice economy and therefore no cultivation of specific cash crops, which may make the peasants more aware of the market economy and its fluctuations. Associated with this is the low level of horizontal mobility which may generate greater awareness. From the information available it seems that in areas of Bangladesh where horizontal mobility is higher, where the peasants cultivate cash crops and where agricultural development has proceeded at a faster speed, political consciousness and action is more pronounced.

The number of landless is increasing in Bangladesh, and it was shown that this is also the case for Boringram. So far, however, politics at the village and the local level has not crystallized along class lines. Local politics does not directly involve the landless and the land-poor. It was shown that politics at the village level is a matter of power struggle among the upper peasantry. Also at the local level, the big and influential persons of the locality fight for the posts as chairmen in the local elections, and also most of the members come from this stratum of society.

The rural power structure forms the base for the larger polity, and it is through the political and economic structures that encapsulate the village that Boringram, like other villages in Bangladesh is integrated in the larger community and ultimately the state.