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Unruly urbanisation on Delhi's fringe

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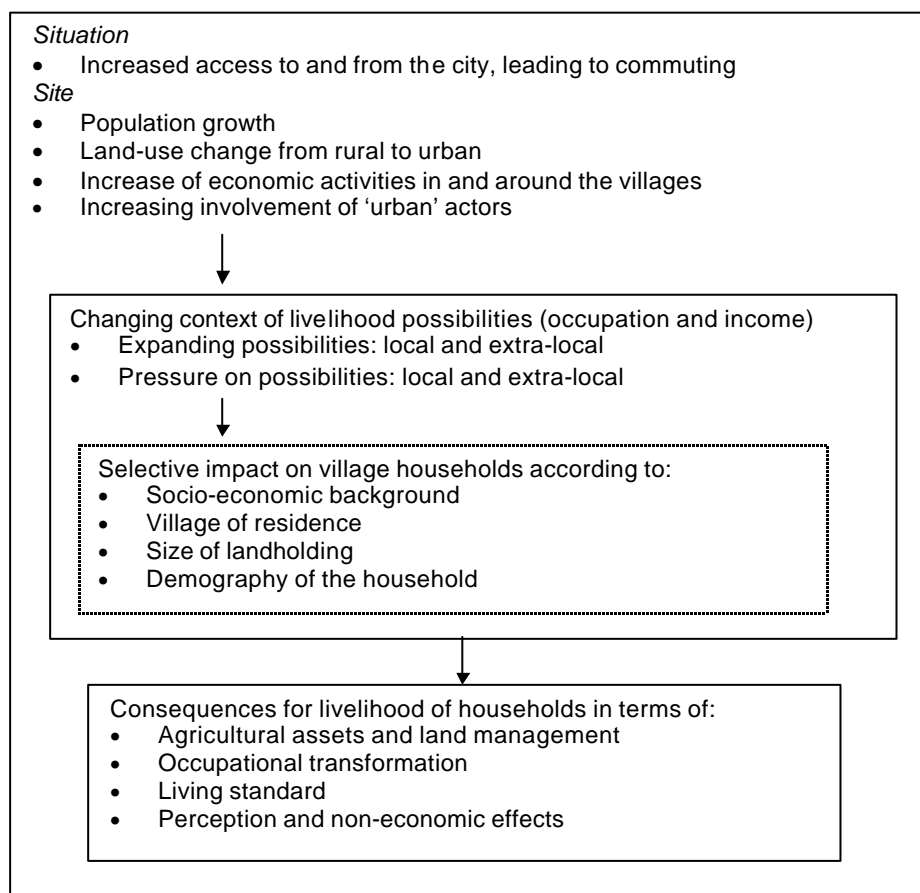
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5 THE IMPACT OF URBANISATION ON HOUSEHOLD LIVELIHOOD

5.1 Structure of the analysis

As the descriptive literature (Chapter 1) and census data (Chapter 2) reveal, Delhi's rural-urban fringe is undergoing an economic transformation at the level of village households. There are shifting from predominantly rural sources of livelihood to urban sources. The villagers to react and anticipate upon urbanisation in many different ways by making use of the changing economic context. It is important to take the general contextual changes into account, because are related to way urbanisation takes place at the local level. Urbanisation must first be clearly defined in order to appreciate the kinds of change that may be attributed to it. Then, the way in which urbanisation is changing the economic circumstances has to be analysed for the specific study area. Only then can the impact on household livelihood be measured according to specific determinants. Households and their individual members anticipate, react to, and are affected by urbanisation in a variety of ways, depending on a number of characteristics. The actual impact of urbanisation is therefore expected to be selective.

Figure 5.1 Outline of the overview of the impact of urbanisation on the livelihood of households



In the situation specific to the study area, origin and caste seem to be the main factors of socio-economic background, though determinants of livelihood are analysed in this chapter as well. These are village of residence, ownership of agricultural land, and demographic characteristics of the household. The independent variables used to ascertain the impact of urbanisation are agricultural assets, the type and location of employment and other sources of income, and the standard of living. The basic household survey elucidates the quantitative aspects of the transformation, whereas the in-depth survey gives more insight into the longitudinal aspects. For instance, it deals with inter-generational change, sources of income that are not captured by the basic household survey, coincidental factors, and the element of perceived change.

5.2 Urbanisation defined in terms of changes in local ‘site’ and ‘situation’

Urbanisation is a rather complex term, as it can be applied at different scales. In geography, it is common to distinguish between site and situation. “Site refers to the physical and cultural characteristics and attributes of the place itself” ... while “situation specifies the external relations of a locale” (Fellmann et al. 1997, p. 10). In the context of a rural-urban fringe, a change in situation usually precedes a change in the site. Namely, better access to a location strengthens the external relations of that place, leading to changes in its site.

Some sources give an indication of the kinds of changes that can occur in a site and situation of a rural-urban fringe (see also Section 1.2). For example, Brookfield et al. (1991) refer to *in-situ urbanisation* focussing on the increasingly urban context of the settlements in their study. In their definition of local transformation, they include land-use changes, change in the occupational structure of workers, and better transport linkages. McGee (1991) concentrates on the ‘situation’ of the urbanising countryside, emphasising the strong impetus from the increased interaction between villages and cities. This incentive to change is further explored by Ginsburg et al. (1991); Ginsburg identifies the *‘low-tech transportation revolution’* as the main cause of the dispersion of urbanisation (p. 37). Ramachandran (1989) mentions commuting to work as an outcome of urbanisation and observes a rapidly growing population due to in-migration. Drawing upon these various sources, it may be concluded that better linkages, land-use changes, diversified local economic activity, and population growth are the main manifestations of change as a consequence of urbanisation. Drawing upon our own observations in the study villages and adding these to the above features, we may say that urbanisation consists of the following characteristics:

Situation:

- Better access from the village to urban areas and vice versa
- More opportunity for villagers to commute and bring goods to urban markets
- More attractive as location for diverse economic activities

Site:

- Rapid population growth due to in-migration
- Local types of land use shifting to urban types
- Non-agricultural activities located in or near the village (involving a greater variety of actors)

- Expansion of urban amenities and infrastructure

The next step is to describe how urbanisation affects income and occupational possibilities in the villages of Delhi’s rural-urban fringe.

5.3 Changing occupational and income opportunities

Urbanisation, through its impact on the local ‘site’ and ‘situation’, changes the possibilities to earn an income. The traditional land-based agricultural activities are in decline, at least relatively, especially where rural land use gives way to urban functions. But a counter force is the development of the more productive and labour-intensive cultivation of vegetables and flowers, which requires less land. The greatest improvement in scope for livelihood, however, will come from expanding the opportunities for non-agricultural income and employment. The next section focuses on this issue. It starts with the many emerging occupational and income possibilities that are related to urbanisation.

5.3.1 Upcoming local and extra-local occupational and income possibilities

Local occupational and income possibilities are those that lie within the boundaries of the area that belongs to a village. Extra-local income and occupation possibilities are those that lie outside those bounds. Figure 5.2 summarises the expanding and diversifying sectors that are important to the local population. There is no hierarchy or indication of frequency in this overview. Relative importance and frequency are both difficult to quantify. The exact importance of each local possibility depends largely on the conditions in each particular village (see Chapter 2 and 3).

Figure 5.2 Expanding income and occupational possibilities in the rural-urban fringe of Delhi

Local	Extra-local
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Retail • Trade/production construction materials • Construction • Industry • Allied and supporting services (workshops, repair shops, etc.) • Transport (buses, (mini) trucks) • Property dealing • Rent and lease of property (land, house) • Dairy • Horticulture, floriculture, nurseries, etc. • In schools, day-care centres, etc. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Government employment: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Administration - Utility sector (e.g. electricity, water, sewers) - Public-sector companies (e.g. banks, railways, hospitals) - Police - Schools, colleges • Private commercial activities • Industry • Markets for certain agricultural products • Retail

Local

Villages close to the city and those along the roads are bustling with economic activity, including a vibrant retail sector. The number of establishments keeps rising in pace with the fast increase of population and purchasing power. Some shops benefit from being located at the roadside, where they cater for through traffic. Production and sales of building materials is also a sizeable sector. There is much construction going on: houses, farmhouses, factories, storehouses and infrastructural works. Besides, the rural-urban

fringe supplies building materials to the city, including bricks, sand, gravel and cement. Brick kilns are scattered throughout the area; there are several cement factories; and along the roadside, numerous shops are selling everything from windowpanes to asbestos roofing. Shops, industrial compounds and so forth generate a need for construction (materials) in the rapidly expanding villages.

The numerous factories sprouting up in and around the villages provide work for entrepreneurs, labourers and builders, but they also provide income for people who rent out land and property for this purpose. Industry employs a large variety of people, ranging from carriers and unskilled labour to skilled and administrative personnel. Industrial development also generates demand for allied services, constituting of repair work, transportation, tea shops and other related services. Many mini-trucks are seen in the villages. Furthermore, storage facilities generate a similar demand for services in the local economy.

The intensive interaction with the city leads to a great demand for buses. Quite a few buses operate from the villages, generating employment for drivers, conductors and mechanics.

The land and real estate sector also creates scope for economic activity; the impact of the property market is typical for a rural-urban fringe. The sector is closely tied to the construction sector; like the building trade, the property market benefits from the growing local population and the expanding economic activities. Better access to the city generates demand for property in the form of houses as well as land. Dealing and brokering in property is a common occupation in the area (see Chapter 4). Property values are rising, creating an opportunity for speculation and profit-taking.

Strongly market-oriented agriculture is found in the vicinity of Delhi. It is mainly geared to the production and sale of perishable and high-value commodities such as flowers, vegetables and dairy products. Generally, producers of agricultural goods nearby the cities enjoy low transport costs and good information about the markets. The location advantages for growing staple crops such as rice and wheat are less evident however. First of all prices are generally fixed by the government. Furthermore, there are many rural wheat and rice depots and markets. Therefore, the location of a particular plot of farmland is of less importance.

There is only limited growth in local government employment, although demand for schoolteachers and other school staff is increasing. Due to the rapid population growth, the number of schools is rising. Some of the larger villages have secondary schools and even colleges. Yet the bulk of government employment is extra-local.

One more important aspect of the local economy should be mentioned: the fact that money accumulates due to the sale of land. Many farmers are able to sell land for elevated prices to private parties. Others are forced to sell land to the government, though they receive high compensation rates in return. Where brick kilns are operating, the landowners can lease out their land for soil excavation. Generally, the compensation far exceeds the opportunity costs for the out-leasing farmer. This creates scope for investment, turning the loss of agricultural resources into opportunities for economic advantage.

Extra-local

Many of the local occupational and income opportunities in the villages are also present in the city as well as in nearby villages and towns. More frequent and better bus service and faster roads have improved the villagers' access to these alternative locations. In addition, the widespread use of motorscooter and motorcycles enables villagers to travel considerable distances, in many cases on a daily basis. Even the most remote villages in Alipur Block have had a direct bus connection to the city since the 1970s.

The most important contribution of the city to the occupational situation in the villages lies in government employment. Because the city is so close, physical access to government employment is very easy from the villages on the fringe compared to remoter rural areas. About 25 per cent of Delhi's working population is in some sort of government employment, both in the central government as well as in the local authorities (National Capital Planning Board 1986). This amounted to 542,000 workers in 1981, when the public sector was growing by 4.6 per cent per year (United Nations 1995, p. 79). This figure includes administrative bodies and providers of amenities (such as electricity, sewer, and water companies) and many (semi-)government institutions such as nationalised banks, schools, bus companies, colleges, universities, state radio and TV, and numerous other bodies. Government jobs are attractive. The salary may not be high, but the job is secure, pensions and health care are provided for, there are more holidays than in any other country in the world, and widespread corruption provides ample opportunity for a civil servant to collect money on the side.

5.3.2 Pressures on occupational and income possibilities

Pressures on the possibilities for work have a local and an extra-local component. Besides the economic aspects, there are socio-cultural developments that put constraints on certain kinds of occupations for particular groups. Here these are classified as occupations that are declining in status.

Figure 5.3 Pressures on occupational and income possibilities for people residing in rural-urban fringe villages

Local	Extra-local
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• (Staple crop) agriculture• Declining status of agricultural work• Competition from migrant workers	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Stagnating availability of government jobs (during 1990s)

Local

Agricultural production is under pressure in many rural-urban fringe villages. Vast stretches of land are being converted into non-agricultural land uses. Obviously, this leads to a loss of agricultural revenue, both for the cultivator who previously worked the land and for those who had been employed as agricultural labour. According to the census data (Census of India 1971-91), on aggregate, conversion only occurs in a relative sense (see Section 2.4). Only in those villages that had entered in the stage of growing urban land use did the number of workers in agricultural employment decrease.

It is important to note the social and cultural constraints on agricultural activity. This relates to the declining status of farming. Due to the penetration of urban values and

higher levels of education, agricultural work is perceived as a 'backward' source of livelihood. Social pressures can be so strong that they encourage inactivity despite the availability of agricultural work or land. The same mechanisms apply for other low-status jobs, such as work at brick kilns, work as domestic servants, and work in construction.

Finally, the villagers have to compete with migrants on the local labour market. The competition has a moderating influence on wages and further stigmatises manual labour as a low-status activity.

Extra-local

In the 1990s, the availability of government employment was stagnating. This represents a considerable change from the situation of the 1970s and 1980s. For decades, there had been a steady expansion of government jobs. The economic crisis of 1991 led to stricter budget control, moderating the recruitment of government employees. This is clearly noticeable in the villages; there, young adults do not enter government employment as easily as before. However, the policy of reduction of government staff has not been implemented very consistently, due to the entrenched influence of labour unions and the established practice of political patronage. On a favourable note, the increasing role of private enterprise provides more possibilities for employment. For example, the monopoly of the Delhi Transport Corporation was broken in 1990. Private buses were consequently introduced on a massive scale.

5.4 The village households and their livelihood patterns

5.4.1 The socio-economic profile of the households

The present analysis of the livelihood situation of the households in the village population focuses on a few key figures (Table 5.1). The data can be broken down into three categories: agricultural assets, occupational characteristics, and living standard. These figures reflect the agricultural background of the households, the prevailing occupational structure, and the living standard as measured according to certain household possessions.

The following observations can be made from Table 5.1. The total aggregate data of row 1a show how little agricultural land is available. Landholdings are small and unevenly distributed. Not more than 40 per cent of the original households owns more than one hectare. Selling of agricultural land (row 1b), which for the most part is to outsiders, has occurred in all the selected villages, although the sample did not include any in Sungarpur. On average, about two out of ten households in the selected villages sold more than one acre (0.406 hectare) during the last 25 years. Most sales have occurred in the most rapidly urbanising villages. Cattle prove to be a significant source of livelihood (row 1c), although there is a high variation among households and villages.

The data under category 2 in Table 5.1 describe two main aspects of the transformation of household livelihood. The figure for participation in agriculture, amounting to a little more than 20 per cent (row 2a), includes both part-time farmers who are also in the service sector as well as women who occasionally do agricultural work alongside their

household work. These women are somewhat arbitrarily counted as half a worker because they hardly ever work on the land full time. Dairy farming is also included among the agricultural occupations. However, it is only counted as such if (part of) the produce is sold. The reason is that keeping one cow for the household's own consumption of milk products is considered to make an insignificant contribution to the household economic situation. In the more rural villages, the share of agricultural occupations is higher, but not much more than 40 per cent. The figures for employment differ slightly from the census figures (see Table 2.4 in Section 2.2). Besides the inaccuracies inherent in a sample survey, the differences may be explained by two other methodological limitations. First, there is a gap of five to six years, during which time the process of urbanisation has continued. Second, the census figures probably overestimate the number of farmers, since that occupation is the easiest answer for the respondent to give to the census enumerator, even if other sources of income and employment might actually be more important.

Table 5.1 Livelihood characteristics of households; indicators of relevance to urbanisation

Household indicators	Significance (at 95% simultaneous confidence interval)				
	Total	n	Standard deviation	Lower bound	Upper bound
<i>1. Agricultural assets</i>					
1a. Land owned ¹	0.84	337	1.69	0.66	1.02
1b. Land sold ²	0.20	337	0.74	0.13	0.28
1c. Cattle owned ³	1.83	337	3.97	1.42	2.26
<i>2. Occupational structure</i>					
2a. Agricultural work ⁴	0.22	337	0.31	0.19	0.26
2b. Commuting ⁵	0.41	337	0.42	0.37	0.46
<i>3. Economic situation</i>					
3a. Living standard ⁶	24.4	337	14.9	22.8	26.0

Source: basic household survey

- ¹ Mean amount of agricultural land owned in hectares per household of the original population (i.e., excluding migrant households).
- ² Proportion of households or (parent's household) that have sold at least 0.406 hectare (1 acre) of agricultural land during the last 25 years.
- ³ Mean number of cattle owned per household (number of cows and buffalos).
- ⁴ Mean proportion of persons employed in agricultural activities out of all working members of the household.
- ⁵ Mean proportion of commuting persons out of all working members of the household (at least four times a week going outside the village area).
- ⁶ The measure of the living standard ranges from a minimum of nearly 0 to a maximum of 100. It is a combination of the following indicators:
 - mean number of rooms in the residence per household member (A)
 - mean number of motorscooters and motorcycles per household (B)
 - mean number of TVs owned per household (C)
 Formula: $3 \times A + B + C$. The highest score is standardised at 100, the other scores are scaled accordingly.

It is obvious that commuting (row 2b) has a stronger influence on household livelihood than agriculture. If there is only one commuting member of the household, he (in very few cases she) is often the main breadwinner.

The average living standard (row 3a) only gives an indication of the level of the household's wealth in relative terms. Therefore, the aggregate figure does not mean

much. The living standard in the villages in Delhi is probably far above that prevailing in areas throughout rural India. There is no way to check that assumption, however, due to the lack of comparable data. But unlike most rural areas, TVs, motorscooters and other material assets are widespread and housing conditions are relatively good in the villages on Delhi's rural-urban fringe.

5.4.2 Socio-economic stratification of households

In previous research, origin and caste were found to be the most important factors explaining the socio-economic stratification of households. Both factors are essential to understanding the baseline situation: social status, occupational patterns, and access to (agricultural) resources. Many studies have found that ownership of agricultural land basically runs along caste lines in North India, despite government efforts to ban the caste system (e.g. Mandelbaum 1970, Béteille 1996, Scarlett Epstein 1998, Crooke 1989, Lanjouw and Stern 1998). That this particular study area is no exception is confirmed by sources from different periods. First, Lewis (1958) provides a detailed account in his study about a typical village near Delhi. This study was carried out in the early 1950s, when the rigidity of economic rights and obligations according to caste (the *Jajmani system*) was greater than at present (Béteille 1996). Sources from the 1960s and 1970s describe a situation in which the caste-assigned occupations and privileges were changing slightly. Even so, land ownership was still concentrated among the 'dominant' caste groups (Agrawala 1962, Rao 1970, Mulay and Ray 1973). More recently, Singh Rana (1994) confirmed that despite the land reform in 1974, certain dominant castes still own the bulk of agricultural land. Caste is therefore a suitable proxy variable for distinguishing the resource-poor disadvantaged households from the traditionally better-off households. Besides, distinguishing socio-economic status and background on the basis of caste and origin is much less problematic and more consistent through time than it would be to use the data on land ownership over the last 25 years.

Migrant settlers have hardly any access to ownership of agricultural land. Thus, it makes sense to place them in a separate category. It is fairly easy to distinguish the original land-owning castes from the landless castes, though the exact caste composition differs per village. Traditionally, the 'cultivating castes' are the dominant group that used to own the land; in this study, the cultivating castes are called Group I. The background of the other indigenous households (Group II) is substantially different. Traditionally, they are the labourers, the artisans, and the service providers. The number of indigenous households of each group varies per village. Usually, Group I accounts for approximately 60 per cent and Group II 40 per cent of the original households in most of the villages. The migrants, called Group III, have yet a different background, which has consequences for their socio-economic opportunities and constraints. The presence of Group III varies enormously per locality. This classification of three groups was found to be most relevant with respect to traditional access to land and with respect to status in economic life. Therefore, we thought it would be particularly interesting to consider the (selective) impact of urbanisation from the perspective of this traditional division of rural society. The above considerations lead to the following succinct definitions of the three groups:

Group I

The *original* households that belong to the traditionally *dominant castes*

Group II

The *original* households that belong to the traditionally *non-dominant castes*

Group III

The *migrant* households (of which the longest-staying member has resided in the village for less than 25 years)

A few remarks should be made about the characteristics of each group. In five out of the six surveyed villages, there is only one dominant caste (although they are different ones), while for one village (Ibrahimpur), there are two dominant castes (see Section 2.4). The economic status and ownership of agricultural land varied considerably within Group I, ranging from small peasants to big landlords. Traditionally, the members of Group I are the cultivators that manage the agricultural land. Dairy farming is also part of their caste-dependent occupation. They used to have a dominant position in the *Jajmani system* (traditionally prevalent in rural India, see Glossary), which gave them their economic advantage. The cultivators had to share part of the harvest with non-dominant caste households in the village in return for agricultural labour and services from them.

There is much diversity among the castes within Group II; it would go beyond the scope of this study to mention all of the castes that have been encountered in the villages. Almost all households are either part of the historically underprivileged lower castes or 'outcastes'. Presently, most fall into one of two categories: S.C. (Scheduled Castes) or O.B.C. (Other Backward Castes). Under the *Jajmani system*, the obligations of the lower castes included working on the land of the land-owning farmers and supporting the village economy by working as carpenters, leather tanners, sweepers and cleaners, blacksmiths, potters and other artisan professions, depending on one's caste (e.g. Srinivas 1996). Some villages have a few of higher-caste households (e.g. not land-owning *Brahmins* and *Banias*). These households are found in only a few cases. Historically, these groups reside in the larger villages and towns rather than in the smaller villages that were selected for this research.

Group III is the result of the massive migration to the villages around Delhi. Although lower castes are more prevalent among them, the variable of caste is less relevant to the socio-economic position of Group III. Among the selected Group III households, there are many single male labourers. They tend to bring their wives and children to the village only when they have attained a more stable income and have obtained a residence. Most of the recent migrants are from Uttar Pradesh and Bihar. They give various reasons for migrating: lack of employment opportunities in the place of origin; fragmentation of land in at their home village; and much better access to jobs in and around Delhi (e.g. Crook 1993, Gjaltema 1996, Papola 1997). Strictly speaking, the migration to the villages near Delhi should be considered rural-to-rural migration, even though most Group III workers seek employment in the non-agricultural urban sector. The lives of true rural-to-rural migrants are difficult: they mostly do agricultural labour and work at brick kilns (e.g. Schenk-Sandbergen 1995). Most of them are low-paid labourers.

There are hardly any representatives of the (urban) middle class among the migrants who reside in the villages. The reason is that the suburbanising urban middle class prefers the newly constructed neighbourhoods adjacent to the city. They are not willing to live in the socially suffocating and relatively under-serviced environment of the villages. The social

position of migrants in the villages is weak. For example, they do not qualify for any official benefit that is meant to compensate villagers for the consequences of land acquisition by the government. Nor do they have an ancestral claim on land for residential space. The outsiders who do own land in the study villages – such as speculators, industrialists, entrepreneurs, and farmhouse owners – hardly ever reside in the village (see Chapter 4). Therefore, they were not included in the sample of the basic household survey. It should be noted that the data for Group III are less representative than those from the indigenous groups. For practical reasons, Group III has been excluded in two out of the six villages selected for the basic household survey. In one village (Khushk), there were no non-seasonal migrants. The selection in the remaining three villages is limited to the migrant households that are residing inside or adjacent to the village settlements.

5.5 Urbanisation and household livelihood: socio-economic background

This section starts with an overview of the specific patterns of livelihood that have emerged in the three groups identified above. In the next section (5.6), three other determinants of livelihood are examined in more detail. Figures 5.4 through 5.8 depict the results from the household variables introduced earlier. Statistical calculations have also been made, but to keep the chapter readable these were placed in Appendix B. The differences are verified according to 95 per cent confidence interval, which helps to assess the statistical reliability of the figures. Simultaneous margins rather than single margins were needed to make comparisons between the groups. For the data on the occupations of individual workers, statistical calculations have not been included due to an excessive number of categories.

As Figure 5.4 clearly shows, agricultural land is concentrated in Group I. In spite of urbanisation, the members of this group have sold only a minor portion of their land. Group I also own the most cattle, although there is a wide variance among the households, leading to a high standard deviation (see Appendix B). The largest 'dairy household' in the sample has 25 cows and buffalos, but about half of all households do not own any cattle at all. Group II owns less cattle, and members of Group III only occasionally own cattle. Four conditions seem to be positively correlated with commercial cattle ownership. First, there are caste-related traditions of keeping cattle (especially in the case of the *Gujjars*, but the *Jats* and the *Tyagis* also keep cattle). Second, owning agricultural land is an advantage since the land can provide cheap fodder. Third, the adult members should always be at home to take care of the cattle. Fourth, there has to be capital available to a household to buy and maintain the animals.

Figure 5.4 Agricultural assets per socio-economic group

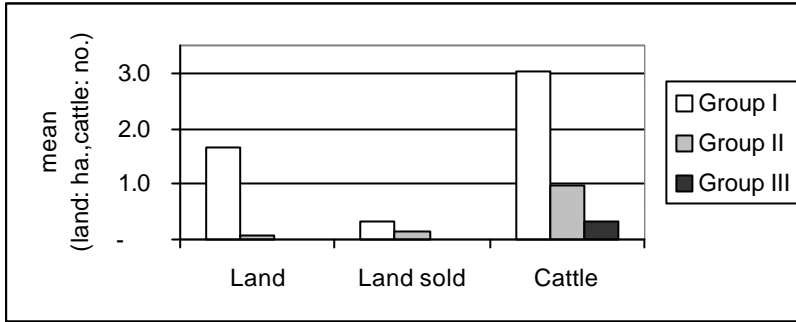


Figure 5.5 Occupational characteristics per socio-economic group

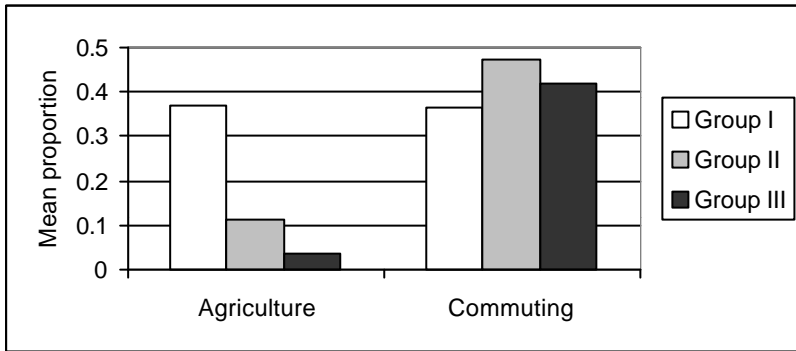


Figure 5.6 The main occupations of individual workers per socio-economic group

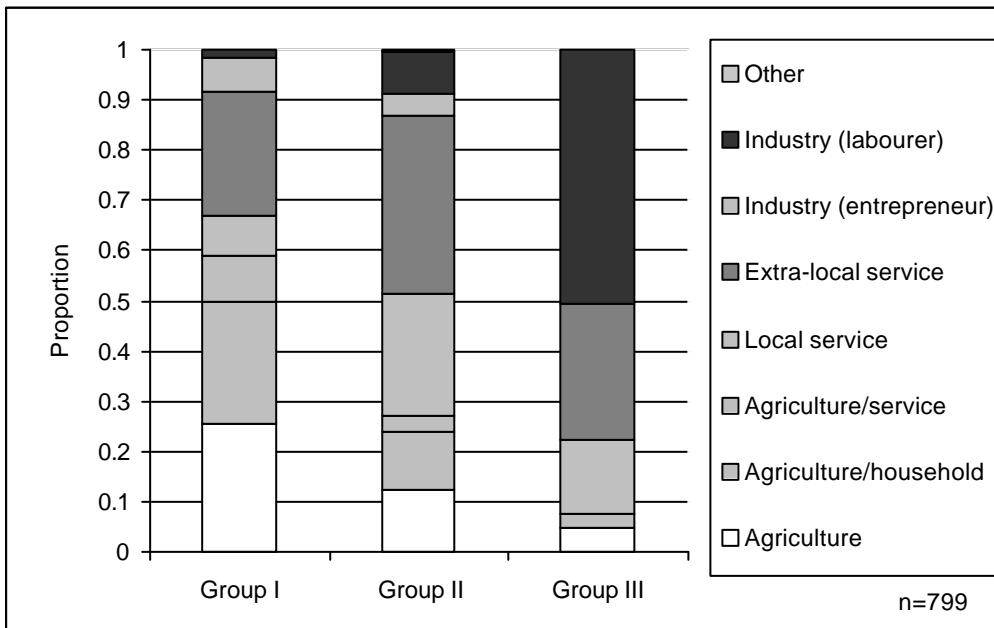


Figure 5.5 shows the occupational characteristics as the mean proportion of household members who are into agriculture or are commuters. With respect to the figures for agriculture, part-time agricultural activity (mostly combined with household work or a service occupation) has been calculated as half an agricultural worker.

Group I has the highest share of agricultural workers within the households. Nonetheless, commuting (mostly for employment in the city) is now becoming more important. Among Group II, work in agriculture has become rare. The members of this group own hardly any agricultural land, and they certainly do not want to work for other farmers. Group II contains relatively many commuters. The few workers who do still work in the fields during the harvest season usually come from deprived households and therefore do not have much choice. Both the wages and the social status of agricultural labour are low. Group III has an even lower rate of participation in agriculture. Most of the hired agricultural labourers are migrants, but they are usually seasonal workers who do not live in the village settlement (and therefore they do not appear in the sample). The importance of commuting is not very different among the groups; at least the difference is not statistically significant.

Figure 5.6 shows the main categories of occupations as distinguished in the basic household survey. It demonstrates that the workers of Group I still have the largest share of persons combining occupations: agriculture/household and agriculture/service. In fact, these persons are part-time farmers. Group II obviously has a higher share of local service workers than Group I. Figure 5.7 confirms that among them there are many persons who run a local retail or repair shop. The extra-local service sector concerns mostly government employment for both Group I and II and 'informal' service activities for Group III. People in Group III are frequently employed as industrial labourers. Among the original population, this occupation is not favoured and seldom done. There are some factory owners and supervisors among Group I, but not many. Group II and III have none at all. Most of the factory owners are 'outsiders' who live in the city or in nearby towns, as mentioned in Chapter 4.

The importance of the occupations and sources of income is estimated by compiling the results of all surveys and interviews (Figure 5.7). Because of this mix of sources, the data do not allow the calculation of representative frequencies. Nevertheless, the data give a detailed impression of the selective integration of the three socio-economic groups in the various occupations and other income-generating activities.

Income from rent (mostly houses, but also factories, storehouses, etc.) and lease (some farmers lease out agricultural land to migrant farmers and brick kilns) is one of the pillars of the local economy, especially for Group I. This is much less so for Group II and not at all for Group III. Households of Group I possess the most land within the boundaries of the village settlement. The households in this group can exploit that land in many profitable ways. Group I, being the local 'ruling class', has a clear advantage in property-related dealing, for which it is essential to know about other landholdings in the village. Furthermore, Group I has more influence and better connections with the authorities and the administration in charge of property matters.

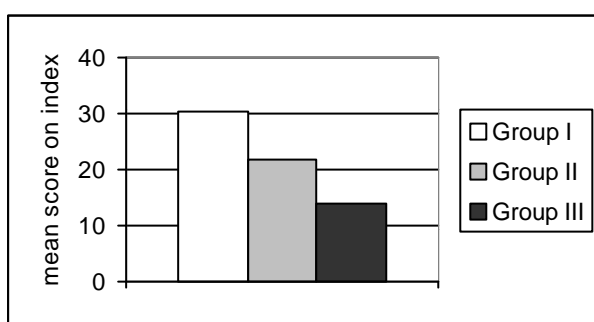
Figure 5.7 Specific occupations and incomes per socio-economic group (in descending order of estimated importance)

Group I	
<i>Local</i>	<i>Extra-local</i>
Agricultural:	Non-agricultural:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agriculture • Horticulture/floriculture/nurseries • Dairy 	- Government employment:
Non-agricultural:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transport (bus drivers, conductors, mechanics, clerks) • Utility (clerks, supervisors, gardeners, watchmen) • Police (constables, officers) • Bank clerks • School teachers and other staff
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rent, leasing out of land/houses • Transport business (owning/driving trucks, buses) • Retail (e.g. general stores) • Property dealing • Brick kiln owner 	- Private
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Business/commerce/trade occupations
Group II	
<i>Local</i>	<i>Extra-local</i>
Agricultural:	Non-agricultural:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agricultural labour, cultivating leased land (very little) 	- Government employment:
Non-agricultural:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Government utilities (labourers, clerks, supervisors, gardeners, watchmen) • Schoolteachers and other school staff • Police (constables, officers) • Transport (bus drivers, conductors, mechanics, clerks) • Bank clerks
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Workshops (repair, tailoring, welding, etc.) • Retail (general stores, teashops) • Rent • Transportation (owning/driving trucks, auto rickshaws, etc.) 	- Private
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Business/commerce/trade
Group III	
<i>Local</i>	<i>Extra-local</i>
Agricultural	Non-agricultural:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agricultural labour and cultivating leased land 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Factory labour • Storehouse labour • Transportation (drivers, helpers) • Petty trade • Rickshaw / auto rickshaw driving • Private watchmen
Non-agricultural	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Factory labour • Storehouse labour • Transportation (drivers, helpers) • Shops (assistants, few shopkeepers) • Servants • Private watchmen • Petty trade 	

Without many of the assets that Group I possesses, Group II takes advantage of expanding local economic activities in a different way. Group II households have relatively many workers who are locally 'self-employed'. Some run shops while others are small traders, repairmen, builders, etc. Among the commuting workers of Group II, government employment is common. Most are working in blue-collar jobs, but employment in white-collar jobs (e.g. teachers and low-level administration) is increasing considerably. Children of blue-collar government workers have generally enjoyed better education than their parents. Therefore, they are better qualified on the labour market. Some informally and privately employed people are commuting to nearby towns and the city as well.

Group III is employed in a wide variety of jobs, mostly at the lower end of the socio-economic spectrum. Unlike Group I and II, migrants hardly find access to government employment. They do not have the necessary local connections and are usually less well educated. When the original groups start taking up urban occupations, Group III replaces the indigenous workers. Thus, Group III takes up the less attractive local jobs, such as agricultural labourers, assistants to shopkeepers, factory workers and carriers in the transport and storage sectors. Nevertheless, commuting is also quite common among Group III. Commuting migrants perform jobs similar to the non-agricultural occupations that they carry out in the villages: low-status labour or petty trade. Some individuals and households manage to move up on social ladder, e.g. owning or at least running shops. Very few others are lower-middle class people who settle in the fringe areas and commute to the city. However, the great majority of Group III is poor.

Figure 5.8 Living standard per socio-economic group



The scores on living standard are obviously derived from characteristics of occupations and income as well as from wealth passed down for generations. The index clearly shows that Group I has the highest mean score on living standard (Figure 5.8), a score which is also statistically significant. This group is traditionally wealthier than Group II and III. Moreover, they obtain most of the benefits from agriculture and from selling land and they generally occupy higher positions in service activities. There are relatively many households of which individual members are successful entrepreneurs, property dealers or high-up government officials, pushing up the average. Most of these households are from the traditionally prominent families in the village, either in land ownership, in local politics or both. However, the distribution of the scores also reveals that low living standards occur among Group I households. Poverty among them is mostly a result of an unsuccessful shift to non-agricultural sources of income accompanied by small landownership. Demographic and coincidental factors also frequently play a role, such as the death or disability of (previously or potentially) earning members.

Group II shows on average a significantly lower living standard, but there is considerable overlap with Group I. There are hardly any households that score very high. Group II emerges as a lower-middle class engaged in lower and middle-range jobs. Despite this relative progress compared to their deprived past, very low living standards can (still) be found. In every village there are a few Group II households that have remained or have become quite poor. Similarly to Group I, poverty is often caused by coincidental misfortune, but there is also a strong relation with low levels of education. Lack of

schooling results in insufficient development of skills and low awareness levels. Both of those qualities are essential if an individual is going to make it into a government job.

The mean living standard is much lower for Group III than for the other groups. The gap is due to the limited scope of opportunity. That, in turn, leads to poor and congested housing conditions and few assets. This applies most painfully to the recent arrivals among labour-class migrants. Many of them share one room with many others. And the incidence of the key assets, namely a TV and a motorscooter or motorcycle, is also low. The household assets may be less representative for their economic situation. They are also part of a household of kin that is not residing in the village. Many Group III households choose to save and send their earnings home instead of spending money on local comforts.

5.6 Household features and livelihood patterns

In this section, the data is sorted according to three characteristics of households that are considered relevant to the urbanisation process. First of all, this includes the characteristics of the resident village (in effect; the specific site and situation of the village); second, this refers to the amount of ownership of land; and third, it covers the demographic structure in terms of nuclear, joint and other types of households. Nevertheless, the socio-economic division remains critical for explaining the emerging picture.

5.6.1 The place of residence: influence of the local 'site' and 'situation'

The local economic setting in which households reside influences their occupational patterns to some extent. The 'situation' seems to be of less importance. That is because the range of the study area is such that all villages have access to the city. The 'sites', however, differ considerably, as shown in the maps in Figure 2.5.

Figure 5.9 shows the proportions of each of the three socio-economic groups represented in the study villages. Not all differences have clear spatial dimensions. Some features are related to different castes that represent the population in the villages. To some extent, the explanation of the variation in ownership of agricultural land and cattle (Figure 5.10) may be explained by the fact that various caste groups inhabit the villages. The castes that traditionally own large pieces of agricultural land include the *Jats* in Zindpur and Nangli Poona, the *Rajputs* in Sungarpur, and the *Brahmins* and *Tyagis* in Ibrahimpur. The dominant *Sainis* in Khushk and the *Gujjars* in Jagatpur are traditionally less well endowed with agricultural land. There is a historical reason for this: the Gujjars and the Sainis are not higher castes, and therefore had and still have less access to land. In the case of the Sainis, this is still visible in the small size of their landholdings. But the Jagatpur villagers have acquired more land during the last 25 years, leading to a relatively high rate of land ownership, although much of it is low-value land in the riverbed.

Figure 5.9 Representation of socio-economic groups in the study villages

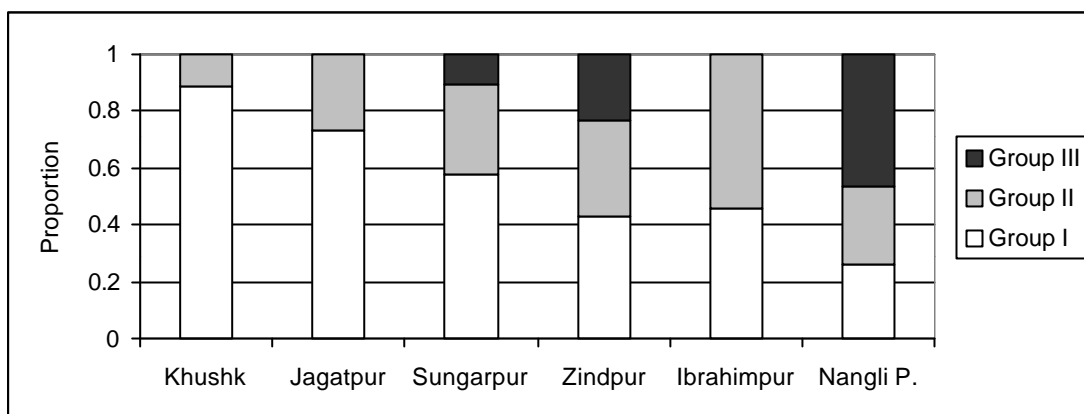
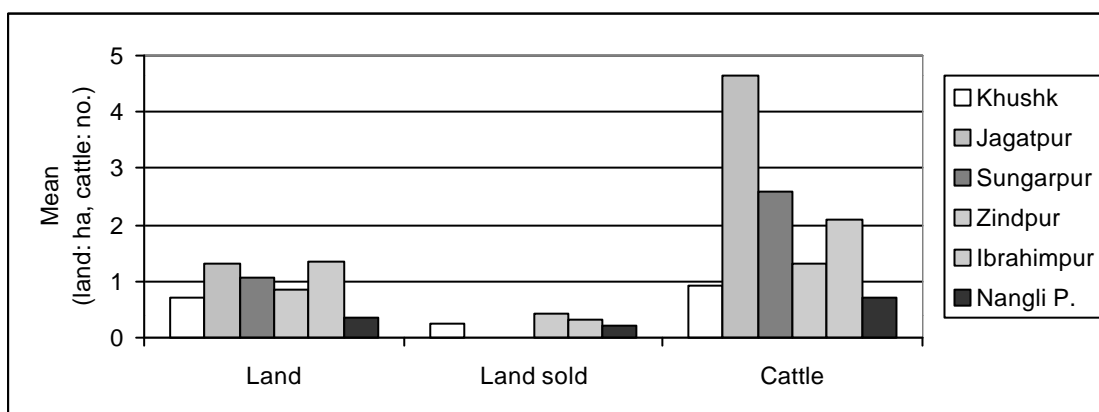


Figure 5.10 Agricultural assets of households per village



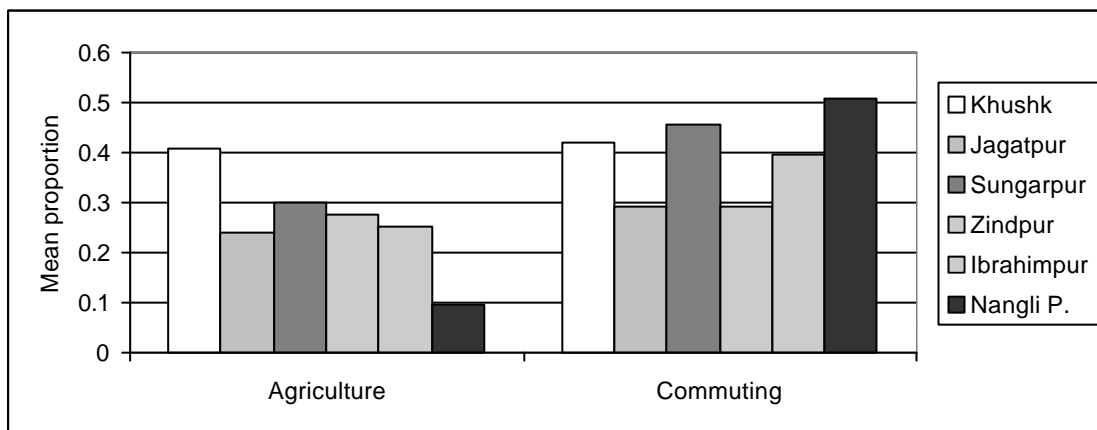
At the household level, fragmentation of land ownership has taken place, reflecting patterns of inheritance of agricultural land over many generations. Quite a few Group I households have no agricultural land, nor did they have any during the last 25 years. The status-enhancing role of agricultural landownership is decreasing, but this effect differs per community. For example, the Sainis of Khushk are reluctant to sell land for fear of diminishing their status. This concern is less pronounced in neighbouring Zindpur. Over the past 25 years, the number of land sales was highest in Zindpur. But when we exclude migrants from the calculation, it is highest in Nangli Poon. There, 37 per cent of all indigenous households have sold land, though it should be noted that the average size of the plots sold is small (0.3 hectare). Zindpur ranks second at 27 per cent, while the other villages still score below 15 per cent.

Dairy farming is concentrated in the villages of Jagatpur and Sungarpur, though the incidence in Ibrahimpur is high too. The Gujjars in Jagatpur have a particularly strong tradition of dairy farming. To carry out dairy farming, the 'site', in terms of space available in the residential area, is also a crucial factor. This space is relatively abundantly available in Jagatpur, Sungarpur and Ibrahimpur. In Jagatpur, the local population is expanding the village area in order to reserve space for additional cattle and

residents. The population sees great potential in the dairy business, as they can combine this activity with urban employment. This combination is quite exceptional. Cattle-rearing in urbanising villages usually decreases because other uses for the space become more profitable.

Generally, agricultural employment and incomes is most important in the small villages where virtually all of the agricultural land remains rural and where intensive cultivation is practised, like Sungarpur and Khushk (Figure 5.11). In both villages, the quality of the land seems to be excellent, partly due to investments and good maintenance by farmers. The easy access to the city enables farmers to bring agricultural produce to the urban markets themselves, thereby generating extra income. There are even villagers in at key positions at the fruit and vegetable market. Local farmers are certainly a strong party in the trade of vegetables and flowers. In this way, the proximity to the city clearly exerts a positive influence on the income levels of these farmers.

Figure 5.11 Occupational characteristics per village



The figures for commuting are high for all villages, though for very different reasons. In Nangli Poona, for example, (local) agricultural activities have declined considerably. And in Sungarpur, there are few local non-agricultural economic possibilities. Both places have high commuting figures in Figure 5.11. There is not much difference between the villages in the study area with respect to the type of work performed by commuters. As indicated in Figure 5.7, commuters are mainly employed as bus drivers, civil servants, service providers, police officers, or teachers and in a range of private-sector jobs (see also the Appendix). On the other hand, the site is more important with respect to non-agricultural activities in the village. The size of the settlement and level of urbanisation determines how intensively village households will be involved in local retail, industry and allied services.

In Figure 5.12, the industrial character of Zindpur and Nangli Poona shows up in the predominance of industrial labour. All of those workers fall into Group III. In Jagatpur, many 'housewives' also keep cattle within the household compound. In Ibrahimpur, the category of local service is quite large, as demonstrated by the presence of many shops. The surrounding 'colonies' provide scope for local service activities. Nangli Poona scores highest in extra-local services, partly because most of the migrants commute. Another reason is frequent bus service along the GT Road.

Figure 5.12 The main occupations of working adults per village

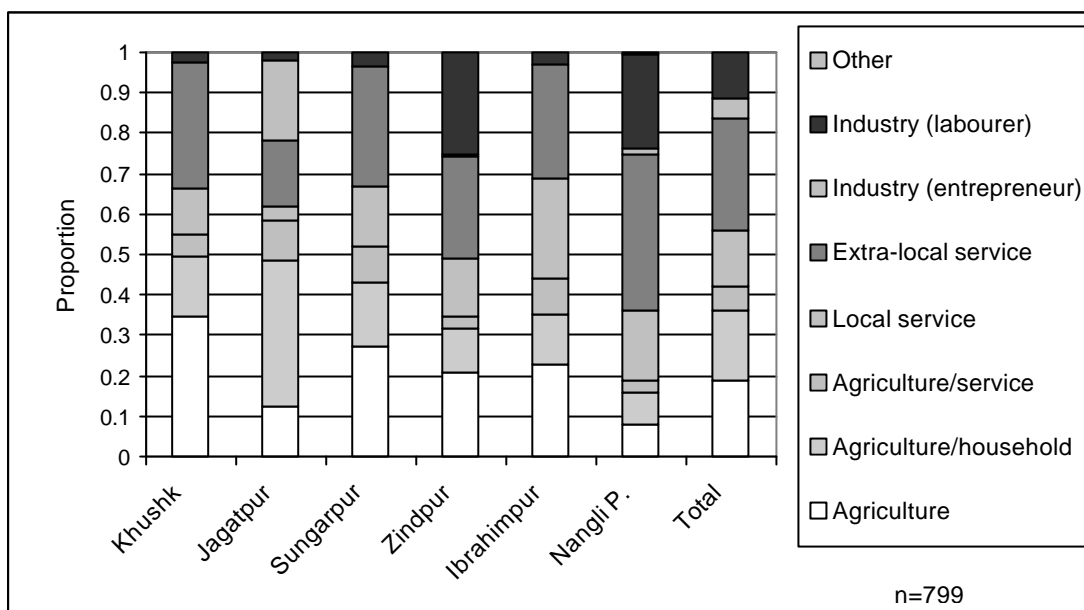
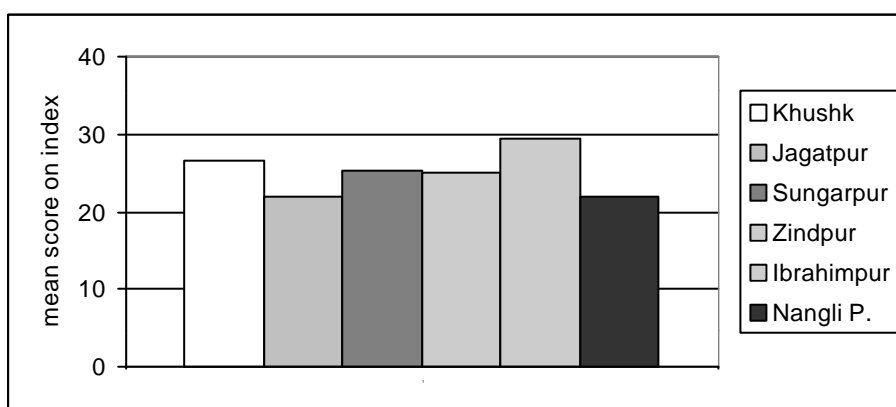


Figure 5.13 Scores on the index of living standard of households per village



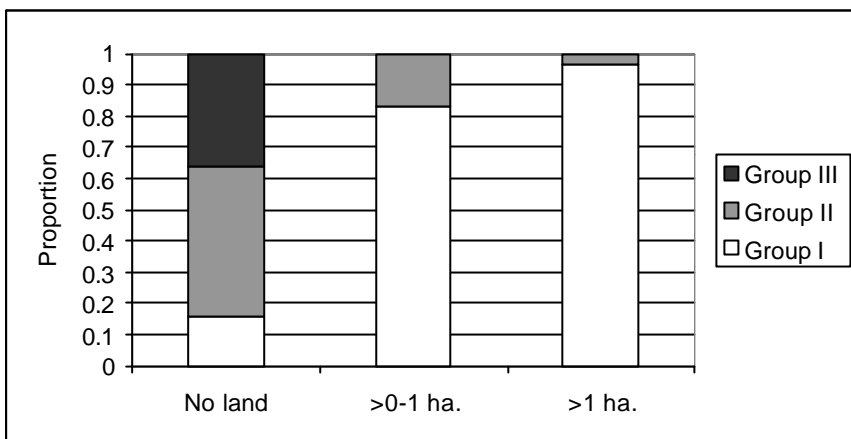
The villages do not differ much in living standard. When we have the poor and unequally represented Group III households out of the index, the differences are even smaller (e.g. 29 for Nangli Poona). The fact that the more urbanised villages have higher standard deviations (see the Appendix) is explained by wider spread between the extremes. As a village urbanises, a considerable number of households get very rich, while the number of poor migrant labour households increases.

5.6.2 Ownership of agricultural land and aspects of land management

The following question forms the basis of this section: To what extent does the amount of agricultural land owned determine the variables for occupation, income and standard of living? An analysis of the data according to different rates of ownership of agricultural

land can partially answer this question. The categories reflect what is locally considered small and large holdings. One hectare is an approximate threshold size for making commercial agriculture profitable.

Figure 5.14 Representation of socio-economic groups in the categories of landownership



Naturally, there is a great difference in the mean of landownership between those households who own less than one hectare and those who own more (Figure 5.15). Traditionally, both economic status and access to agricultural land vary considerably within Group I, as its members range from small peasants to big landlords. This is still the case, although the group owning more than three hectares is small (all in Group I, constituting 11 per cent of that group). Keeping cattle coincides with ownership of land. In all known cases, at least one male member of the household takes responsibility for cultivating the land. Other members of the household – persons with work, retired people and youngsters – occasionally help out when more hands are needed. If there is little surplus labour available within the household, the farmer hires extra workers. Hiring flexible labour has become easier in the last 25 years, with the breakdown of the *Jajmani system* and the arrival of large groups of seasonal migrants.

Figure 5.15 Agricultural assets per category of ownership of agricultural land

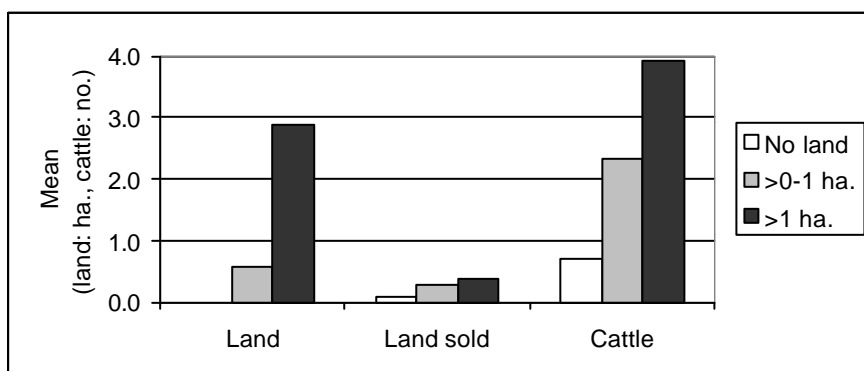
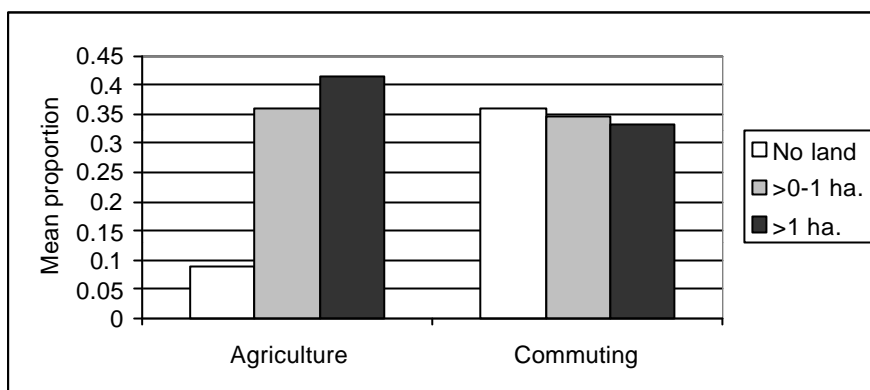


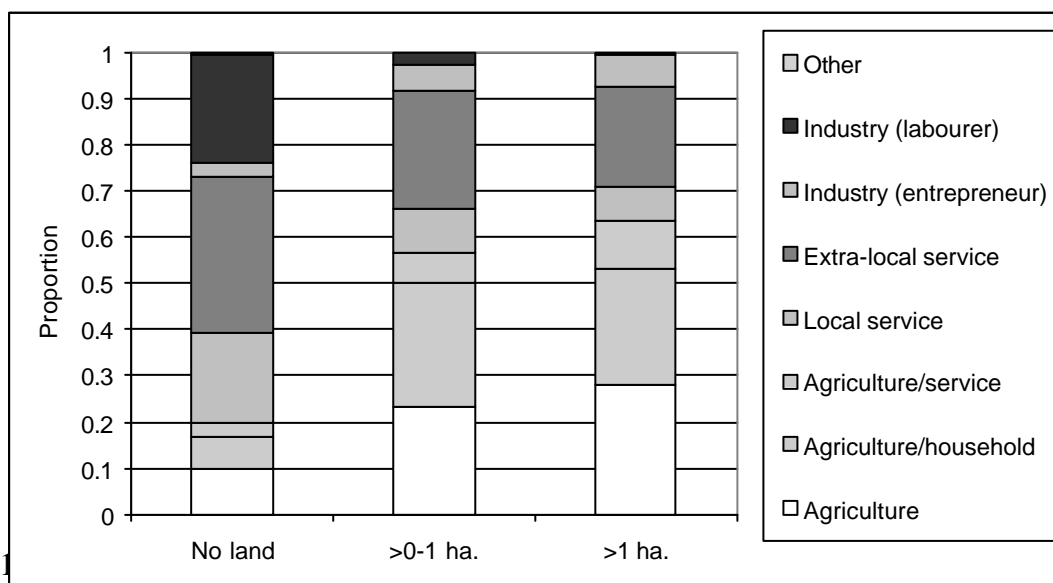
Figure 5.16 Occupational characteristics per category of ownership of agricultural land



Figures 5.16 and 5.17 show that landholding households are much more involved in agriculture than households without land but that the difference between small and large landowners is much smaller. The explanation is that many large landowners lease out land and/or hire in labour. They also prefer to have some of the household members employed by the government or in other non-agricultural employment, such as property dealing. Commuting is slightly less common among larger landowners, though still important.

With respect to the standard of living (Figure 5.18), there are clear differences between owning no land, a little land and more than one hectare. It is remarkable that the households with the highest rate of land ownership do not have a much higher living standard. This confirms the impression that the integration of workers in non-agricultural sources of income has become more important factor for raising income levels than ownership of agricultural land. Nevertheless, land provides considerable advantages, in the sense that landowners have multiple options (i.e. selling and leasing out).

Figure 5.17 Main occupations of working adults per category of ownership of agricultural land



It would be interesting to compare the living standard of households that sold land during the last 25 years with the situation of those households that did not. Unfortunately, the sample of the basic household survey contains only 22 cases of households that have sold more than one hectare and 27 that have sold less than one hectare. The mean of living standards is clearly in favour of the households that have sold land, although this number is not statistically significant (Figure 5.19 and Appendix B). It should be noted that most of the households that have sold land are still holding on to part of their land and have used the revenues for their economic benefit.

Figure 5.18 Living standards per category of landownership

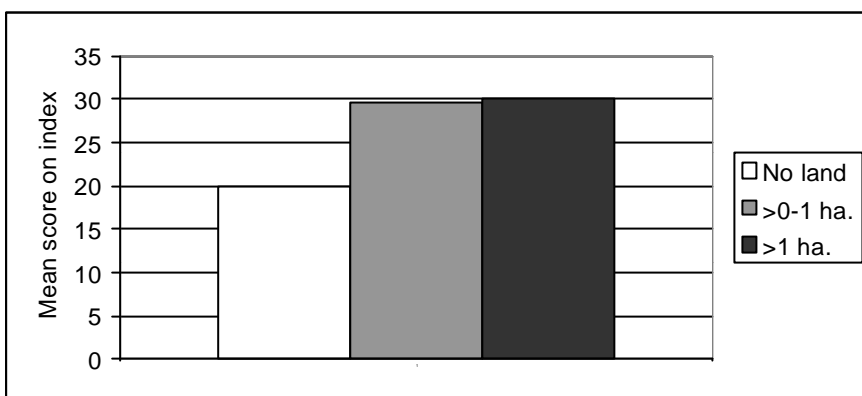
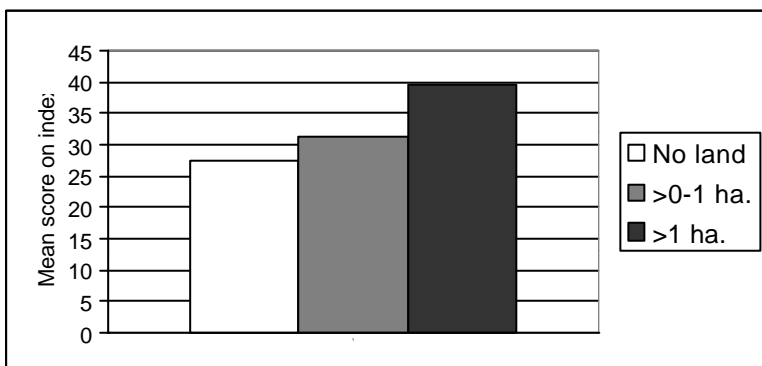


Figure 5.19 Living standard of households that sold land among Group I



There are many ways to make use of the land, even if there is little or no labour available in the household. Most landowners are personally engaged in cultivating the land. But some landowning households lease out land on a sharecropping or rental basis (see Section 4.2.1). The variety of lease constructions illustrates the many options that Group I households have in managing their agricultural land. The basic household survey provides an indication of the incidence of lease. There are a few Group I households (9 per cent of the total) that lease in land (at an average of 1.7 hectares), usually to supplement their own (shortfall of) land. Only 4 per cent of Group II households lease in land (at an average of 0.7 hectares). The indigenous households that lease in land are mostly commercial farmers looking for a higher income from cultivation. Others are

migrants cultivating commercial crops on small plots of leased land. About 12 per cent of these households in Group I lease out land (at an average of 2.2 hectares). Leasing out occurs most in landowning households where workers are (successfully) engaged in non-agricultural activities.

The location of brick kilns is another land-based activity with relevance to the livelihood situation of Group I landowners. Loam excavation on farmland has various implications for the livelihood of Group I (see also Section 3.2). The lease rates are high and have been rising steadily over the past 25 years, being invariably higher than the opportunity cost of agricultural income. When a local farmer leases out agricultural land, activities in farming are at least temporarily stalled. In this way, brick kilns lead to some degree of unemployment for the households involved, although their income situation temporarily improves. As one villager remarked, “at one point in time, half of all the farmers could be found playing cards every day when there were 8 brick kilns on the village land”. Brick kilns brought cars, TVs and other status goods to the villages at a relatively early stage.

Both continuous agricultural income and revenues from selling and leasing out land are often invested in transport companies, brick kilns, property dealing, and in a number of other activities for which access to capital is essential. Also, a secured income from land enables households to place more stress on the education of the youth. The relatively high level of education found in Group I helps people start up private businesses and find government jobs. However, there is an indirect threat to this comfortable situation. Farming households that have sufficient land are lured into conspicuous consumption. They feel less compelled to diversify and invest in alternative employment and sources of income. After some moneyed years, this complaisance can lead to a relative or even absolute decline in their economic status. The poorer households among Group I, often landowners, have not managed to find significantly gainful employment outside farming.

Forced sale of land through government acquisition can have favourable consequences (see also Chapter 4). Sometimes the landowners claim the right to a government job as part of the bargain (also reported in the press: Times of India 14-10-1989, Business Line 25-7-1998). This study came across little evidence that workers obtained government employment as a direct consequence of land acquisition. What they did gain is an awareness of the range of possibilities that arise through obtaining access to the application procedures. Another advantage of selling land to the government is that the revenue can be used to pay the bribes that are often demanded by superiors for employing government staff. In such cases, the compensation money received for the land is used directly to ‘buy’ an attractive desk job in a government institute.

Group II plays a rather insignificant role in the management of agricultural land. The land reform of 1974 (within the so-called twenty-point programme initiated by the then Prime Minister Indira Gandhi) was intended to change the disadvantaged situation of the lower castes regarding land ownership. The programme aimed at allotting one acre to all landless households out of the common land of the village. Its success varied from place to place, as reflected by the selected villages. In Khushk, Sungarpur, and Jagatpur, the programme was not implemented at all due to the non-existence of village common land. In Nangli Poona, the common land was allotted to the landless. However, soon after the allotment, the landowning community was able to buy the land at a low price as a result of local political hassles. In Ibrahimpur and Zindpur, the common land was allotted after a controversial decision by the village *Panchayat*, but the agricultural quality of the fields

that were parcelled out was very poor. In Ibrahimpur, most allottee households sold their land during the 1970s and 1980s. Only in Zindpur is the single acre of allotted agricultural land still largely in the hands of the allottees. However, these plots are generally of poor agricultural value. About half of these fields were either barren or waterlogged and therefore remained uncultivated. Besides, when the government acquires the land, the compensation for the allotted land is lower because the allottees only have an *asami right* (user right). Evidence from the experience in the study villages suggests that the land reform has not contributed much to the livelihood of poor villagers. It did have an impact in another sense, though. The whole event caused a stir and raised the political consciousness among lower-caste people.

The figures for Group III indicate a consistent exclusion from access to local agricultural land in the form of ownership. The sample included only one Group III household in the village Khushk that acquired some agricultural land in 1971, but the parcel was sold again in the 1980s. Leasing in land to cultivate cash crops is quite common for migrants, but these people are usually only present seasonally. There are many such migrating farmers who travel around. Migrants involved in agriculture are invariably mobile; they are a kind of modern nomads. They go where there is work or where there is land to lease.

5.6.3 Demographic structure: nuclear and joint type of households

Household structure is an important factor in the livelihood of the villagers. It is sometimes claimed that urbanisation leads to a preference for nuclear households instead of the joint households that are prevalent in agricultural households in rural India (see Section 1.2.4). Although this cliché may be only partially true, the interviews revealed that the norm for joint households among the farming community was stronger in the past. Consequently, there may be some truth in the claim of Ramachandran (1989) that joint households come under pressure in a semi-urban society.

In this study, simple definitions are applied: nuclear households consist of the head of the household and/or his/her spouse and/or their non-working children, comprising a maximum of two generations. Joint households consist of two or more generations and accommodate one's elders and married brothers in the same household. The category of 'other' is made up mainly of non-family households of workers who eat their meals together. It must be said that the category of 'joint' represents a very heterogeneous group of households. Cohabitation of married brothers is relatively rare. In many cases, only one elder lives in the house, which does make it very different from a nuclear household.

Figure 5.20 shows that most joint households can be found among Group I. There are three reasons. First, Group I households possess more land within the village settlement. Consequently, it is not necessary to split up the household for lack of residential space. They can often extend into the *gher* (cattle shed) adjacent to the house. People in Group II face much more congested housing conditions and have no other option than to acquire a new residential plot for the adult man who marries and has his own income. Second, it is the traditional social and cultural preference among the dominant-caste groups to stay in joint households. This preference is clearly eroding, but it is still valid to a certain

extent. Third, there is a compelling economic reason, as mentioned in the literature; the farming families stay together to jointly manage the land and to avoid fragmentation.

Figure 5.20 Representation of socio-economic groups per category of demographic structure

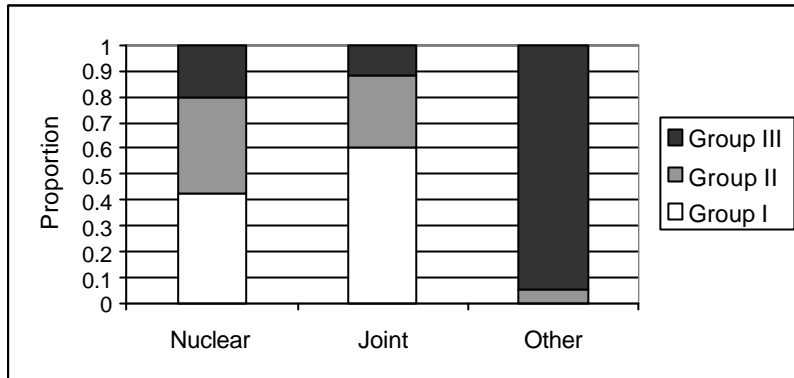
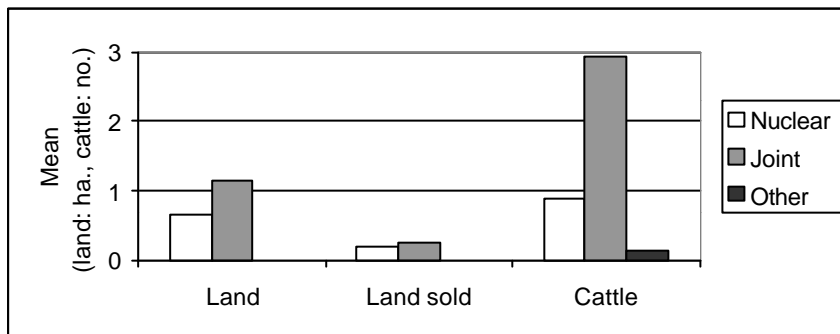


Figure 5.21 Agricultural assets per category of demographic structure



The rate of land ownership is higher among joint households, also because they are less susceptible to fragmentation of land. Cattle ownership is much more common in joint households. For one thing, it is easier to spread out the task of looking after the cattle; moreover they also tend to have more space for cattle.

Figures 5.22 and 5.23 show that agricultural occupations are more common in joint households, corresponding roughly to the differences between the socio-economic groups. This correspondence indicates that the factor demographic structure does not play a very important role. Furthermore, there is little difference in living standard between joint and nuclear households. The category of 'other' is significantly poorer; these households are almost all migrant labourers who share a dwelling. Nuclear households among Group I have an obviously higher living standard than the joint households of that group, with a score of respectively 34.6 and 27.5. It is likely that the nuclear households in Group I consist of relatively more workers in good non-agricultural urban employment.

Figure 5.22 Occupational characteristics per category of demographic structure

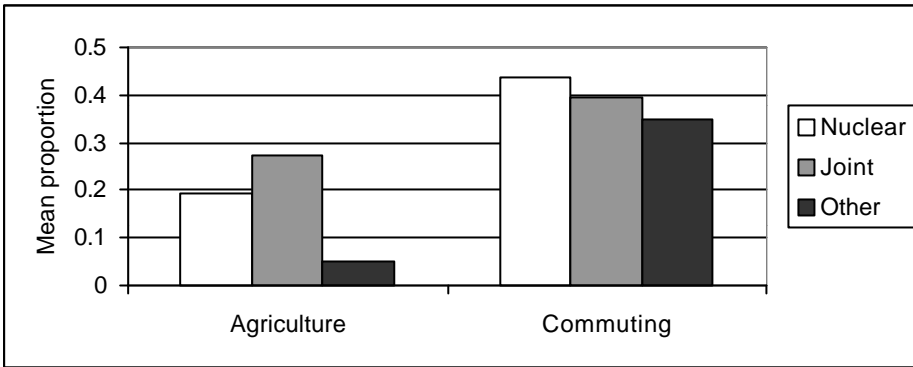


Figure 5.23 The main occupations of workers per category of demographic structure

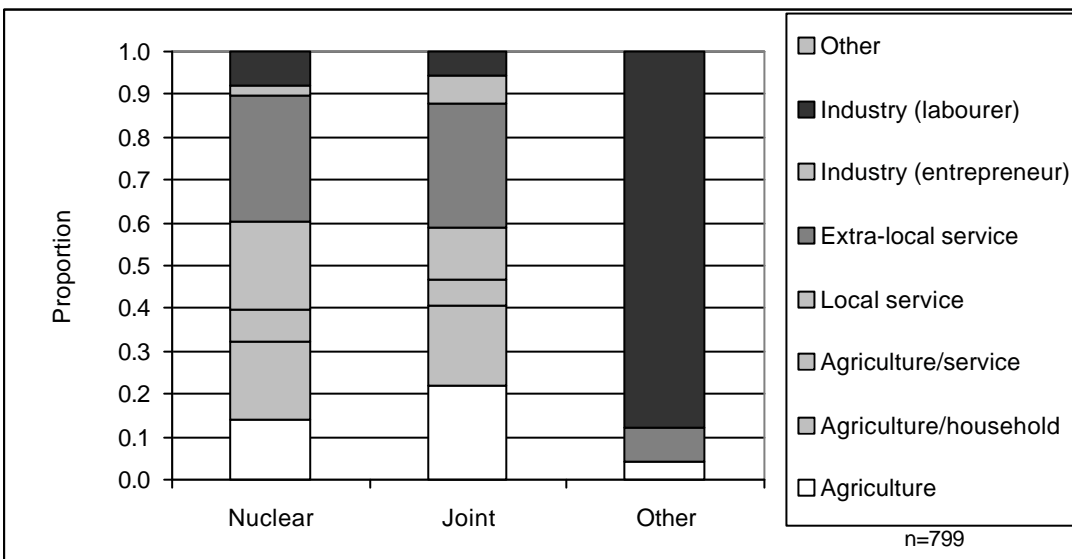
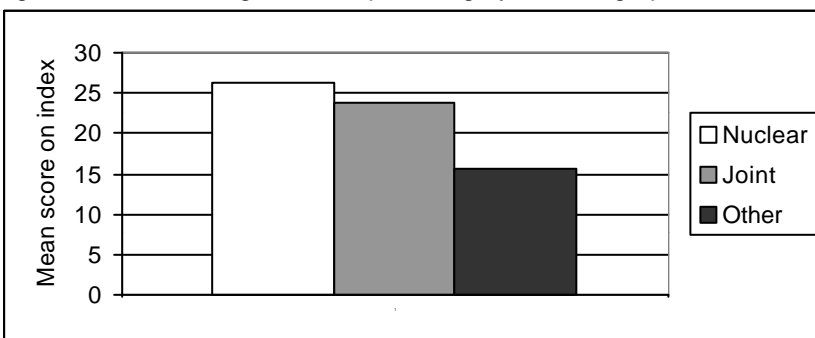


Figure 5.24 Living standard per category of demographic structure



There is a rapidly growing preference to start a separate household if the income is sufficient and stable. Government jobs in particular provide security of income. It is therefore not very surprising that the joint household system is breaking down. When there is agricultural land in the family, a joint household sometimes splits up without subdividing the agricultural land. If there is only one brother who continues cultivation, he manages the land and earns his livelihood from it, sometimes along with his father. The farming brother takes most of the revenue, though he is obliged to support his parents if they are still alive. If the land is sold, however, the brothers share the profit, which can be invested in new sources of income for the family.

5.7 Processes, generational change and perceived changes in livelihood

5.7.1 Inter-generational processes in occupations and other sources of income

In addition to the basic household data about the change of income and occupation, the in-depth survey provides more information about the follow-up between generations. This elucidates the different 'occupation and income careers' that are typical of village households in the rural-urban fringe. Figures 5.25 to 5.30 present case studies of six households/families that have shown different degrees of success in the transformation of their livelihood. The cases illustrate the most important influential variables identified in earlier sections of this chapter. Those variables are combined with numerous coincidental and personal factors that play crucial roles in how (individuals in) households anticipate and respond to opportunities and constraints resulting from urbanisation.

The transformation of occupations among Group I largely happens from one generation to the next. Individual farmers diversify their income without giving up farming entirely. There are relatively few cases of individuals making a radical shift in occupation (for example; from being a full-time farmer to taking a full-time service job).

The transformation of Group II is characterised by more abrupt changes. In the development of the occupational structure of the older members of Group II, the caste-assigned patterns are still visible, e.g. in the many repair shops that are run by Group II workers. The occupations of the younger generations resemble their caste's traditional orientation much less. In a rural-urban fringe, the breakdown of the economic side of the caste system has clearly proceeded faster than in remote rural areas.

Considering the original population, out of the 143 government employees covered by the in-depth survey, 129 got their jobs at a young age (before 25 years). Even retired and senior government servants obtained their jobs when they were young, indicating that it is difficult to get into government employment at a later age. The exceptions to this rule were almost all employed in the 1980s, which was a time that the government was still expanding its staff. The same pattern holds true for professional higher-skilled jobs in the private sector. Those who obtained these jobs usually make extra non-agricultural income by setting up their own business or investing in local property.

Figure 5.25 Case of favourable livelihood development in Group I

Sunder Singh Tyagi was one of the larger landowners in Ibrahimpur village. He died a few years ago. The farmer from Ibrahimpur was hardly educated, but he earned a reasonable living with cultivation. In the 1970s, he had so much land that he and his eldest sons could only cultivate half of their land themselves. Presently, his two eldest sons have extended cultivation, covering all of their owned land. A quarter of their total land (3 hectares of the total 12) was sold in 1985, when the land prices suddenly tripled. Most of their land is near the Yamuna River, and two acres of high-value land are owned at the roadside near the village. For cultivation, they used to employ original low-caste villagers, whoever was available, but now they only employ 'Biharis' (common name for labour from the impoverished region of Eastern Uttar Pradesh and Bihar). The construction of the higher levee in 1982 greatly improved the land on the inner side of the levee, but the land at the riverside can only be cultivated during *rabi*. The land closest to the river is seasonally leased out to people who harvest a rough type of straw used for construction. Sunder had six sons and three daughters. The daughters are, as usual, married off to men in other villages not very far from Ibrahimpur. While the eldest and least educated sons maintained and improved the cultivation, the other sons went to college. The eldest son, who is illiterate, runs a small roadside restaurant in addition to farming. His 24-year-old son (carrying a mobile phone!) teams up with the second son of Sunder for farming, but he seems to have more interest in the lucrative property business. The other sons are employed in a large variety of jobs: the eldest is principal of a nearby secondary school; the second is a journalist; and the third is a local merchant in building materials. One son has left the village to become a lecturer in physics in the USA! The second son argues that it was good that their land was not acquired in the 1970s, which happened in a village where they have relatives. "We knew that we had to work hard to advance and support our brothers with their studies. In these urban villages there is more unemployment. People can earn money passively by renting out property. Education has lagged behind there. Some people from our village have sold all their land at a too early stage. They became rich overnight, but did not know how to handle their fortune very well. They spent too much money in marriage ceremonies, the construction of a bigger house and a car. My family knew how to handle it and has gained prestige. Nobody in this village dares to speak against us now!" Despite their undoubtable progress, the Tyagi family thinks that the government does a disservice to the dominant castes by enforcing the reservation policy: "presently it is very hard for us higher castes to become employed in the government. 'Scheduled castes' get advantaged systematically. They are hardly educated but they all have well-paid government jobs, while many Brahmins and Tyagis in our village are jobless."

Commercial activity is often started with financial help from the household or from family members beyond the household. People hardly resort to official credit from banks. This indicates both the inefficiency of banks as well as the strong economic ties in families. The role of private money lending (e.g. by the *Bania* caste as part of the *Jajmani system*) has almost disappeared, making the strength and the solidarity within the household/family even more important. Income from one member of the household is used to get the other person started, whether it is used for an initial investment, or for education, for bribes to government agencies, etc. The other side of the coin is that these are obligations within households that may restrain individuals from expanding their commercial activities or developing new ones. In addition, risk aversion is considered necessary to ensure the household's long-term economic position. Individuals can take risks as long as they do not jeopardise the economic status of the household as a whole.

The integration of Group II into non-traditional jobs had already started 25 years ago. At and present, there is hardly anybody left doing caste-assigned occupations. However, for government jobs as well as (local) service jobs, they are often doing work similar to their traditional labour or artisan jobs, but now the work is commercialised or institutionalised. Some are working in construction. They are either involved in trading and making materials or have semi-skilled jobs as a mason or a construction supervisor. This type of income generation somewhat resembles the original tasks as carpenter, potter, blacksmith, etc., taking advantage of certain skills that are typical of caste and family.

Figure 5.26 Case of unfavourable livelihood development in Group I

Balbir Singh from Pehladpur Bangar shares his family's land (1.3 hectares) with his two elder brothers, all of them married. Their land, located in the middle of other agricultural fields, renders them average harvests of wheat and fodder. They live in relative poverty. The two younger brothers have enough ancestral residential space, but only a small brick structure fills one corner, and there is (only) one buffalo and a calf in the other. The eldest brother lives separately in a small house on the other side of the street. Since 1979, the eldest brother has been a gardener for the DDA (among the lowest class jobs in government) in nearby Rohini Township. He can easily get there by cycle. The middle brother, who is also doing farming, seems to have psychological troubles and does not contribute much to the income of the family. Some years he leases in some extra land near his plot, but this year he could not manage. Balbir, 25 years old, helps with the farming but considers himself to be unemployed. The brother's wives occasionally help in agriculture and looking after the cattle but cannot do paid work. "My wife's father or brother would come over to kill me if I allowed that to happen!" Balbir hopes for acquisition of their land. "Then we could file for an alternative plot in the *lal dora*, sell one part of it and start a shop. I only fear that my education is insufficient to do this kind of business. Even our fellow villagers become increasingly tricky in business and do not even refrain from cheating their own caste members."

Another villager considers why this family has not progressed: "Well, I don't know exactly. In earlier times we knew the concerns of each and every household. But the village depersonalises. People think it is their own business. Their father Vishnu was known as a jolly fellow eating too good for what their economic situation allowed, and did not see to the education of his sons. There was also trouble in the family. But their grandfather was a well-known 'freedom fighter' and enjoyed respect in the village and beyond! It is tragic what happened to these people."

Group II started to gain access to government employment that matched their caste-assigned occupation, involving the handling of garbage, cleaning etc. Their status, wages and security are better than they would find in similar jobs in the village within the *Jajmani system*. Presently, the same types of work are still performed by Group II everywhere in urban Delhi. Some are still employed as sweepers, garbage collectors and other menial tasks, but supervisory positions are increasingly common. The easier access to the city has been particularly instrumental in bringing about their rapid detachment from local labour and artisan jobs and their integration in government. Government employment ensures a stable and secure salary (although quite low), access to health facilities, pensions and other privileges. Presently, Group II is still most strongly represented in blue-collar jobs but also increasingly in white-collar jobs, especially in the government. Within the blue-collar category, there is a shift towards more 'attractive' positions. Urbanisation enhances the process of *sanskritisation* whereby the lower-caste population adopts higher-caste habits, inhibitions and values (Srinivas 1996). Therefore, occupations such as handling dead animals and garbage are becoming unacceptable for them as well. More acceptable blue-collar positions include gardener, watchman and mechanic.

Due to their improved education, the range of jobs for which Group II can qualify is broadening considerably. The moderate upward mobility of Group II is largely explained by their increased access to a wider variety of government positions such as clerks and teachers. Some respondents from Group I complain that the official policy of job reservation for lower castes makes life unfairly easy for the lower castes. This is only partially true. First, very few of the manual occupations in government service are acceptable to Group I, so they do not compete anyway. The 'lowest' jobs that Group I can perform and still be socially acceptable are gardening and care-taking (as a watchman). Second, for access to government service, connections inside government institutions through kin and community are definitely more important than formal quota,

which are often not even filled. Nowadays, Group II has a critical mass in these services, allowing them to secure a considerable part of the employment in many government agencies. Despite its problems, the reservation policy is relatively successful in Delhi's rural-urban fringe; this is not the case in remote rural areas, where the government is hardly making any impact. Recently, private entrepreneurship, also among Group II, is becoming more common, partly because of the scarcity of government jobs in the 1990s. Besides, youngsters from this group usually leave school with their secondary school completed and enrol in professional, teaching, and administrative courses.

Figure 5.27 Case of a favourable livelihood development in Group II

Father Hari Lal tells: "We used to be hungry from time to time. We depended on what the 'Zamindars' would give us. If their harvest was poor, our share was hardly sufficient to feed the family. The family hails *shahari karan* (urbanisation), since it brought a reasonable level of prosperity to them. A colour TV and a brand new motorscooter are on ready display. Asking about their traditional caste-assigned occupation (pottery), he says: "That was never a sufficient source of income. There were too many of our caste living in this village. Doing agricultural labour was much more important, and our fathers were sometimes doing masonry of the landlords' houses, which some of our caste still do."

The family never got land out of the land reform in 1974. "Although we were supposed to get this one acre, local politics were such that there was no chance. The village had no common land, and which landlord would give up his own fields? Instead, we did get a small residential plot because our family had good relations with the Pradhan (village headman)."

The five brothers are middle-aged. One brother, the brightest one, made it as a teacher at a primary government school and aspires to get the post of principal in the years to come. One became disabled nine years ago. Before that he was taking land on lease to cultivate and to run a small workshop on the side. Since his accident he does not work anymore, but his brothers provide him with the main essentials. One is a tailor at the main road and combines this business with a small shoe store. One is 'upper-divisional clerk' at the Income Tax Department in Delhi, and one is a fitter at the Northern Railway Company. One of the wives earns money by running a small local garment factory. This is quite exceptional because almost all women of their caste are housewives. The youngest one is an apprentice at a photographer's shop. One daughter was married off to a man in another village and the other children are still in school.

The teacher is proud of his family: "Nobody could keep us from getting educated. Although father was a simple labourer, hard-working people can do good business here now. My brother keeps various labourers in his shop, who could ever have imagined that? The landlords complain a lot about job reservation for lower castes but have no reason to. And have you seen the castles of houses in which they are living?"

An outcome of the relatively solid livelihood perspective of the original households is that households remain in the villages. This is even true of the former farming community from whom the land is acquired or bought; they would also be able to buy agricultural land elsewhere. The original villagers have an advantage in that they live in very low-cost housing near a city where the housing shortage is acute (see Chapter 4). The strong household and family bonds forming the basis for economic opportunity is another explanation. The household income is often pooled to provide an individual with an expensive education and make investments in his job (investments for a shop, bribe for a government post, etc.). Of course, the strong moral obligations may also be a constraint for an individual.

Figure 5.28 Case of unfavourable livelihood development in Group II

Katcheroo from Ibrahimpur has five sons and four daughters. All claim to be 'self-employed', but as it seems with quite marginal results. All are illiterate. Their father used to be an agricultural labourer until he became disabled fifteen years ago. This happened when the children were not yet grown up. At present, only Katcheroo's wife is working as a hand in agriculture from time to time. Dowry for the daughters' marriages has indebted the family, which continues to be a burden. Although all the sons are adults now, the household earnings are still low. One son tried to set up a TV repair shop in the village, but he hardly gets any customers. One combines a cycle repair shop with a teashop but barely manages to earn Rs. 800 per month. One is an industrial labourer in a factory in Delhi and earns slightly more, but he has to pay the bus fare. They complain about the labour situation. "The 'Biharis' work under the wage level that is acceptable to us. Besides, we do not get anywhere if we ask to be employed in the factories nearby they use all kind of excuses not to hire us. They know they cannot cheat us like the Biharis". Explaining why they do not apply for government employment: "There are only a few jobs for which we could qualify. We filled in forms with the help of some office clerk in Delhi, but for some reason we never got to hear about it. We doubt if the clerk did our work."

Katcheroo obtained one acre of agricultural land during the twenty-point programme in 1974, but he sold it for a low price soon afterwards to pay off part of his debt. It was not cultivable anyway due to continuous waterlogging, dense cane vegetation with tough roots, and problematic road access. The housing conditions of the family are poor. They have no indoor latrines, little space, and no plaster on the bricks. All brothers live in the same compound, but in separate rooms and with their own cooking units. A joint household proved to be impossible due to disputes. "Since father died, there is a lot of arguing about money." Excessive drinking often ignites arguments. Hopefully, the (numerous) children will break out of the downward spiral of things.

The transformation leads to less participation of women in outdoor labour (Chikara and Warnar 1999). The basic household survey found only a few cases of women in formal employment. The earlier-mentioned process of *sanskritisation* plays a role in the social and cultural preferences. In addition, increasing prosperity leads to a situation in which the woman's income from outdoor employment is no longer essential for the household's survival. Of the few women who are employed in government work, most are widows of civil servants. They automatically became employed when their husband died on the job. However, there are some exceptions. A few women are schoolteachers, some are working at the local *angandwari* (child-care centre), and some poor women perform menial work locally due to necessity. Migrant women are much more often found doing heavy outdoor labour in construction, agriculture and at the brick kilns. One could say that the employment curve of women in relation to class is U-shaped: employment of women is higher among the poor and also slightly higher among the educated elite (teachers).

There is some social mobility among the migrants, although not as much as among the original population. Many migrants return to their home village with little savings after a long life of hard manual labour. Others do manage to move into a better income situation via petty trade and skilled labour. They occasionally move up to become shopkeepers, supervisors in factories, truck drivers, etc. Especially in Pehladpur Bangar, where urbanisation came early and where Group III has been represented since the 1960s, 82 of the 104 shops are run by outsiders. Some are from an urban lower-middle-class background. But quite a few of them started out as labour class migrants in the same village, although they had to be at least literate to gain access to such forms of occupation. Sometimes they are second-generation migrants. Migrants often start working in the area of transport as a driver or conductor, a profession shared with many among the original population and has a better status than that of a simple labourer.

Figure 5.29 Case of favourable livelihood development in Group III

Akbar Mahmood, a Muslim of 35 years old, arrived in Nangli Poona village in 1990. In his home village, not far from Aligarh in Uttar Pradesh, there was nothing else to do than marginal seasonal agricultural labour or become a brick kiln labourer, which was and still is very common for the poorer class in Aligarh district. At a young age he started helping a shopkeeper in Aligarh with his business of collecting waste materials from rag pickers, selecting it and selling it again. After he learned the business he decided to go to Nangli Poona, where a relative was doing factory labour. He settled there, worked two years in a factory as well, and after some time he started a waste-material shop in the village, selling the material again to factories in Samaipur. After the first comfortable earnings, his wife and children came over in 1993. Presently, his occupation produces an income of approximately Rs. 4,000 per month. He bought a plot of land in the extended *lal dora* of the village from a local *Jat*, he is still paying off the purchase. His house has two rooms, he owns a second-hand motorscooter and a black-and-white TV, and he is having an indoor latrine put in.

His business is going pretty well, but there is much insecurity in his mind. There are larger operators in the waste-material business, threatening to take away his livelihood. Although he gets along with the villagers fairly well, he fears ethnic prejudice against Muslims, of which he is one of the few in the village. Nonetheless, he is fairly optimistic about the future. His two young daughters are going to the government school, but he thinks of sending his only son to the more highly reputed private school, provided he can afford the tuition.

Figure 5.30 Case of unfavourable livelihood development in Group III

Kishan Kumar is living with seven other young labourers from Bihar in a small two-room structure, formerly used as a cattle shed by a Zindpur farmer. Together, they pay Rs. 500 per month in rent. Two are from the Yadav Caste (in his home state, included in the so-called OBC category). Five claim to be Rajputs, an upper caste. Housing conditions are quite difficult. There is no latrine. There is only one hand pump for water. And there is hardly enough space in the rooms for all seven to sleep at the same time. Fortunately, some of them work nightshifts.

Presently they all work in the plywood-sawing factory nearby. They are employed via a labour contractor and do not have a permanent job there. All perform manual labour at a wage of approximately Rs. 900 per month, which is below the legal minimum wage for Delhi. They do not do this job all year round. The work at the factory varies. In the harvesting season, they try to earn more by doing agricultural labour around Zindpur. Four of them worked last year in a rice mill in Haryana. They try to be in their home village at least one month per year. Although two of them are already married, it is not feasible for them to bring their family to where they live. Two others return home to help on their family fields, while the rest come from families with no land.

Talking about their situation, they acknowledge their difficulties. They complain most about the place where they come from: "In Bihar there is nothing. Wages are three times lower, if you can get any work at all. Besides, it is dangerous due to caste disputes. Eventually we want to come back to the village with some money, but this is hardly feasible because our earnings are meagre."

5.7.2 Livelihood concerns: unemployment, aspirations and status issues

Unemployment is definitely a problem for Group I as well as Group II, although in different ways. For Group I, the privilege of owning agricultural land can prevent people from making a timely reorientation towards non-agricultural sources of income. Nevertheless, the livelihood problems due to acquisition of land now seem to be limited. The villages that were urbanised in the 1970s and 1980s, however, abound with stories of land acquisition and the consequent problems of livelihood and (un)employment. The literature also provides some evidence that dealing with the 'urban future' was more problematic in the past. For example, Dupont (1997) describes the ruthless expropriation of village agricultural land for the creation of NOIDA (a large-scale formal housing and industrial project, see map in Figure 2.1) during the Emergency of 1976. Later, the

former farmers were compensated for the loss of their land. But initially it posed a serious threat to their livelihood and employment. Since then, the strength of the villagers as 'actors' has steadily improved (see Chapter 4).

Unemployment occurs among Group I regardless of the economic situation of the household. Better education, sometimes even up to university level, raises a person's aspirations and forms a higher threshold for 'inferior' occupations such as ordinary labour jobs, cultivation, petty trade and commerce, and nowadays even clerical positions. Other more socially acceptable types of employment suffer from low status due to poor wages (e.g. teaching at a school). Consequently, young villagers with BA or MA degrees are not generally satisfied with a teaching job at a primary school. For higher-educated villagers, it is still not easy to compete with their counterparts from urban Delhi for professional jobs in Delhi, although the competitiveness of the villagers is clearly increasing. Unemployment is also common among people with insufficient education. The rural population still suffers from the lesser quality of schools and colleges in Delhi's rural area in comparison with the urban ones. Nowadays, many students from the wealthier segments attend schools in the urban area, mainly to overcome that problem. One of the 'booming businesses' in the larger villages is setting up private schools and tutoring centres.

Group II workers who are employed for daily wages and self-employed workers are quite vulnerable to unemployment too. When they are older than approximately thirty, they no longer qualify for a government job. An important exception to the age rule is when a government worker dies on the job; then, a family member (usually the wife) is given a job in the same government agency. The increasing social inhibition to perform 'inferior' jobs (due to sanscritisation) leads to unemployment in a manner similar to that found in Group I.

The great majority of Group III show the least inhibition for doing low-status work. Besides, if a migrant becomes unemployed for an extended period, the individual or even the whole household is likely to go back to their home village or move on to another place where they can find work. Therefore, unemployment is rare in Group III. Nonetheless, people in Group III are usually struggling; they have to do underpaid casual labour with very little security. They do not have much access to formal employment, let alone government employment. They simply do not have the education, networks, or money to bribe their way in. Within most government agencies, employment, especially jobs at the lower and intermediary level, are monopolised by the 'locals'. The great majority of the migrants are self-employed or work as daily (or casual) labour. Real unemployment, if it is defined as inactivity, is quite low for the simple reason that this is a situation that a migrant household cannot afford. Among Group III, the participation of women in labour is also quite low, except for performing agricultural labour in brick kilns and certain tasks in factories.

5.7.3 Perceptions and non-economic factors

The economist's notion of progress does not always correspond to the perception of such by the people, who also take non-economic considerations into account. There is definitely a sense of nostalgia, especially among the older farmers facing forced sale of

their land. This sense is common among members of Group I, who also see that their domination in the previous economic order has eroded. Social status and economic influence no longer depend solely on caste, agricultural ingenuity and the size of one's landholdings. Therefore, some previously prestigious households have seen their economic position decline in comparison to that of more enterprising villagers. On the other hand, some farming households say that they wish to sell land but cannot find a buyer who is prepared to pay a decent price. They feel disadvantaged compared to other landowners who have sold land.

A major source of dissatisfaction and sense of failure among people who remain in low-status activities is related to the process of *sanskritisation*, which refers to the adoption of high-caste values by lower-caste people.

Generally, the population's experience with and perception of *shaharikaran* (urban development) is much more positive than depicted in the newspapers. The papers highlight the adverse effects of urbanisation on the villagers' livelihood (e.g. Frontline 20-5-1994 p. 110, Indian Express 14-2-1998, The Hindu 10-4-1998). This point of view probably originates from the image of an idyllic village in the countryside. Against that background, urbanisation would either deprive the villagers of their livelihood or negatively affect their culture by bringing in an abundance of money. Consumerism would presumably take over the originally peaceful and hard-working villages. The youth would become bored while money is available, which would lead to an excessive rate of crime, abuse of alcohol and drugs, etc. Although these observations are undoubtedly correct to some degree, these journalists put a one-sided and sensational twist on the story. The reality is better characterised by a strong political consciousness, educational standards that are rising, more awareness of the possibilities on the urban job market (possibly including crime) and in the commercial sector, and in improving urban amenities.

5.8 Links to debates about urbanisation and rural transformation

As argued elsewhere, urbanisation is very instrumental to a successful switch in occupational and income possibilities. Urbanisation can lead to higher living standards than before and in comparison to more remote rural areas. In this section, the results of this study will be compared with the findings from sources that are introduced in Section 1.2.

The Delhi case supports statements by McGee (1991) and Ginsburg et al. (1991), referring to 'desakota', that it is increasingly difficult to delimit urban and rural areas, since the occupational orientation of many villages is increasingly 'urban'. It should be emphasised that this study concerns the 'peri-urban' area and says nothing about the more distant 'desakota' region that surrounds it. The census data displayed in Section 2.2 about Haryana and Sonapat district do not indicate a very strong transformation towards non-agricultural occupations there. Kumar (1999), studying the census data of an area beyond the Delhi NCT, reports an increasing share of agricultural activity the farther away from Delhi one gets. But even near Delhi's borders, there are much higher percentages of agricultural workers than in Alipur Block. Therefore, in Delhi's region the 'desakota' may not extend as far as McGee and others hypothesise. Unfortunately,

neither Ramachandran's nor McGee's concepts are sufficiently operationalised. Therefore, the threshold values of occupational diversification for certain delimitations are not clear.

Concerning the occupational structure, there is an important contrast with the industrialising areas in the Western world, where the Industrial Revolution engaged relatively more (previously) rural people. Lin (1994) criticises the use of Western models in an Asian context, where more agricultural workers go straight into the tertiary sector. This is clearly visible among the original population. McGee (1991) and Chakraborty (1991) emphasise the role of the informal sector in the tertiary sector, referring to a 'bazaar economy' due to the shortage of formal jobs. This study, however, shows that the original village population claims a high share of formal employment, of which government jobs are the most important. It should be kept in mind that Delhi, being the national capital, has an extensive civil service sector. The scope for government jobs may not be as high in other cities in India. At the household level, there is often a sectoral mix in occupations and income. Therefore, the household does not depend exclusively on one sector. Besides, the line between formal and informal economic activity is difficult to draw. 'Informal' has an air of marginality to it, which is certainly not the case for many types of private business that are performed by villagers in Delhi's rural-urban fringe. The migrants, however, do suffer from a lack of access to formal employment and remain marginal to a large extent. If a 'proto-proletariat' would have to be identified, it would consist of these migrants. Most of them maintain strong 'rural' ties with their region of origin. They are highly mobile thus do not emerge as a very strong force on the formal urban job market.

It is interesting to see how the villages in Alipur Block compare with villages farther away from the city, such as Palanpur in Western Uttar Pradesh (Lanjouw and Stern 1998). Palanpur would be closer to a typical village in Northern India than the villages in this study, which lie half way on the core-periphery continuum. Commuting is much more difficult, while exogenous local non-agricultural activity is nearly absent. The impact caused by urbanisation can be seen in another light. Palanpur has shown considerable occupational change from agricultural to non-agricultural jobs, but the change is not nearly as radical as found in the study villages. Besides, Palanpur has shown considerable out-migration (both permanent and seasonal), a phenomenon which is hardly observed in the study villages among the original population. Many of the migrant workers in Alipur Block come from villages such as Palanpur. The comparison suggests that urbanisation is the driving force behind the transformation in the study villages.

Longitudinal comparison is possible on the grounds of the work by Lewis (1958), who studied a typical village in what is now the rural-urban fringe of Delhi. The same village is presently part of urban Delhi. Lewis did not place his study village within the direct sphere of influence of the city, although even at that time that village showed a clear urban influence. Migrants were not yet present there. A small minority of workers among the original population were then working in Delhi. In those days, it was much more difficult to commute on daily basis, and the city offered less occupational and commercial opportunity. Especially for Group II households, this situation contributed to their marginal existence as landless agricultural labour and particularly in unrewarding artisan occupations. Relatively more people served in the army, staying away from the

village for most of the year, especially among the *Jat* caste. The caste system was still rigorous, determining the occupational structure of households to a much larger degree. Not even half of the fields were taken into cultivation, and then only to grow one or sometimes two crops per year.

Drèze (1998) sheds light on the problem of the economic backwardness of lower-caste people and the (formal) government effort to integrate them in government jobs through the reservation scheme. He concludes that the effect of job reservation is quite insignificant for remote villages. Higher castes can enter government jobs on a Scheduled Caste quota if the institute 'cannot find' a suitable SC candidate. Besides, the reservation policy is highly politicised, leading to ineffective implementation. For example, the dominant *Jats* have recently been included in the OBC category after fierce lobbying (Hindustan Times 24-10-1999). This study shows that the proximity of a large urban area is probably a stronger force in the emancipation of the lower castes. It works both through access to reserved government employment as well as through better education levels and political awareness.

In the 1970s, there was a strong debate in development studies on the supposed exploitative mechanisms that favour the cities. Lipton (1977) draws our attention to an 'urban bias' in terms of development effort, the economic system and political force. In this regard, the question arises whether the rural-urban fringe is part of the rural or the urban area. Lipton (1977) first claims that "in poor countries, one usually can draw a fairly sharp line between city and countryside" but recognises that exceptions may include "regions where part-time farming and townward commuting are made possible by cheap and highly developed transport systems, as in the Wet Zone, Sri Lanka; and in semi-developed Third World city-states with considerable small-scale horticulture, such as Singapore" (p. 56). Delhi's rural area should also feature in this list, indicating that Lipton may underestimate the extent of the zones of direct influence of cities. On the other hand, there is a 'bias' in favour of the villages within Delhi's NCT in terms of amenities, transport links and occupational possibilities compared to the villages beyond the administrative boundary of the city.

Since the 1970s, the neo-classical approaches have gained ground, focusing on cities as nuclei for modernisation and engines of growth. Marxists such as Kundu (1989) tend to see cities as 'vanguards of exploitation'. Going even farther than Lipton, they identify exploitative mechanisms in terms of resources, talented people (brain drain), unfavourable biases of government spending and taxation and the terms of trade of agricultural products. A study by Zoomers and Kleinpenning (1996) re-enters the discussion. For the region of Asunción, they find a similar occupational diversification as was found in this study, opposing the idea of exploitation of the rural population. They emphasise "the role of Asunción as a 'safety valve' for the rural poor by providing them with opportunities for finding additional income sources outside the farming sector" (pp.162-163).

Migrants represent an important economic link of the rural-urban fringe with remote rural areas. It is hard to judge whether they are exploited or not. Although their wages are low and their living standard is poor, the remittances that they send to their village secure the survival of relatives.

It should be reiterated that the analysis presented in this chapter is based exclusively on the perspective of (economic) livelihood. The consequences of urbanisation for the

environment in which people live are described in the next chapter, which shows a less favourable picture. The dark side of the impact of urbanisation on the urban fringe can be quite severe, offsetting the positive effects of socio-economic progress to a considerable degree.