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Evolution of Land Distribution in West Bengal 1967-2004: Role of Land Reform and Demographic Changes

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Abstract

This paper examines the indirect effect of land reform and demographic changes on land inequality operating through induced household divisions and land market transactions. We develop an intra-household model of joint production where divisions, out-migration or land purchases arise to avoid inefficient free-riding arising from demographic growth. Land reform affects divisions and land transactions owing to induced effects on farm profitability and anticipation of future reforms. These predictions are successfully tested in data from a West Bengal household survey spanning 1967-2004, where we find the quantitative effect of the land reforms were dwarfed by demographic changes.

Keywords: [inequality](#); [land reform](#); [household division](#); [land markets](#); [Equality and Inequality](#); [Property](#); [Household](#); [Change](#); [West Bengal](#);

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