CONTENTS

List of Tables 9
List of Maps and Figures 11
Acknowledgements 12

1. INTRODUCTION 13
   1.1 Capitalism and 'Modern' Poverty
   1.2 The Tool of Comparison
   1.3 Systems of Surplus Extraction
   1.4 The Units of Research
   Notes

2. PRECOLONIAL AGRARIAN RELATIONS 37
   2.1 Pre-British Bengal
   2.2 The Kaveri Delta before Colonial Rule
   2.3 Pre-British Lower Burma
   2.4 One Type of Precolonial Agrarian Order?
      2.4.1 The deltaic environment
      2.4.2 The cultivation of wet rice
      2.4.3 Lords and cultivators
      2.4.4 Tributary systems
   Notes

3. AGRARIAN RELATIONS IN THE EARLY COLONIAL PERIOD 74
   3.1 Bengal, 1750s to 1880s
      3.1.1 The Permanent Settlement
      3.1.2 Agrarian production for new markets
      3.1.3 Effects on the agrarian order
3.2 The Kaveri Delta During the Nineteenth Century
   3.2.1 The raiyatwari system and the mirasidars
   3.2.2 Rice and labour
   3.2.3 The decline of the mirasidari community
3.3 Early Colonial Lower Burma
   3.3.1 The raiyatwari system in Lower Burma
   3.3.2 The beginning of the rice boom
   3.3.3 Immigration and rural differentiation
3.4 Three Societies Under Early British Rule

Notes

4. AGRARIAN RELATIONS IN THE
   LATE COLONIAL PERIOD
4.1 Bengal, 1880s to 1940s
   4.1.1 Wedding land tax to the market
   4.1.2 The expansion of trade and credit
   4.1.3 A new lease of life for sharecropping
   4.1.4 Peasants enter the land market
   4.1.5 Wage labour
   4.1.6 Regional variation
4.2 The Kaveri Delta, 1880s to 1940s
   4.2.1 The backbone of the agrarian elite: land taxation
   4.2.2 Bonded labour, wage labour, and tenancy
   4.2.3 Escape: labourers migrate to capitalist enclaves overseas
   4.2.4 The rice trade
   4.2.5 Rural conflict and the agrarian order
   4.2.6 Regional variation
   4.2.7 The depression of the 1930s
   4.2.8 Challenges to the power of the mirasidars
4.3 Lower Burma, 1880s to 1940s
   4.3.1 Land taxation
   4.3.2 Landlords acquire the land
   4.3.3 Credit relations: the heyday of the Chettiar
   4.3.4 The emergence of tenancy
   4.3.5 Wage labour
   4.3.6 The rice trade
   4.3.7 Regional variation
   4.3.8 1930: The depression hits Lower Burma

92

103
4.3.9 Mass rebellion and its aftermath
4.3.10 The Japanese occupy the country, 1942–45

4.4 Three Asian Deltas in the Age of High Colonialism: Convergence or Divergence?
4.4.1 Economic integration across the Bay of Bengal: its impact on rural social structure
4.4.2 Population pressure
4.4.3 Agrarian stagnation and rural class formation

Notes

5. POST-COLONIAL AGRARIAN RELATIONS
5.1 West Bengal and Bangladesh, 1940s to 1980s
  5.1.1 A raiyatwari system of land taxation
  5.1.2 Land reform: the zamindars are ousted
  5.1.3 The persistence of tenancy
  5.1.4 Wage labour
  5.1.5 Agriculture becomes more commercialised
  5.1.6 Rural conflict
  5.1.7 Regional variation

5.2 Kaveri Delta, 1940s to 1980s
  5.2.1 Land taxation and tenancy reform
  5.2.2 Wage labour
  5.2.3 Technological change in agriculture
  5.2.4 The state and the market
  5.2.5 A changing agrarian order
  5.2.6 Regional conflict

5.3 Lower Burma, 1940s to 1980s
  5.3.1 Tribute in a new form: procurement instead of taxation
  5.3.2 The state becomes the landlord
  5.3.3 The deproletarianisation of the workforce
  5.3.4 State credit and private moneylending
  5.3.5 Agricultural change and loss of state control over the market
  5.3.6 Regional variation
  5.3.7 Rural conflict
  5.3.8 Changing patterns of surplus extraction

5.4 The Three Deltas After Independence
  5.4.1 The demise of the colonial economy: its impact on rural social structure
5.4.2 Population pressure
5.4.3 Physical and social contrasts after Independence
5.4.4 The social structures of accumulation
5.4.5 Mass poverty and the vigour of surplus extraction

Notes

6. CONCLUSION

Notes

GLOSSARY

APPENDIX

REFERENCES

AUTHOR INDEX

SUBJECT INDEX
LIST OF TABLES

4.1 Population of Bengal, Lower Burma, and the Kaveri Delta, 1872–1941 147
4.2 Average Annual Rates of Population Increase, 1872–1941 147
4.3 Population Densities, 1872–1941 148
4.4 Person/Land Ratios, 1881–1951 (Total Population/Net Sown Paddy Area) 148
4.5 Productivity of Rice Land, 1893–1940s (Tons of Clean Rice/ha) 149
4.6 Rice Output per Head, 1891–1951 (in kg of Clean Rice, per Head of Total Population) 150
5.1 Population of Bengal, Lower Burma, and the Kaveri Delta, 1941–81 225
5.2 Average Annual Rates of Population Increase, 1901–81 226
5.3 Population Densities, 1941–81 226
5.4 Person/Land Ratios, 1941–81 (Total Population/Net Sown Paddy Area) 227
5.5 Productivity of Rice Land, 1940s to 1980s (Tons of Clean Rice/ha) 228
5.6 Rice Output per Head, 1941–82 (in kg of Clean Rice, per Head of Total Population) 229

APPENDIX

2. Average Annual Rates of Population Increase, 1872 to 1981 303
4. Person/Land Ratios for Bengal, Lower Burma, and the Kaveri Delta, 1881–1981 (Total Population/Net Sown Paddy Area) 304
5. Prices of Rice in Bengal, Lower Burma, and the Kaveri Delta, 1900–43 (Rs. per 100 kg Clean Coarse Rice, Retail Prices) 305
6. Productivity of Rice Land in Bengal, Lower Burma, and the Kaveri Delta, 1893–1984 (kg of Clean Rice per ha) 306
7. Rice Output per Head in Bengal, Lower Burma, and the Kaveri Delta, 1871–72 to 1981–82 (in kg of Clean Rice, per Head of Total Population) 309
LIST OF MAPS AND FIGURES

1.1 The Position of Bengal, Lower Burma, and the Kaveri Delta in British India, 1852–1937 26
2.1 Bengal and Its Surroundings, Colonial Period 39
2.2 The Bengal Delta, Colonial Period 40
2.3 The Kaveri Delta and Its Surroundings 46
2.4 The Kaveri Delta 47
2.5 Lower Burma and Its Surroundings, 1886–1948 53
2.6 The Burma Delta 55
5.1 The Partition of Bengal: I. Districts up to 1947 182
5.2 The Partition of Bengal: II. Districts 1947–80 183
6.1 Changes in Modes of Primary Accumulation from the Eve of Colonial Annexation to the 1980s 279