

Household, Generational, and Fraternal Pathways to Poverty and Prosperity

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Even as the poverty and prosperity pathways (PPP) literature has drawn attention to the nature of the household as the key site and actor for the production of poverty and prosperity—and in the process refined the relatively gross and indiscriminating implications inherent in the macro-scale notions of mode of production, class, etc., the paper, based on a small (n=30 households) family/life-history-based qualitative study in a rural setting in Nepal, argues that the PPP literature unwarrantedly awards the household an autonomy it does not deserve. Not only is poverty and prosperity tightly tied to the meso and macro levels, e.g. the nature of agrarian relations and agriculture, linkage with the urban-industrial-commercial economies, inheritance systems, post-marital rules of residence, state policies, etc., the formation and nature of the household is itself shaped by such institutions and histories. Further, the precise mode in which poverty and prosperity is generated changes historically. While the size of the farmland owned—which is generally inherited—remains the primary prosperity-ensuring or poverty-mitigating factor, the significance of farm ownership, for the younger generation, has been substantially reduced. Commercialization of agriculture, diversification, labor migration, and access to work in formal sectors and urban locations constitute the principal points on the pathways to prosperity. This is further substantiated in a comparison of the PPPs of sets of brothers. A comparison between brothers comes close to fulfilling conditions for a 'natural experiment'. The comparison shows that while the size of farm ownership continues to be important for PPPs, those who diversified, engaged in labor migration, had access to formal sector jobs, or worked in nearby market towns had moved or were moving to prosperity compared to those who relied on traditional agriculture. As was the case in household and generational comparisons, brothers who were sick themselves or had one or more household members suffering from a chronic illness, were almost invariably passing through a trajectory toward poverty. The significance of other 'lumpy expenditure' and the dependency ratio was not comparably pronounced either way.

I. History, capitalism, democracy and poverty

While one can imagine that there have been 'poor' people in the past, poverty has not been a salient political, economic or intellectual problem through human history, including in collectivities organized as social individuals, households, and nation states. In almost all historical societies the condition of being poor or prosperous has most often been rationalized as a near-permanent station certain categories of peoples, e.g. social groups which lost the last war, racial groups, ethnic groups, class groups, etc., were destined to. Which group was destined to poverty and which to prosperity was regulated largely by means of hegemonic religious edicts, customs, laws, unequal exchange, and threat or infliction of organized violence. The fundamental rule which governed who belonged to which of the two stations was defined

through an often explicit and intricate system of super-ordination and subordination. Under the system, most importantly, both the subordinates and the super-ordinates inherited their respective stations through generations. The subordinate, barring exception, could not become prosperous. The ideological and hereditary walls erected around the each of the two stations were largely insurmountable. The two groups were often engaged in ubiquitous and intricate labor and other exchanges which, in a vast irony (to the extent that the present is projected on to the past), helped to keep one group poor and the other prosperous.

Paradoxically, poverty became a political, economic and intellectual problem following the rise of capitalism and, later, democracy. The demise and weakening of the old regime of subordination went hand in hand with the loss of preeminence of the twin ancient regimes—the feudal and other pre-capitalist forms of production and exchange *and* the church and other ecclesiastical orders. Suddenly, the walls around the semi-permanent and very largely inherited stations of poverty and prosperity became somewhat penetrable. Intergenerational transfer of household poverty and prosperity was no more a near-certainty as it was before on set of capitalism. Indeed, a poor person could potentially become prosperous during his own lifetime. Now this rags-to-riches story was not enacted often. But it was enacted far more frequently than had been the case before the rise of capitalism. Certainly poverty and prosperity became much less inheritable than was the norm in the earlier regime.

Historical processes tied to capitalism hastened this novel flux in poverty and prosperity. A host of capitalism-allied processes—among them urbanization, migration, industrialization and, very importantly, democratization, which took hold between the 17th and 19th CE Europe, led to a tumultuous and encompassing social churning and transformation (Polanyi 1944). This churning and transformation created new, large-scale and concentrated poverty *and* prosperity. While poverty, under the new regime, was created across the world in an extensive fashion, both poverty and prosperity were suddenly created in large volumes in the towns and cities of Europe. It was in this specific historical setting that poverty was born: Poverty suddenly became a political, economic and intellectual problem which demanded resolution. Thus, even as poverty continued to be continually reproduced and expanded, attempts were also continually made to reduce poverty, not the least because the poor continually threatened to weaken and dismantle key features of the new regime, e.g. overwork, exploitation, profit.

Importantly, and simultaneously, under the transformation, and particularly with the demise of the regime of permanent subordination of specific categories of peoples—and the rise of democratic and labor movements—poverty came to be seen as something that was not a destiny. No vanquished group, and no racial, ethnic, class, etc. group, and no clan or household would *have* to be destined to poverty. The sanctity of the once-hegemonic and ‘permanent’ principles, which were used to mark the poor, started to lose legitimacy. In addition, politically organized wage workers, peasants and other categories of the poor, in some locations and at some times, became assertive and powerful enough to begin to demand a leash on the level of prosperity. This was what led to the principle and practice of modern taxation and redistribution.

The loss of sanctity of 'permanent' principles of super-ordination and subordination, the invention of workers' rights and the legitimacy of redistributory principles and practices was possible because of the rise of democracy. Democracy has and can become a potent weapon both against poverty and for prosperity promotion. Inherited and multi-generational subordination and poverty were endemic to feudal and other pre-capitalist forms *and* ecclesiastical, monarchical and other non-democratic regimes. Popular and capitalism-based struggles (i.e. led by unions of free labor, petty bourgeoisie and the bourgeoisie) against such regimes and for alleviation of poverty, access to resources, living wages, reasonable working hours and other leisure periods, sick leave, health insurance, free or significantly subsidized health, education and others facilities and services, childbirth support, etc. as well as pension, social security, progressive income tax, inheritance tax, etc. helped significantly in reducing poverty. Some of these measures also went some way—in a comparative sense—in reducing the extremely uneven starting point from where the path to poverty and prosperity begins. 'Participation,' 'engagement,' 'voice,' collective bargaining, as well as more upfront and agitational strategies, not to speak of armed action leading to a democratic dispensation have variously proved helpful in reducing poverty and in promoting prosperity. Again, even as identification of a specific set of technical fixes is important, promotion of democracy—starting from voting and welfare rights for citizens to rights of farm tenants and wage workers to nonagricultural workers and to the poor as such--can be of crucial importance for poverty reduction. It should be noted that, democracy promotion is rarely recognized for its significance on the pathways to poverty and prosperity (PPP) literature.

Poverty started to take shape as an international and world-level political, economic and intellectual problem during and following resistance movements against colonization as well as due to an expansionary and resurgent capitalism that led to the emergence of a re-ordered and expanded world system. Rapid economic globalization, raging post-World War II bi-polarization of world politics, the post WW II regime of developmental assistance in terms of policies and finance as well as increasing awareness of the interconnectedness and one-ness of the world—with respect to resources, production, exchange, labor, disease and, more lately, environment and climate also led to the problematization of poverty at the world level. (See Frank 1998 for a critique of the Eurocentric interpretation of capitalism and for the powerful Asian and South/Central American connection to the birth and rise of global capitalism.) Finally, increasing democratization of post-colonial and developmentalist states was a key factor for the problematization of poverty.

The salience of poverty as a political, economic and intellectual problem, which has been associated with the loss of legitimacy of inheritable subordinate or super-ordinate status, has gone hand in hand with a number of historical processes directly linked to the mode of generation of livelihood (MOGL). As noted, the 'prime mover' has been the advent and rise of capitalism and the capitalist world-system. Above all, capitalism has led to—and has been leading toward--the creation of 'free' labor from among a host of subordinate, attached and dependent social groups, e.g. the slaves and serfs, the war-vanquished, specific racial and

ethnic groups and, more recently, women. As Weber (1930) and others have emphasized, the capitalist tenor has also been much worldlier, materialistic, profit driven, acquisitive, consumptive, individualistic and individual-achievement oriented, dis-possessive, exploitative, increasingly exchange rather than production based, change-prone, rapidly devouring of itself, and so on.

The capitalist process has unleashed several other transformations in modes of generating livelihood. One, for most workers, work has been transformed into labor. Selling labor power in the market often, although not always, brings a higher return. But it is also the case that because opportunities to engage in labor is often uncertain, those individuals, households, localities and groups often successively avoid poverty or climb out of poverty which seek a balance between labor on the one hand and work (or employment and self employment) on the other. Lacking enough productive assets on which to work, it is often best to remain on the lookout for opportunity to engage in labor. This is often not adequately emphasized in the PPP literature, e.g. Bhatta and Sharma (2006) who principally emphasize promotion of agriculture and rural asset creation for overcoming poverty. On the other hand, prosperity-inducing feature of the effect of the 'urban linkage' has been highlighted in several others (e.g. Krishna and Shariff 2011).

Two, the location of work has largely shifted from home to a dedicated place of work. This is less the case in regions and locations where agriculture continues to be the dominant sector of employment. But only a small proportion of households, even those in 'agricultural countries,' now can generate livelihood exclusively from agriculture. In addition, more households generate more income from non-agricultural activities now than even in the recent past. While this is not the case year-to-year—given the fluctuations in demand for labor due even during the short run—'un-domestication' of work continues has remained the secular trend through last several hundred years. The income value for households, whether total or per unit of labor, of 'outside work' has been increasing faster than that from agriculture. The prospect of not becoming poor or escaping from poverty is often contingent on access to 'outside work'. Nonetheless, particular for women, balancing of household, agricultural, and some other non-migratory nonagricultural work, most often small-scale retailing, has increasingly become the norm. Agriculture has become feminized. But more and more women are taking on income-earning nonagricultural pursuits. The prospects of not becoming poor or escaping from poverty, thus, is often tied to access to nonagricultural activities in the wider labor market.

Three, there has been a large-scale transformation in the structure of production. Agriculture commands a smaller share of the labor force. It contributes an even smaller share to the value of total production of goods and services in a country. Illustratively, in Nepal, agriculture contributed more than two-thirds of the GDP in 1970. The share came down to approximately one-third of the GDP by 2010. While agriculture does draw in two-thirds of the labor force, the fact that it contributes only one-third to the GDP also implies that the ways of not becoming poor or escaping out from poverty for households often requires access to non-agricultural modes of generating livelihood.

Four, there has been a large-scale movement of work and workers from the rural to the urban. Sociologists (e.g. Wallerstein 1999) have spoken of this phenomenon as one of de-ruralization. Access to work and rate of wages are, in general, both higher in the urban than the rural areas. The prospects of not becoming poor and that of escaping from poverty are to a highly significant extent contingent on 'urban work'. The urban, indeed, not only makes work more accessible and wage rate higher, but it sets shapes the nature of the rural. Among others, the intricate interaction of the rural with the urban reshapes both the nature of the household, e.g. its size, structure and the nature of social relationship among the members of a household--and the routine of formation of new households, as well as the ways in which a household generates livelihood. (Indeed, the legitimacy of the twin categories—and polar opposites--of 'rural' and 'urban' is in serious need of reconsideration. In particular, the rural lives off, to an increasingly significant extent, off the remittance sent in from urban areas. The rural, on the other hand, does not live off local production.) The 'urban connection' where goods, incomes, and remittances are produced, can potentially reshape the ways of not becoming poor or escaping out from poverty.

Finally, there has been a large-scale change in which institutions and activities related to production and exchange are organized. Fully localized 'subsistence economy' may not ever have been in existence. But locality and subsistence is least honored now than ever before. Both are being increasingly transcended. Not only is the scale of transaction of commodities across localities and countries becoming ever larger but the movement of labor across localities and countries is enlarging as well. Illustratively, it has been estimated that one in every seven Nepali may be an international labor migrant. (This, of course, translates into one in every four young person.) There are, in addition, many more migrant workers inside the country. This large scale movement, international labor movement in particular, is reshaping the ways in and out of poverty.

It is most important to emphasize here that these features of capitalism are not only historically distinctive but have also transformed the entire social order right from the political, economic, intellectual, etc. levels and from the individual to the world system. These features of capitalism and the specific ways in which these features are changing have transformed the nature and causality of poverty and prosperity as well as the identity of the poor and the prosperous. As such, paths out of poverty and toward prosperity must also broadly be sought within these features and processes of capitalism in diverse domains (e.g. the political, economic, intellectual, etc.) and levels (i.e. the individual, the household, the racial, ethnic and gender groups, the state, the world system, etc.). Certainly, specific world-regions, states and localities, which are characterized with distinctive economies, polities, cultures, human capabilities, geographies, etc., possess distinctive problems of poverty and facilities for poverty reduction and prosperity promotion. (*Some* of these problems and facilities may partially present us with a 'stage' problem: An immediate hinterland may face both the problems of poverty and enjoy the facilities for poverty reduction that the immediately associated town faced ten or five years ago.) It is important both from intellectual and policy points of view to comprehend and to find

resolution within the specific features of capitalism which characterize the domains and levels of capitalism the poor find themselves in. The technical fixes, i.e. the recommendations of a policy report, in relation both to the domains and levels, might be quite different. But one has to keep in mind that the technical fixes have to be broadly consonant with the specific set of features and flows of capitalism at a particular location, domain, and level.

The importance of taking history seriously is evident enough. In a stagnant economy, i.e. one in which both the structure and the rate of change are relatively stable, chances of escape from and slide into poverty are fairly slim. The dice of birth—whether one is born to a poor or a prosperous household, as well as to a specific class, ethnicity, locality, etc.—that both shapes inheritance and what one can or cannot do in order to better one's life—shapes the course of life. (It may be noted that historically, even in a dynamic economy, it has taken a long time for women—as well as some others—to become able to shed the dice of birth.) In an economy which is changing both structurally and in rates of positive or negative growth, on the other hand, not only does the magnitude and rate of structural change shape the course of life, but a far wider latitude is created for households and their members—including even those for whom the dice did not fall favorably—to act as agents to re-fashion their own livelihoods and PPPs. That is, the agency of a household and its members gets a fuller play when the MOGL and the PPPs remain in flux or are under transformation. More concretely, and in a more positive context, the agency of a household and its members is heightened when the size of production becomes larger, the structure of production is more diversified and the rate of growth gains speed. Indeed, change in the size, structure and growth of economy changes the nature of household and the relationship among its members. Such changes in the economy, and thus in the platter of the MOGL, lead to changes in the size and structure of a household and the nature of relationship among the members of a household—and among husband and wife, parents and children, siblings, old and new generation, and so forth. The 'new economy' heterogenizes households as well as members of a household. Despite Krishna and Shariff (2011: 533), a dynamic, transitional and capitalist economy transforms the constitution of the MOGL platter and makes conditions of poverty and prosperity far more fluid compared to a stagnant and pre-capitalist economies. Neither poverty nor its relative fluidity is historically constant. Illustratively, Emran and Shilpi (2011) show, in a comparison between Vietnam and Nepal, how lack of economic growth in Nepal contributes to lack of intergenerational occupational mobility, particularly among women there.

II. Pathways to Poverty and Poverty: Literature and Problems

It is important to realize that PPP literature, like any other and inevitably, is a product of a specific history and a specific knowledge and action agenda (or a specific discourse). The historical and structural window the PPP literature addresses is one where the economy is fluid and growing and the 'economic hierarchy' is itself relatively fluid. It is also one in which the polity has come to regard poverty as a feature that is malleable and is, indeed, spending substantial sums to research correlates and causes of poverty and is actively taking steps to reduce the magnitude and intensity of poverty. The PPP literature also addresses a historical

and structural window where democracy is taking or has taken hold and older institutions and rules of super-ordination and subordination have been seriously questioned and illegitimated. It is one in which rural settlements and households (excepting those of the landlords and other a few others) have experienced considerable diversification and differentiation and thus become more heterogeneous. It is also one in which post-WW II rules of 'development' as well as international policy and financial assistance regime operate. Finally, it is also one in which, university-based household livelihood research, which started in the UK in the 1970s, has been changing, it would appear, especially following the livelihoods research agenda pushed forward by the British international aid agency Department for International Development. The PPP literature also seems to have a firmer root in the UK than anywhere else.

The PPP literature, as any other, is a product of a specific historical-structural window. It could not be otherwise. Knowledge is socially and historically constructed and the PPP literature is a product of its times. In keeping with this assertion—and the historical context outlined in the preceding paragraph, it is important to note that the poverty literature has been with us since the late 1940s. (Of course, the poverty literature can be traced to 19th century urban Europe as well.) This is when the Bretton Woods system and the international development discourse and practice came into being. The 'poverty industry' has since been large in scale and provided a key platform for world capitalist growth as well as international relations.

Even as the current PPP literature forms part of the post-WW II poverty discourse, there is a distinction to be made between the two. While the earlier poverty literature was focused on the macro, country and regional levels, the PPP literature is much more tuned in to the settlement and, in particular, the household level. As noted earlier, this is, in large part, due to the steep rise in differentiation among households in rural areas beginning the 1960s in particular. It is, thus, not entirely incidental either that the PPP literature is almost as much concerned with investigating prosperity as with poverty. The PPP literature, very much unlike the old poverty literature, begins with the assumption that poverty and prosperity are highly dependent on specific features of households. While features of households and poverty (or prosperity) are surely correlated, the worry now is that the pendulum may have swung too much on one of the sides and the PPP literature may outlive its utility by discounting the significance of the macro.

On the other hand, there are several positive outcomes of the current PPP literature. It has made us aware of the magnitude and distribution of poverty and prosperity across several countries, e.g. Bangladesh (Kothari and Hulme 2003, Sen 2003, Baulch and Davis 2007, Quisumbing and 2013), Nepal (Prennushi 1999, Seddon and Hussain 2002, Bhatta and Sharma 2006, Emran and Shilpi 2010) and India (Krishna and Shariff 2011, Hatlebakk 2012). In addition, McKay and Perge (2011), in assessing the claim of Carter and Barrett (2006) on the empirical existence of 'poverty trap,' describe, compare and explain PPPs in Bolivia, South Africa, Tanzania, Uganda and Vietnam. Second, it has also brought to our attention key correlates and causes of poverty and prosperity (see, in particular, Baulch and Davis 2007, Sen 2003, Krishna and Shariff 2011). Third, and as a distinguishing feature, it has provided a much needed

corrective balance to macro, national or regional level analysis by analyzing poverty and prosperity at the micro, settlement and household levels. Fourth, it has shown why the pathways from poverty to prosperity are difficult to traverse for most poor households (see Baluch and Davis 2007, Kothari and Hulme 2003). In the process, the literature has highlighted and ranked the negative significance of several events and processes which hinder the passage of poor households to prosperity. These have ranged from 'natural' factors, e.g. floods; domestic cycle-related factors, e.g. marriage, birth, formation of new household, old age, death; health factors, e.g. prolonged or otherwise high-expenses involving medical emergencies which households to poverty or thwart them from escaping from poverty. Studies which highlight the extremely important significance of inheritance and bequests for traversing along the PPP, and how different social groups are handicapped or assisted differently as they traverse along the PPPs have made key contributions in this context (Quisumbing 2006). It is to be hoped that the PPP studies in future will both learn to address historical-structural or theoretical as well as empirical inadequacies. With reference to the latter, the continuing acquisition of 'time-depth' in several data sets, particularly the World Bank LSMS data set which covers a large number of countries, will be of great help. In addition, the LSMS and other data sets may usefully consider incorporating recall data on poverty and prosperity, which will add more time depth than is possible in panel data sets.

Significance of history and structure

One of the key problems of much of the PPP literature, however, is that instead of acknowledging the specificity and, in a sense, the narrowness of the window and calibrating its conclusions and claims accordingly, it has worked on the assumption that the window is trans-historical and trans-structural. It is, in fact, only within the historical contexts of capitalism—and its ever changing form, democracy (which is changing itself), settlement and household level diversification and differentiation, intensification of rural-urban interaction in relation to exchange of commodities, labor and wages, 'rules' of international development, etc. that one can usefully locate the burgeoning literature on pathways to poverty and prosperity (PPP). It is unfortunate, however, that the PPP literature is not cognizant of the historical conditions of its own birth.

A review of the PPP literature shows, consequently, that it has, in general, failed to recognize both its own pedigree and, as a consequence, its promise. It has become much too tied to proximate and 'local' causes even as it fails to center stage and to interrogate the significance of history and structure for shaping and reshaping pathways to poverty and prosperity. It has become much too tied to short-term policy making and much less to problematizing poverty within a historical and comparative frame and comprehending the historical and structural forces and processes giving rise to poverty and prosperity. It has become much too wedded to policy concerns even as it loses its historical-comparative and intellectual-theoretical edge. It has become much too micro and almost exclusively focused on the nature of the household. It has become unaware or neglectful also of the changing placement and belonging of individual members within a household. It may, it may be surmised, have also become a product of a historical and structural condition in which sponsors of research push not for historical-

comparative knowledge on poverty reduction and prosperity promotion but immediately actionable country level and international policy recommendations. That the proximate and the local, and not the historical and structural, questions loom large in much of the PPP literature cannot be explained in any other way.

The PPP literature, by failing to take a historical-structural view, does not recognize the significance of the historically changing modes of generation of livelihood (MOGL), the identification of poverty-friendly and prosperity-friendly elements in the MOGL platter, and the historical nature of articulation of diverse elements in the platter by households and other organizations. Baulch and Davis (p. 16), unlike others, do speak of the ‘changing profiles of risks and opportunities’. But this remains at the level of promise; it is not something that has been followed through. In addition, they take it as merely as an empirical rather than historical and theoretical shortcoming. (Check the published paper, and not only the draft, though.) A close recognition of the historically changing platter of MOGL—and the historically changing nature of PPPs—is important for two reasons. One, it allows us to analyze in a larger-scale and longer-run historical—comparative perspective that is much more insightful and powerful than establishing statistical relationships among a set of proximate independent and dependent variables related to poverty and prosperity. It is important to establish empirical relationships between poverty and its causes but this does not answer why and under what conditions a specific empirical relationship holds. Nor is the establishment of an empirical relationship able to tell us why such a relationship does not hold at other structural spaces and times.

A large-scale and longer-run frame is necessary not only to comprehend PPP at other times and places but also to validly comprehend the nature of PPP in a given political-economic setting at this moment in time. PPPs have to be identified not within a static model of MOGL within which some households rise remain level or fall. The rise and fall of households along the PPPs, instead, ought to be recorded within substantive and macro and meso history of production and exchange, as also within specific labor regimes, modes of organizations of livelihood, etc. The empirics of the ‘here and now’ are theoretically interesting only when placed within an encompassing historical-structural framework. It is also important, of course, to do so without losing the specificity of the settlement, generations, household, individuals, MOGLs and PPPs in question.

In essence, much of the PPP literature has been longitudinal without being historical and generational. It has not been sufficiently structural either. The shift in the structure of production across the world and across almost all countries has gone *substantively* unrecognized in the literature notwithstanding its empirical acknowledgment, notwithstanding the fact that successive structural shifts have been fundamentally changing the PP trajectories of different generations in the past as well as the present. It is almost certain that PP trajectories will change in future as well. In addition, historical-structural shifts have also have led to divergent PP trajectories for diverse groups of peoples and households, e.g. rural and urban, more diversified and less diversified, landed and landless, men and women, and so on.

Fetishization of household

Much of the PPP literature also implicitly holds to the invalid assumption that poverty and prosperity are best described and explained as features of a household. The PPP literature often bypasses explicit incorporation of encompassing economic and political domains in the PPP models. There have been only a few attempts at seeking a correspondence between specific features of the encompassing and macro level on the one hand and that of the household on the other (See Quisumbing 2006, however.) They often do so, however, in the concluding or recommendatory section. Thus, the connection between the micro and the macro—or the government or an international agency (to whom the recommendation is apparently directed)—is implicitly acknowledged. But the macro, as also the micro-macro linkage, is rarely problematized and regarded as a key and substantive area of inquiry. The recommendation often refers to macro, national-level policies, but the empirics refers exclusively or almost-exclusively to the household level. There is clearly a disjunction here. One would expect macro-level recommendations to flow from analyses of macro-level variables, in addition, where necessary, from analyses of micro-level variables. It is likely that seriously deficient policy recommendations might flow from such an analysis which is (a) not based on an analysis of macro-scale variables, (b) which does not examine the interface between the macro and micro levels of analysis.

As such, the PPP literature generally and almost exclusively describes and explains poverty with reference to household assets and capabilities. Policies for both poverty reduction and prosperity promotion are also largely predicated on household assets and capabilities. However, and for the last several hundred years, and even as the household continues to be a key site of production and exchange, the household is only one among many where production and exchange—and other factors giving rise to poverty and prosperity generated. Indeed, and without derogating the singular significance of the household, poverty and prosperity is increasingly generated elsewhere, although in tandem with the household. The implication is clear: Neither the comprehension of poverty nor a resolution to the problem of poverty can be found by centering oneself exclusively or nearly-exclusively at the level of the household. While this statement may seem labored or perversely obvious to some, the manner in which household PPPs are generally analyzed and reported makes it seem like it is the nature of the household and the decisions which it enters into that constitute the principal if not the only correlates of poverty or prosperity. In the absence of a simultaneous intertwining of micro and macro level explanations, the micro assumes a significance it does not deserve. That the household is only a site of observation and not of explanation is often lost. Similarly, resolution of poverty, to a much greater extent than in the past, draws attention to relatively macro processes at the global, state and regional and local levels. The household continues to be a key site but also one among many other sites which generate or retard poverty. It is not at all enough, therefore, to limit oneself to the identification of features of a household that tend to keep it poor or prosperous.

It may be useful to note here that for a long time, however, poverty was regarded as a feature of specific countries or states rather than of specific communities, classes, social groups and

households. One could argue that features of households became direct and refined objects of focus when rural households, which were, except for those of the landlords and state representatives, were broadly homogeneous and owned and worked a similar set of (broadly defined) assets, began the process of diversification and differentiation among themselves and, in due course, took on decidedly divergent pathways toward poverty or prosperity.

This process of diversification and differentiation in and among households in many 'developing' as well as 'emerging' economies and societies began at different times in different countries, colonies and dependencies. In some urban-industrial and market areas among some countries, e.g. India, China, and those along the global and regional trade routes, e.g. in West Asia, this process predated European colonization. For several 'third world' countries, this process took hold following WW II. For most countries, however, diversification, differentiation, and 'development' started to take hold beginning the 1960s. The twin processes of diversification and differentiation—in a sense the heterogenization of the rural—operated both within and outside of agriculture, and spread across the manufacturing, construction, communication and, above all, the service sectors. In some countries, the process of diversification and differentiation, and the corollary process of economic growth and development, proceeded apace during the later decades even as it moved along in a slow, winding and eventful manner in the rest. One could argue that poverty has been reduced significantly precisely in those countries where economic growth and development—and diversification and differentiation—proceeded relatively rapidly. The principal point, however, is that the process of diversification and differentiation has gone hand in hand with (a) the transition from diverse pre-capitalist forms broadly to the capitalist form of economy, polity and culture, (b) de-ruralization, coupled with urbanization and the emergence of novel and increasingly intense interaction between the rural and the urban, (c) 'de-agriculturalization', which has led to large-scale changes in the structure of production such that the share of the agriculture sector in national and household economy contributes becomes ever smaller, and (d) democratization, under which claims to citizenship, minimum wage, anti-poverty levels of welfare claims, etc. are becoming stronger. It is both surprising and worrisome that the PPP literature has remained aseptic to these world historical developments which have redefined and reshaped poverty and prosperity.

The new found emphasis on households in the PPP literature now becomes understandable. The once 'homogeneous' rural households are no longer so. During last fifty years, we have witnessed the birth and rise—and the consequent transformation—of successively new rural and household economies, polities and societies. Some have come to question if the vaunted 'rural community' is a community any more (Stacey Pigg 1992). Others have spoken of 'semi-proletarianization of households' and of how households change their nature in keeping with the cyclical movements of the world-economy and in keeping with whether a household is located in the core or the peripheral locations of the world economy (Smith and Wallerstein 1992). Following this line of thought, we could well argue that national and even local economies and polities are restructuring households by weakening some of their features and accentuating or adding some others. The upshot of all this is that old livelihoods are being

supplanted or transformed and new ones are coming to the fore. This, in turn, is leading a churning of the old society. In doing so, this supplantation and transformation is also re-ordering and transforming the old and well-tread pathways to poverty and prosperity. This singular world-historical process, however, finds no resonance in the PPP literature.

That diversification and differentiation, in most countries, began to really catch hold in the 1960s implies that, prior to this period, the societies we are speaking of had remained, for long periods, relatively stable and stagnant. This, in turn, implies also that poverty and prosperity were ordered and stable. There were few rags-to-riches or riches-to-rags stories. One could not have a stable society *and* a large-scale upending of the prosperous to a state of poverty and of the poor to a state of prosperity. That would inevitably challenge both stability and stagnance. The rules which governed the walk to prosperity and to poverty were transparently laid out and strictly regulated. These rules enjoyed a broad hegemony. Barring exceptions, these rules had to do with inheritance—of gender, productive resources, income and, thus, class, ownership of labor power, i.e. within the context of racial distinctions, slavery, serfdom and free labor, level of subordination and super-ordination, and—in South Asia—caste standing, etc. These rules also had to do with laws and customs. Certain categories of social groups, e.g. certain racial, ethnic, caste, and gender groups, households and members thereof were legally or customarily barred from becoming prosperous or at least of making a public showing of markers of prosperity. These rules also had to do with relatively closed avenues to representation and leadership. Under evolving conditions of capitalism and democracy, which arrived in these countries beginning the 1960s, it began to become clear to the new citizens that poverty and prosperity were outcomes not of divine or natural order but of specific economic, political and cultural structures and processes.

The new and much more diversified and differentiated economy, among others, has significantly altered the old pathways to poverty and prosperity. In the process, it has also altered the nature of social relationships, including within the household. It has watered down, if not obliterated the old categories of the rural and the urban, raising the question whether a new principle of categorization could be more useful, and whether some other ways of grasping the essence of the new rural and the new urban--and the new ways in which the two are interconnecting--could be developed. That would certainly be a great insight into one of the more powerful processes which is transforming not only poverty and prosperity but also communities, classes and households in the modern world.

As noted, it is not a household that shapes the course of its PPP by itself. While much of the PPP literature does not assert this directly, the absence of engagement there with questions of encompassing economic and political structures and their dynamics that are of utmost significance in the making and unmaking of poverty and prosperity and the almost exclusive concentration on specific features households as makers or breakers of poverty and non-poverty is unwarranted. Households are not 'natural' or 'primordial' entities. Households are socially and historically created entities. The nature of households is always in flux. The nature of the economy and the state are fundamental correlates of the nature of the household. The

nature of the household and household-related institutions, e.g. those related to gender relationship, marriage and fertility, parent-child relationship, inheritance and bequests, lineality and post-marital locality, etc. shape the nature of economy and the state. To make the matter more complex, the nature of these relationships is historically shaped and changing. The PPP literature, however, is of not help in exploring and resolving the nature of the relationship between the encompassing structures and the household. The household is surely a site of resource pooling. Its members surely function as purposeful agents which significantly shapes the nature of PPPs of the household. But the PPP literature, because it fetishizes the household, has inhibited an encompassing, macro as well as nuanced understanding of PPPs. Even if we were to believe that households were truly subsistent and therefore autarkic at a specific phase of history, this is certainly not the case at present. Indeed, this has been less and less so through last several centuries. This just goes to show, once again, that households are socially and historically constructed. The PPP view of history, in a powerful but historically and theoretically invalid manner, harkens back to the olden times.

The macro and meso are increasingly fundamental to the PPPs households and individuals pursue. It is, as such, necessary to map household trajectories over a historically shifting terrain of opportunities and constraints. It is important to note that this shift has differential implications for different generations as well as gender, ethnic, class, etc., groups. It also has differential implications for the landed and the landed, and the more diversified and less diversified households. With the rapid change in the structure of production, rise of the salience of nonfarm and off-farm jobs and sources of income opportunities, mobility, democratic rights, and a politicized atmosphere, the PPPs remain more fluid than was the case in the previous generation.

Confusion on changing nature of property rights

In denigrating and glossing over the significance of substantive world-historical transitions in favor of theoretically lower-order and proximate empirical-level relationships, the PPP literature misses out on a key transition increasingly characteristic to societies today. This is a transition in the nature of assets and the rights to such assets. Whether assets are corporatized at the household level or whether assets are individualized by members of a household are becoming foundational to the PPPs of large number of households and individuals.

There is a fundamental distinction, which is largely unrecognized in the PPP literature, to be made between corporate household assets on the one hand and assets and capabilities which are individualized, particularly following the expansion of capitalist wage-work market. The quintessential family farm was (and is) often owned by the household as such rather than the head of the household as an individual person. In some societies, e.g. Nepal, the ownership of the head of the household is legally and customarily compromised inasmuch as each of the sons can make a legal claim to 'his share' the farm. The head of the household does hold the place of power and pride—as well as decision making—in the household hierarchy. But his privilege is conditional on the decision of other members of the households, his sons and his wife in particular. The head does not own the farm in a full sense. Under capitalism, however,

poverty or prosperity is becoming increasingly predicated on individualized assets and capabilities. In the context of changing modes of generation of livelihood (MOGL) most of the 'modern' elements could be expected to comprise of individualized and mobile asset sets and the 'older' elements to comprise of corporatized and fixed asset sets. The youth, with their young age, good health, literacy and better education, newer sets of skills, high-mobility potential, and the ungrudging 'backstopping' facility that parents and stem households provide, possess a high level of individualized and mobile assets compared to older adults who not only possess fewer and lower-quality individualized assets but also are, in a way, obliged to manage a corporate and fixed asset, including for the benefit of the members of the 'individualized' younger generation. In this scenario, the younger generation has the advantage of a larger and much more diversified platter of MOGL than the older generation. The younger generation, in a relative sense, has not only the opportunity of making 'choices' from the modern elements of the MOGL platter, but also benefits from gains from the older platter, even if it does not contribute to cultivate the old platter. As a straddler, as one who can benefit from both the 'modern' and the 'traditional elements,' the PPPs of those in the younger generation are likely to be much different from that of the older generation.

The non-agricultural and non-rural nature of much of the new MOGL platter may also mean that it valorizes individualized and mobile rather than household or corporatized assets. If so, the young would be better off with better health, education and skills rather than relying upon relatively small, unirrigated, low-productivity ancestral farms. Individualized assets and capability may furnish a more powerful weapon against poverty than 'older' household assets. But this disjunction between the PPPs of the younger generation as against that of the old may also force, between parents and children, as also among members of a joint or extended family--where members may not, for various reasons, be able to acquire similar levels of individualized capabilities--a schism which may have powerful implications on the PPPs of the respective generations or individuals. The poverty prone-ness of different members of a household may diverge and each may take a different pathway to avert poverty. (This is substantiated in a later section which compares the PPPs of 15 sets of brothers.) But it is also possible that some households, the ones with adequate physical or landed assets, may look for diversification of household capabilities, assets, occupations and incomes as complements to one another rather than engaging in corporatized and fixed versus individualized and mobile assets and capability choices.

It should be noted that acquisition of some individualized assets are subsidized by the government and, thus, are less than fully charged to the household the individual is a member of. Basic schooling, primary health care, and several other individual assets come under such subsidized provisions in most countries. Many of such assets are friendlier to the younger generation than to the old. Illustratively, it is the young person and not the old who benefits from subsidized schooling. Whether the schooled young eventually become able to walk a path away from poverty is a different matter. It is also a different matter if a schooled young is able or willing to 'subsidize' the unschooled old and protect her from poverty. On the other hand, it is also possible, although much less commonly, for elders in a household with considerable

fixed physical household assets to 'tie up' the young in the household with such assets and to deny them adequate opportunity to raise their individualized and mobile capabilities and assets. On the other hand, a fixed or corporatized asset set may empower the older generation, the head of the household in particular.

The nature of the asset a household controls and the MOGL it pursues may bear consequences for the nature of relationship among diverse generations, genders, residents of particular—particularly rural and urban, developed and underdeveloped—locations, etc. as also to the PPPs they pursue and experience. Whether the nature of an asset is mobile or fixed and whether the MOGL of a household is corporatized or individualized may well have highly unlike consequences not only for immediate PPP but also for the nature of the relationship among the members of a household, the rate of formation of household, and the poverty or prosperity of the older versus the younger generation. A relatively mobile and/or individualized—rather than corporatized—asset set may well encourage mobility of the young, intensify intergenerational conflict, lead to early breakup of the old stem household and to the formation of new 'branch' household(s). Social groups that possess little fixed assets, e.g. the landless, the Dalits, may accordingly 'encourage' early-age mobility and 'separation' and new household formation. The landed households, on the other hand, may discourage mobility, early-age household formation, etc. even under conditions of intense family conflict. Historically and theoretically informed identification of changing profiles of opportunities and risks is fundamental to a historically and structurally sensitive account of PPPs.

III. The objectives

It follows from the criticisms made above that PPP inquiries, in order to acquire a powerful theoretical edge, ought to pay full heed to the (a) substantive and concrete historical and structural—rather than merely longitudinal and lower-order empirical—contexts, (b) promise and limitation of the household as a component of an encompassing political-economic system—rather than regarding it as a structure which exists nearly autonomously and which can, by itself, push it toward poverty or prosperity, and (c) changing nature of rights to assets and properties, which are slowly but unmistakably becoming individualized rather than corporatized at the household level.

Remaining within and taking off from these premises, the rest of the paper aims to describe and account for the PPPs of a small number of *households* in a rural setting. First, we shall describe the diverse ways along which the PPPs of the households pass through. We shall, in addition, also investigate (a) the implications of decreasing significance of agriculture and the increasing significance of nonagricultural sectors, (b) and whether or not entry into modern sector is necessary for averting poverty or escaping from it. We shall also assess the implications of landownership status, i.e. medium and large sized landedness versus landlessness, and the extent of household-level occupational diversification within and outside agriculture, for the PPPs of the households. There are important theoretical justifications for focusing on these 'variates' or divergences. We shall also investigate if ownership status of immobile and corporatized assets, e.g. farmland, impact on early or late 'splitting' of a stem

household and the formation of a new one. There is also a fundamental theoretical justification for such an investigation inasmuch as the formation and persistence of a household may or may not be seen to be contingent on ownership status of such assets. This also permits us to assess if fixed and corporatized assets are friendlier to the persistence of a household and if mobile and individualized assets are friendlier to the 'splitting' of the old household and the formation of a new household. Finally, we shall inquire the pathways that households have utilized in order to avoid poverty and to gain prosperity and, in this context, assess the significance of an 'urban connection' through wage work, marketing of farm/household products, and running of an enterprise ; non-agricultural initiatives: running a rice, wheat processing mill, tractor renting, etc.; labor migration; commercial agriculture, including vegetable farming; and kinship-based and political or patron-client connection to urban-dwelling middle and upper class households.

Second, we shall investigate if there is a *generational shift* in PPPs. We shall describe how the older and the younger generations 'choose' from the MOGL platter. Is the older generation more diversified than the younger? Is the younger generation less reliant on landed resources? What are the attributes of the households which enable members of the younger generation to 'choose' from a wider, i.e. more diversified elements in the MOGL platter? Are there differences in how the older and the younger generation avoid(ed) or escape(d) from poverty? In essence are the causes of poverty and pathways out of poverty in the most recent historical phase diverging from the older one? Why?

Third, we compare the PPPs that *brothers* pursue and the outcomes they achieve. We do so in order to investigate the extent to which, and the reasons for which, individuals raised in the same household, and presumably with the same sets and levels of endowments can diverge in their PPPs. Comparison among brothers allows us to carry out, in an important sense, a natural experiment with built-in controls.

IV. Setting, design and data

Setting

This study is empirically located in the rural settlement of Sonapur (pseudonym), which lies in the eastern plains of Nepal, approximately 1.5 hour bus ride from Biratnagar, the second largest city in Nepal. Nepal, a least developed country, has seen fairly rapid changes in a variety of sectors since the 1980s. Politically, the country was transformed from an absolute monarchy to a constitutionally regulated monarchy to a republic during the period. The country also went through an 11-year long armed struggle between a Maoist political formation and the security apparatus, during which approximately 15,000 militants and civilians died and many more were injured and displaced. Economically, the structure of production has changed considerably. The share of agriculture, which used to be nearly two-thirds of the GDP, has now been reduced to one-third. While labor migration has long been a routine, the scale of labor migration, particularly to West Asia and South Asia has become very large. Nearly 4 million (out of a total population of 27 million) are reported working 'overseas,' i.e. beyond Nepal and India. Total remittance which passes through banking channels comprises more than 23 percent of the GDP. In all likelihood, the figure underestimates the share given that a significant proportion of

total remittance flows through other, illegal channels. Wage rates, including agricultural wage rates, have increased rapidly (Das and Hatlebakk 2012). Agriculture is slowly being diversified and commercialized and the flow of income to rural areas has been increasing. One important upshot of all these processes has been that the proportion of those in absolute poverty has declined from 40 percent in 1976 to 31 percent in 1996 and 24 percent in 2011. These changes are surprising inasmuch as the World Bank, as late as 1999, was asserting that agricultural production, landownership and land quality were of the uppermost significance for poverty reduction (Prennushi 1999).

There have been positive changes in other areas as well. Literacy, education and health and longevity data have remained promising. In a pronounced change, average life span has increased from the less than 50 years in 1980 to 69 in 2011. Indeed, the 2010 UNDP Human Development Report showed that over the 30-year period since 1980, Nepal had made the most progress among all the countries in the world with respect to the human development index. The rate of progress in health and education was rapid and sustained while that income was less so.

Sonapur, the location of this study, had been settled possibly for more than one century. Important shifts, however, took hold since the 1960s. Migrants from the Hills and Plains of Nepal and the adjoining plains of India came to Sonapur and settled there after clearing substantial sections of the forests there since beginning the early 1960s. This sudden expansion in settlement was due to the confluence of a variety of factors including control over endemic malaria, an important set of land reform measures—including award of rights to one-fourth of the land tilled to tenant farmers, and the emergence of a relatively lenient government policy which tolerated—or at least did not oppose with large-scale force—forest clearance and settlement activities.

There were other significant changes as well in Sonapur beginning that period. A high school came up in 1960. An irrigation channel was dug up in 1965. Wheat cultivation was introduced around 1980 and became an important winter crop. The dirt access road was graveled in the early 1990s. Vegetable cultivation and marketing has made a slow beginning in farm plots which are irrigated. Agricultural intensity has increased. More than half of the farmland, however, continues to be highly extensively cultivated with a variety of lentils or remain non-cultivated during the dry winter season.

The larger Sonapur area now comprises of 1,214 households and a population of 5,695. The literacy rate is 65 percent. Approximately nine percent of the residents are currently living outside of the settlement. Almost one-third of this number comprises of students. There are more than eight schools spread across the larger Sonapur area and students from adjacent locations come to study in the local high school. Approximately 28 percent of the households in the larger Sonapur area are poor. This proportion is significantly higher than the district figure of 17 percent.

Design

Much of the PPP literature has been based on large and probability sample surveys and on quantitative analysis. The exceptions (Narayan 2000, Kothari and Hulme 2003) are few and far between. Larger-scale empirical investigations, i.e. social surveys, have important uses. They generally follow rules of probability, ensure statistical representativeness, reduce sampling errors and allow statistical estimations and permit statistically based decision making. Quantitative investigations are also invaluable to estimate the magnitude of variables of interest in a population and, where at least two data points are available, to forecast statistical trends. Notwithstanding Kothari and Hulme, large scale survey data-based quantitative analyses can be helpful to co-relate and 'causal-ize' variables associated with poverty and prosperity.

The empirical component of this study, in contrast, is 'very small' in scale. The focus here is on 30 households. If Kothari and Hulme (Draft, March 2003 labeled their study to be of a nano scale, we might label this study a micro-scale one). The 'natural' companion methodology to a micro-scale study is a qualitatively designed one, and we have followed up this rule.

Qualitative designs, information and mode of analysis are useful as well. This is particularly the case where the cases, which can of course no longer be labeled 'samples,' are selected based on significant theoretical grounds. Theoretical sampling (see Glazer and Strauss 1967 and Denzin 1970 for early versions) can, when used insightfully and in a disciplined manner, help falsify, elaborate and recast theories. One could surely falsify, elaborate and recast theories with the help of large-scale survey data. But because the frames for the collection of large-scale data sets often are not explicitly based on theoretical platforms, the pronounced tendency in the analysis of such data is generally, although not always, limited to establishing causal relationships or correlations among indicator-level and theoretically 'lower-order' measured or operational variables. Such analyses tend to remain at the level of empirical generalization. The quantitative emphasis is often inimical to all information not contained in the data set. Survey organizers and researcher who base themselves on surveys often operate under the assumption that the data set contains elements for all possible explanations. The lament often is that 'if only the data had been well analyzed ...' This is a false expectation. This, instead, may lead to atheoretical and ahistorical explanation and to wrong-headed and counter-productive policy recommendation. Further, exclusive reliance on a closed quantitative dataset leads to a closed rather than a relatively open—and hence correctible and potentially cumulative—description and explanation. When a closed system of description and explanation collapses, one is forced to begin completely anew. One cannot pick up some of the old pieces, bring in a set of new ones, connect them together, and formulate an improved description and explanation. In quantitative investigations, a fuller search for relatively encompassing theory-level implications of such relationships often go un-pursued. Theoretical sampling, on the other hand, is based on more self-conscious and relative explicit theoretical considerations. Accordingly, the 30 household were selected not randomly but with explicit theoretical considerations in mind.

One implication, of the reliance on theoretically directed selection of household—and the generation of data related precisely to such purposively collected data—is that we, as hinted earlier, do not—and cannot—answer question either about the magnitude of poverty or about the trend of poverty in the settlement. In an important way, this is a serious limitation. But what is lost in empirical generality may hopefully be balanced by gains made in answering theoretical questions.

Data

This study, unlike most other studies on PPP, uses a 5-point scale to measure poverty and prosperity. It has become something of a norm, in the literature, to measure or to discuss PP pathways principally by utilizing only two categories, the poor and the non-poor. (Baulch and Davis 2008: 6). The emphasis of Barrett and Carter (2012) and Carter and Barrett (2006) is on ‘poverty trap’ that hinders an escape from poverty, but they basically work with the two-outcome, i.e. nonpoor-to-poor and poor-to-nonpoor, frame. McKay and Perge (2011) also basically posit the two outcome frame (and go on to show why Carter and Barrett’s ‘poverty trap’ does not hold water). Quisumbing and Baulch (2013) follow the same pattern. Bhatta and Sharma (2006) also work with the same frame. The benefit of a 5-point scale, compared to the binary poor-nonpoor scale, in that the former can be much more nuanced. Now, if the intention is much more policy oriented, and particularly related to persons and households inside and outside of a poverty threshold, the poor-nonpoor distinction may suffice. But theoretically-oriented studies may best work on –a less categorical and more nuanced measurements. Further, since this study tracks interviewees and their households over a fairly long period, ranging from 15 years to 45 or more years, we could expect households to have traversed an eventful life along the poverty-prosperity pathway.

However, there are several useful innovations made in the literature as well. Baulch and Davis (2008) extend the two-outcome, i.e. poor-nonpoor transition into a four-outcome transition (or the lack of it): poor-to-nonpoor, nonpoor-to-poor, always poor and always nonpoor. They also attempt to show the pattern of poor-to-nonpoor and nonpoor-to-poor trajectory patterns (p. 11), where such a move from one stage to the other can be smooth (whether improving or declining), saw-toothed (whether stable, improving or declining), and single-step or multi- step. Barrett and Carter (2012: 2ff) develop the notion of ‘poverty trap,’ which they wish to distinguish from the notion of ‘persistent poverty’. They argue that ‘persistent poverty’ ‘intrinsically lacks the analytical foundation necessary to mount a thoughtful policy response, which requires knowing *why* households are persistently poor.’ But, to the extent that persistent poverty is regarded both as a descriptive as well as explanatory category, which is often the case in the PPP literature, both the concepts, i.e. persistent poverty and poverty trap, should be equally useful. Some others (McKay and Perge 2011) prefer to split the poor into two categories: chronic and non-chronic (or transient) poor and seek the causes which underlie chronic poverty. (Chronic poverty, of course, would appear to tap the set of dimensions as ‘persistent poverty’ as well as those which define a ‘poverty trap.) Bhatta and Sharma (2006) also explore the notion and the causes of chronic and transient poverty specifically in the case of Nepal. It would, however, appear that what is chronic or persistent and what is transient is,

to some extent, an artifact of a dataset rather than one of a history or theory of poverty. The transient poor are often simply defined as those households which were poor during one of the two panel surveys and chronically poor are defined as those who were poor during both the panel surveys. This also goes also to indicate the principally data-driven nature of much of the PPP literature. Sen (2003), on the other hand, and in a manner similar to the one posited in this paper, works not with a poor-nonpoor frame but with households which are ascending and those that are descending the poverty-prosperity ladder.

Unlike some other PPP studies (excepting Sen 2003 and some others), which carry out a household poverty-prosperity comparison at two points in time—as is often allowed by most panel datasets, this study carries out such comparison, depending upon the age of the interviewee head of household, at 2-4 points in time. (Note, however that the 2-4 observations on poverty and prosperity in this study are made by means of recall, unlike in panel data sets where observations are based on currently existing situations.) If a household head is 30 years old, because we begin an account of the household when the interviewee was 15, we have only two points to compare. But if an interviewee is between 30 and 44, we have three data points. For interviewees between 45 and 59 we have four data points. For older interviewees, we have five data points. Among our 30 interviewees, all were 30 years old or more. Twelve were between 30 and 44. A further 16 were between 45 and 59. And two were 60 and over.

The adoption of multiple data points was made possible due to a variety of factors. To begin with, we deal with a small number of cases. Second, we utilize the life history *cum* in-depth interview technique, wherein we follow an interviewee through the course of his or her life. Third, given the relatively stagnant nature of much of the economy before the 1980s—inasmuch as ownership of farmland and agriculture shaped much of the course of the PPPs for most of the households—a 15-year interval seemed reasonable as well. Of course, 15 years may be rather much too long in locations and times when the economy is growing or shrinking rapidly and one in which there has been little political change, broadly understood as change in the relative power of various social categories. On the other hand, the time span may be too short when the economy and polity remain stagnant over decades or more. Finally, there was little point in failing to utilize the potential inherent in a field-based primary-data collection, and one that employed qualitative techniques. If you have sought out a 65 year old interviewee and if the interviewee agreed to cooperate, it would be foolhardy to reduce the data points to two. The PPP, over that lifespan, can have passed through many twists and turn for it to be forced within two data points.

In fact, because our case selection was (a) theoretically informed (rather than statistically representative), (b) because we followed a qualitative data generation design, and (c) we were interested in significant departures during the entire course of life of an interviewee (rather than at a few fixed points in his life), we generated information on many more than 2-4 data points. For most interviewees, for example, we would know if something significant, in relation to poverty and prosperity, took place when he was 37 or 43 or 58. Limiting information to a few

and fixed years only would have been highly uneconomical from both financial as informational points of view.

There is a greater than usual reliance on subjective assessment in this study, at least in comparison to quantitative studies that are also often wedded to an 'objectivist' position. Interviewees were asked a set of objective questions, e.g. questions on household demographics, land ownership, major items and of expenditure and investment, etc. We, however, did not ourselves calculate the overall poverty or prosperity of a household with the use of data on the preceding set of variables. We were not fully certain we had covered all the necessary assets, capability, income, consumption, expenditure and investment related information variables. The divergence in the quantitative and qualitative data in Baulch and Davis (2008) and the possibilities they raised for redesigning and reworking questions and response categories was certainly a key reason for this decision. In consequence, the key variable of our study, the location of a household on the 5-point poverty-prosperity range, was subjectively assessed. Interviewees were simply asked to rate themselves along the 5-point scale. The reference point, for the initial age-point, i.e. when the interviewee was 15 years old, was the neighbors. That is, an interviewee was asked where his household fell on the 5-point poverty-prosperity range in implicit comparison to his neighbors. (The questionnaire spoke in terms of grades of 'economic status' rather than 'points in the poverty-prosperity range'.) At other age points, the interviewee was asked whether and to which approximate point in the poverty-prosperity range was his household located in implicit comparison to the point his household was at the previous age point.

It should be emphasized that subjective answers to the question on the grade of economic status was not accepted at face value. To begin with, and as noted, specific households were selected based, among others, information provided by several informants on the current economic status *and* the changing economic fortunes of households. Indeed, accounts provided by informants before the interviews formed much of the basis of theoretical sampling. Further, during the interview, we repeatedly referred back to the responses made by an interviewee to several associated and component questions, e.g. landownership, primary and secondary occupation, number of earners in the household, expenditures, investments, etc., when an interviewee was answering the question on economic status and sought to validate the answer. In addition, when in considerable doubt, we informally sought out neighbors to corroborate the subjective account after the interview.

The fact that there are more than two data points in this study at which to compare (most of the) pairs of brothers gives substance to the notion of a trajectory. Because this study focuses intensely and mostly qualitatively on a small number of cases and employs a life history *cum* in-depth interview technique, the information we have on the 30 respondents—who comprised of 15 sets of brothers. We did measure poverty-prosperity at 15-year intervals, i.e. at ages 15, 30, 45 and 60 and over, but we also generated information on the course of life—and in between each of those 15-year intervals. Thus we generated information on what major events and processes related, among others, to work and labor, occupation and income, health

and education, marriage and dowry, major expenditures and investments, *during* when the respondent was 15 to 29. So also for the periods in-between ages 30-44, 45-59, and 60 and over. Thus, while we here report and analyze data for the set age points, the life history and in-depth interview techniques has allowed as a peek that surveys would miss out on.

The household themselves, as noted, were selected not randomly in order to ensure representativeness vis-a-vis all the sampling units but on theoretical bases. Theoretical sampling is attuned not to representation but to theoretical insight. Such sampling potentially allows us to gain theoretical insights in particular by means of comparison of among social categories which are previously known to be highly dissimilar or highly dissimilar. The data and interpretation are here focused not on representation of all possible social categories—or of the society as a whole, which is, of course, valuable in itself --but only of the categories which have been shown or otherwise expected to ‘behave’ highly similarly to highly dissimilarly under certain specific well defined conditions.

One such condition, for this study, was diversification of MOGL at the household level. The question we asked was: Are more diversified households on a different PP track than the less diversified ones? The theoretical expectation would be that, indeed, the more diversified households, because they can reach out to and access diverse elements in the MOGL platter, can pool income from a wider array of sources. Because they are able to do this, they can enlarge their income and savings and smooth their consumption over good times and bad. In addition, we also wanted answer to the question: To what extent can diversification *within* agriculture enable households to not become poor or to escape from poverty? The theoretical expectation in this instance would be that diversification *within* agriculture may allow households both not to become poor or to escape from poverty only under certain specific conditions: the farm is irrigated, lies physically close to market center(s), and a household has enough labor power itself. Third, we also wished to assess the attributes of households which have enabled its younger generation to be able to access a wider set of elements form the MOGL platter. Is it a sizable landownership which facilitates households to help the younger members to become healthier, more educated, and more mobile? In other words, is corporatized and fixed household asset a necessary condition for the acquisition of individualized and mobile endowments in the second generation? Further, is entry into the ‘modern’ sector a necessary condition for not becoming poor or escaping from poverty? Fourth, we wished to assess the divergence in the PPPs of the older generation versus that of the younger generation in order to comprehend the relationship between history and generations *and* the ‘historical platter’. The older generation may have become poor (or failed to escape poverty) or prospered for different reasons than those in the younger generation. The mapping of poverty and prosperity, it seems, has to be carried out not over a MOGL canvas that is static but over one that is historically dynamic and moving.

It may well be charged that this is a tall order for a study that is empirically located in a particular time and place. It is also a tall order for a study that relies on the investigation of a small number of cases and not on a statistically representative and adequately-sized statistical

sample. It may also be seen to be a tall order for a study of a qualitative bent. Indeed, these charges may all be upheld in some respects. This study, however, is not meant to be definitive. In keeping with its empirical frailty in terms of statistical representativeness, the paper makes only tentative and suggestive claims. The hope is to become historically and theoretically indicative and insightful rather than empirically definitive and precise. This study, in a way, takes the tack from Kothari and Hulme (p.1) who call their own study a 'nano scale poverty study' and detail the passage of one single household along a PPP which remains in flux. While we do not agree with their multiple charges against quantitative designs and data sets (p.1), we do partially agree, as Kothari and Hulme do, when properly and adequately situated, that 'data is just the plural of the anecdote'. A qualitative design, set of information, and mode of analysis is a valid way of generating knowledge because, as Mills (1959) would say, it can connect biography with history and, we may add, micro with macro. Doing so can throw the nature of the connection into a sharp relief. In addition, it can provide further illumination on the nature of each of the two levels. The qualitative design can provide information and insight both on objective conditions as well as subjective perceptions, even as the latter is often shirked by inquiries which are of the quantitative bent. In addition, qualitative design can potentially be more context-sensitive, nuanced, 'concrete,' and 'deep'. Finally, qualitative studies, with adequate safeguards, can be carried out at a fraction of the financial cost, time and number of researchers necessary for quantitative studies. (This may be one reason why quantitative PPP studies generally use poverty-prosperity data from a handful of countries, particularly, India and Bangladesh, which are immensely rich in poverty-related data sets.) Qualitative studies, on the other hand, do not allow us either to estimate magnitudes and to carry out probability-based tests of statistical significance.

There is some PPP literature that combines both quantitative and qualitative designs, sets of information and modes of analysis. The Baulch and Davis (2008) study is the most important of these. (See Kanbur 2001 for an early general introduction to the 'qualquant' methods.) The study first carried out a quantitative survey on poverty-poverty transitions. At the second stage, a representative subset was selected for qualitative modes of data generation and analysis. While this was an innovative design, the divergence in information that the two designs produced were much too large for comfort. The reliability of much of the information was put into doubt. On the other hand, Baulch and Davis's (2008) discussion as to why the results of the two designs might have diverged from each other are instructive and may offer clues to rework the two designs in future.

The intention here, in any case, is to look for suggestive insights which may be followed up and assessed. One intention here is to cast a larger-scale and longer-run lens and to see whether or not this lens can help us to view PPP somewhat differently. The expectation here is that future studies may wish to beneficially pursue some of the emphases in the paper, e.g. moving beyond establishment of proximate causal relationships among poverty and prosperity to elaborating relationships within a more encompassing historically and structurally changing levels of social organization, e.g. the world, region, country, locality, household and individual. That is, future studies may prefer to view time, i.e. the time gap between the first and the last set of the panel

data, not merely chronologically and longitudinally but also as one during which there may have been substantive historical and structural changes, e.g. changes in the platter of modes of generation of livelihood and the prospects of becoming poor, escaping from poverty or becoming prosperous. They may, in a larger-scale and longer time span perspective, inquire on historically ordered yet contingent pathways to poverty and prosperity. Such a perspective would not only open up far more exciting historical-comparative theoretical possibilities but would also illuminate the present. It may even point out novel poverty-escaping paths for the present and for structurally divergent settings. In addition, such a perspective would also help us shed limitations that necessarily accrue when the dominant or nearly-exclusive fodder of PPP inquiries consists of sets of panel data which are generated over a very narrow span of time. (See Hatlebakk 2012, who covers changes over three generations.) The repeated and longitudinal nature of World Bank Living Standard Measurement Survey data, which also consists of sets of panel data, therefore, bears contradictory potentials. It can be a very good source for PPP analysis when contextualized within and combined with significant unmeasured data, when the measured and unmeasured time spans are seen not merely as gaps in abstract and chronological times but as divergences in substantive historical times. The potential will be even higher if such a mode of analysis is pursued not only at the country level but across country and at global levels. Lacking such a perspective, however, the data set can be put to highly un-illuminating and uncertain theoretical and policy-practice ends.

V. Poverty and Prosperity among Sonapur Households

Before we begin the discussion, it should be emphasized that the case households selected in Sonapur as a whole most probably do not constitute a representative sample of all households there. As emphasized, these households were theoretically selected with the help of informants and within the proviso that each household selected should be complemented by a 'brother household' residing and willing to be interviewed in the vicinity without which fraternal comparison would not have been possible. As also noted, the 'fraternal requirement' rendered a number of other possibilities more likely, among which underestimation of actual household-level differentiation as well as underestimation of actual prosperity were particularly important.

A couple of methodological notes are in order at this point. We attempt to relate, in the next three sections, the economic status of households at 2-4 points in time, i.e. at the time the heads of households were 15, 30, 45 and 60. This gives us the poverty-prosperity pathways of the case households. However, not all heads of household we interviewed were 60 (or more). In fact, a few heads were less than 45. Economic status, therefore, has been measured only at two age points for those households whose heads had just crossed 30 years of age. But because we wished to increase data points to an optimum extent, we did ask respondents who had crossed the midpoint of an age bracket, i.e. those who had crossed 37 for interviewees between 30-44, their economic status even though they had not reached the age of 45. So also with the age bracket 45-59, for whom the midpoint fell at age 52. We have used such information in our analysis. It should be noted that while measuring poverty at different age-points, this paper compares a household (except at age 15) not against other households but against the status of the household at the preceding data points.

We have attempted to relate economic statuses at different age points, which together sketch the poverty-prosperity pathways of households, generations and brothers to a variety of household and other attributes. Among these are: Types of occupation, number of earners, and sources of income of members of a household; land owned and rented-in by a household; the number of earners and the dependency ratio in a household; and schooling and training of a head of household. As we could 'see' during our case interviews the poverty-prosperity trajectory is an outcome of these and very many *other* factors. We have noted some of these diverse factors' in our discussion of household trajectories below. There is, probably increasingly, no single factor that determines the trajectory. It is, more often than not, a combination of factors which shape the pathway. Nonetheless, and for the sake of consistent comparison among households, generations and brothers, we have, in an overall sense, focused on 'land operatorship' (which combines together owned and rented-in farmland) and 'occupational and income status' (which combines together occupational diversification and number of sources of income) as causal correlates of economic status.

In the figures presented, the three variables are labeled, respectively, *ecostatus* (for overall economic status in relation not to level of ownership of asset and investment as such but in relation to consumption), *ocinstatus* (status in relation to occupational diversification and number of sources of income), and *landstatus* (size of farmland operated). *Ecstatus* is a five-level subjective assessment, by the heads of household, of the overall economic condition of a given household at various age points. The five levels measured on the *vertical* axis, are: 1 (Very Poor), 2 (Poor), 3 (Middling), 4 (Well-to-do), and 5 (Prosperous). *Ocincome*, as noted, is ordered by the cumulative levels of diversification and number of sources of income. Like overall economic status, it is also rank ordered at five points. Households which derive their income only from farming, wage work, and/or small livestock lie at the lowest rank of 1. Households derive income from cultivating own farmland, sharecropping, wage work, and livestock are ranked 2. Those which derive income from farming, livestock, wage work and/or renting oxen or other implements and repairing are 3. Those who derive income from farming, livestock, dairying, tea/ale shop and other retailing, commuting wage labor in urban locations, renting thresher, cultivating green vegetables are ranked 4. Those who derive income from the some of the preceding and combine them with international labor migration and/or school teaching or other regular low level white collar 'office job' are ranked 5. While farmland (*landstatus*) was measured continuously, for the analysis here, we have, once again, classified operated farmland into five categories: 1 (0-0.09ha), 2 (0.10-0.99ha), 3 (1.00-2.99ha), 4 (3.00-3.99ha), and 5 (4.00ha or more).

The *horizontal* axis shows the four age points along which the rest of the 'variables' were measured. '1' on the horizontal axis implies the initial age point, i.e. the point at which an interviewee was 15 years of age. Age 30, 45 and 60 or more are labeled '2,' '3,' and '4,' respectively.

Inheritance, landownership, diversification, and PPP

Inheritance, most prominently of farmland, is fundamentally important to the poverty and prosperity trajectory for most of the households. Inheritance is important not only because it means asset-fulness (or asset-lessness). It is important also because it provides the initial platform on which the onward PP trajectory takes shape.

An individual inherits very many markers and attributes from his/her parents and the stem household. While inheritance, strictly speaking, refers to legal or customary transfer of physical or financial assets primarily from parents to children or among close relatives, a variety of social markers may be said to be inherited, e.g. gender, ethnic, caste, and even class characteristics, may be said to be inherited to a degree. All of these inheritances shape the life of the inheritor to varying degrees. In this paper, however, we are concerned only with inheritance of farm land.

That most households and livelihoods are predominantly platformed on inherited farm makes the significance of such farm land absolutely clear. Ownership of land and economic status of households, when the heads of households were 16 years of age, co-varied to a very large extent. All of the 12 well-to-do and prosperous households, when the interviewees were 16 years of age, had large-sized farm land. The two co-varied less when the interviewees were 30 years of age. That is, even as landholding, for most households, continued to be the most important component of economic status, it was gradually being fashioned out of additional occupations and sources of income. Landholding was no more enough in order to climb or to hold on to the top economic category. Correspondingly, at the macro and meso levels, the historical platter of MOGLs was slowly but unmistakably changing. In general, only those households which could engage with one or more elements of the platter could continue to retain or climb on to the top category. Households which could not do so slid down approximately one step in the ladder every 10-15 years. The size of landholding per household, by the time the interviewees set up new households themselves, in any case, had become much smaller. The mean size of farmland when the interviewees were 15 was 4.5 ha while it was 2.4 ha by the time they had turned 30. This reduction was largely a result of subdivision. But there were several cases of sale of farm land as well. This process has hastened since 1990 due to the emergence of yet another livelihood platter—in which labor migration and remittance, rapidly increasing agricultural wage rate, intensified ‘urban contact,’ schooling and non-farm employment, etc. had become prominent.

Let us view the data from another end, that of households which started on the PPP landless or the near-landless. All four heads of households who were very poor at 16 were landless or near-landless as well. At one end, this further buttresses the closely co-varying nature of landownership and economic status 30 or more years ago. All four households currently remain landless or near-landless as well. But the economic status of one of the four has risen to ‘poor’ and that of the other three has risen to the ‘middling’ status. This partial dis-attachment between economic status and landownership would probably not have been a reality 30 or more years ago. Such dis-attachment has become increasingly possible thereafter because of

the nature of change in the nature of the platter of MOGLs and sources of income. In the cases that we are concerned with here, the valorization of skilled repair work and retail business, both correlates of an expanding, diversifying and 'urbanizing' macro and meso economy, has made such a dis-attachment possible.

Clearly, the early setting up of independent household has paid well for these young householders from the landless category. Is, then, early-age formation of households to be encouraged? In cases where the young are healthy and possess skills to sell in the market, it does seem that early household formation is prosperity-friendly. In such cases, getting out of poverty would appear to demand an early split of the stem household. The often-made equation of modernity with nuclear and 'small' family would support such a conclusion as well. This would, at the very broad level, seem to mirror the experience of the 'West' since the 18th century in general and following WW II in particular. A broader review, however, would probably show that a rapidly expanding and growing economy and a welfare or social democratic political economy would have to underpin the identified association between early formation of household and prosperity.

There are some relatively large holder households who are doing well and some others who are not. H1 and H2, who own 4.3ha and 6ha of farmland, respectively, have been in the top economic status categories. They are not diversified as such either. But the three sons of the H1 household were schooled well and are currently working as a factory supervisor, high school teacher, and policeman. They are all married, have set up independent households, and live in different parts of the country. H2's only son is just completing school and it is likely that he will seek a nonagricultural job away from the settlement. Both households, H1 in particular, have 'kept pace with the times' and are likely to be able to benefit from the changing MOGL platter. In such a case, the landed assets could be said to have been well leveraged in order to acquire 'next-generation' assets. H29, another large holder, and one who has failed to diversify away from 'traditional' agriculture, is attempting to follow a similar pattern. Of his four daughters, three are in Grades 10-12. (One has been 'married off' for some years.) He is trying to go against his father's dictum: 'What do you gain by going to school? We have enough farmland, don't we?' But it is a fact also that he has been gradually losing his economic status on account of educational expenses and lost opportunity cost of his daughters' labor, his wife's prolonged sickness and disability, and lack of diversification. H30 is traversing a similar trajectory. It is not diversified. In addition, the household has to shoulder financial and loss-of-labor burdens due to the prolonged sickness of the mother in the household. It is sliding down in economic status.

Based on these cases, one could conclude that ownership of farmland continues to be a sturdy platform for livelihood and for not sliding toward poverty. But it has not been able to ensure continued prosperity as it possibly could have two generations ago. There are strong chances that ownership of farmland may be even less able to ensure continued prosperity in future. Prosperity, the cases tell us, requires a 'good' articulation of landed and non-landed assets and, in many instances, leveraging of landed status for the acquisition of economic status through non-agricultural and non-rural means. On the other hand, there continues to be large scope for

poverty reduction and prosperity promotion through irrigated and commercial agriculture and dairying and raising of 'improved' livestock breeds. Such farm products can find a good market in nearby towns and cities.

Table 1 sketches the poverty-prosperity pathways of the 30 studied households. The table shows a number of highly complex and interesting processes at work during the last 60 years in Sonapur. First, there has been substantial movement along the PP pathways. Let us take the case of the four households which were rated very poor when the heads of household were 15 years old. One of the four households remains very poor. One has graduated to being 'merely' poor and two have moved up the scale to 'middle' economic status category. Of the two households which were rated 'poor,' one has climbed to the 'well-to-do status and the other climbed higher to the top category. The poor and the very poor, clearly, have climbed up the ladder with rather firm footing. This *suggests* that there has been more escaping from poverty than falling into poverty. This would also *suggest* that the economy *may* have been structurally shifting and expanding and that MOGL *may* have been diversifying.

Now let us focus on the category on the middle. The middle has thinned out; it has become half the size it was when the heads of household were 15. Of the 'original' 12 middling households, four have slid down to poverty while five have climbed up. Four of the 12 have moved afar; two have become very poor and the other two have entered the top category. This suggests that the economy has been fairly dynamic through the last six decades. This also suggests that there must be some polarizing factors which pull the middle towards one or the other pole.

Of the eight well-to-do households, four have climbed up, one has slid down to the middling category and one has slid further down to poverty. Once again, there is a more welcome path to prosperity than to poverty here. Finally, of the four prosperous households, three have slid down. Of the three, two have been particularly hard hit, sliding down to the poor and the very poor categories. Nonetheless, of the six households in the bottom two categories, all except one made substantial progress, climbing up 1-4 'ladders'. Of the 12 in the 'middling' category slightly more climbed up than slid down. Of the eight well-to-do, four climbed up and only two slid down. Of the top category, however, three slid down 1-4 ladders of economic status.

All in all, there would seem to be in operation, through last six decades, a set of powerful polarizing factors which draw households away from the middle. There would also seem to be relatively robust pathways to prosperity than to poverty. It is to be noted that the pathways to prosperity are more robust than otherwise despite the likelihood that some of the prosperous are likely to have left the village and are, thus, 'excluded' from our list of study households. In other words, had households which had left the settlement been included on the list, it is likely that there would have been more prosperous households than has been shown in this report. Finally, there would also appear to be forces and processes which force households, both from the middling as well as the two upper categories, into poverty.

Table 1. Lifetime Poverty-Prosperity Transition in Economic Status of 30 Case Households

| Economic status and number of heads of Household at age 15 | | Economic status and number of heads of household at currently completed age | | | | |
|--|----|---|------|----------|------------|------------|
| | | Very Poor | Poor | Middling | Well-to-do | Prosperous |
| Very Poor | 4 | 1 | 1 | 2 | | |
| Poor | 2 | | | | 1 | 1 |
| Middling | 12 | 2 | 2 | 3 | 3 | 2 |
| Well-to-do | 8 | | 1 | 1 | 2 | 4 |
| Prosperous | 4 | 1 | 1 | | 1 | 1 |

We can now follow up the poverty-prosperity transition of some of the households through specific age points focusing, in particular, on illustrative households which made a jump up or down two or more steps on the economic-status ladder. While doing so, we can also describe the ‘causes’ for the rise and fall of the households along the ladder.

Of the four households (H) which began from the ‘very poor’ level, three made a jump to the middling category right at age 30. Only one of these three was past 60 years of age, and he continued his ‘middling’ status through his lifetime. Two of the households (H27 and H28) were landless to begin with (Figure 1). (They remain landless at present in a de jure sense; hence the landlessness indicated in the accompanying figure. However, they do farm and exercise usufruct right over 0.3 ha of public land.) The rise had to do with (a) formation of new households early, i.e. at ages 24 and 22, respectively (b) setting up of two-earner households, and (c) earning of income from three diverse sources. The sources included smithy, farming, raising and selling goats and pigs, and running tea-and-ale shops.

Of the two households (H13 and H21) which began from the ‘poor’ level, both jumped the ladder by 3 and 2 steps, respectively (Figure 2). The 3-step jump was made gradually but consistently while the 2-step jump was made rather late, i.e. after age 30. The gradual 3-step jump was made possible mainly through income from three-earner household and highly diversified sources of income. It is noteworthy that the household has not increased its landholding of 1.3 ha, despite the flow of substantial income and potential savings. It derives its income from dairying (both raising milch cows and collecting milk from other households and selling milk), farming, rearing and selling goats, and running a tea shop. The income source also includes interests raised from money lent to other households in the settlement. The savings are invested primarily on increasing the size of the herd and lending. This has, by all accounts, been a virtuoso performance. The other household, in turn, has based its income on the fact that all of the members are able bodied, working, and earning. It owns a sizable and mostly irrigated 2.5 ha farm. It has also benefitted from the main earner having had a full-time job with regular income in a jute factory for four years early on and having worked in Malaysia for another four years. In addition, the household engages in agricultural wage labor and raises and

sells goats and pigs in the market. Given these features, the economic rise of the household has been possible despite the early sickness of the lady of the house which lasted for six months and which led to the expenditure of approximately Rs. 100,000 and son's and daughter's weddings which cost approximately Rs 200,000. These two cases clearly show that the 'new economy,' which includes traditional agriculture but is characterized by a diversified mode of generation of livelihood, creates space for 'nimble households'. Under the 'old economy' the size of the farmland very often translated into a path which led to poverty or, conversely, to prosperity.

Figure 1. Households which rapidly improved from very poor to middling economic status

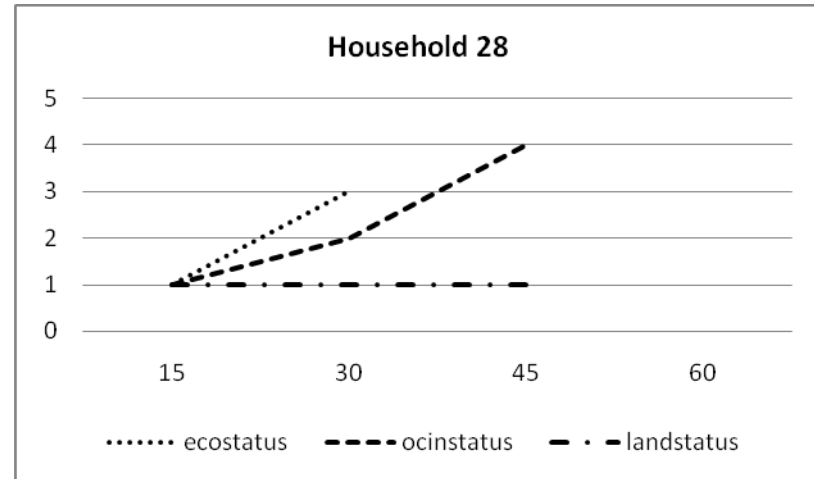
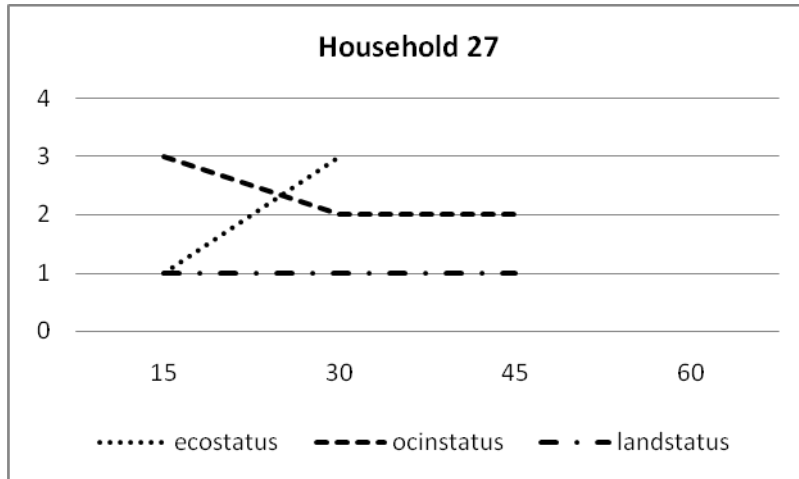


Figure 2. Households which rapidly moved from prosperity to poverty

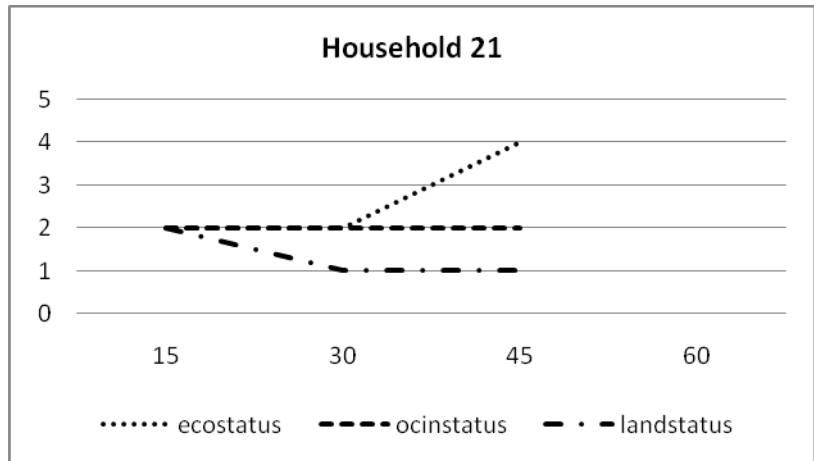
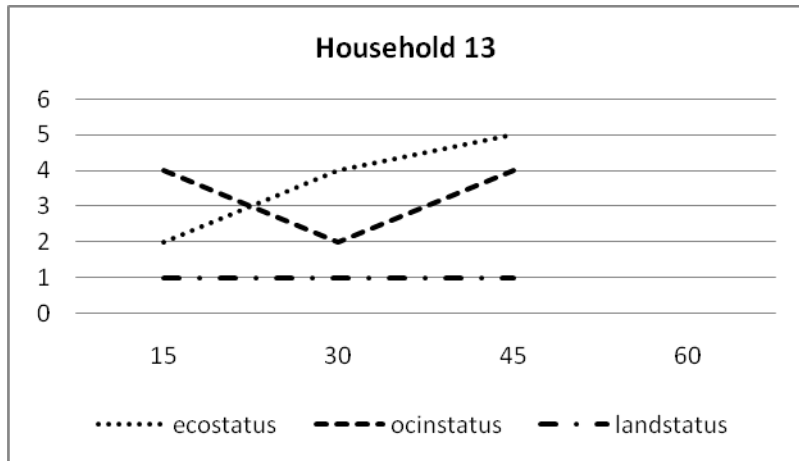


Figure 3. Households which prospered due to engagement in 'new economy'

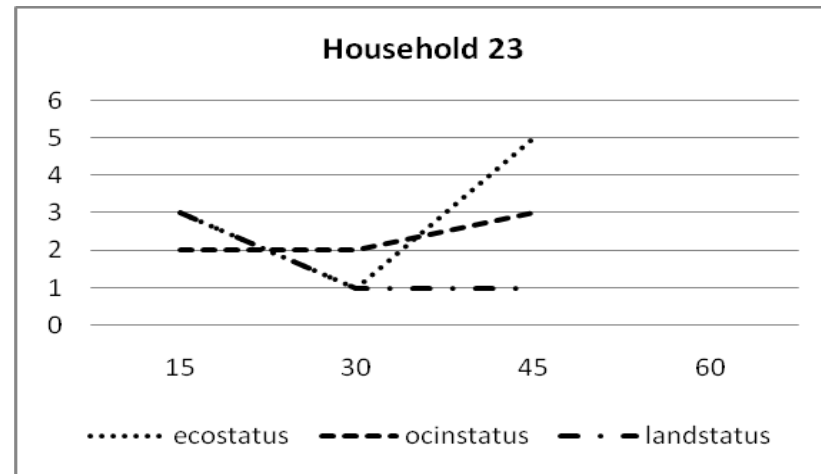
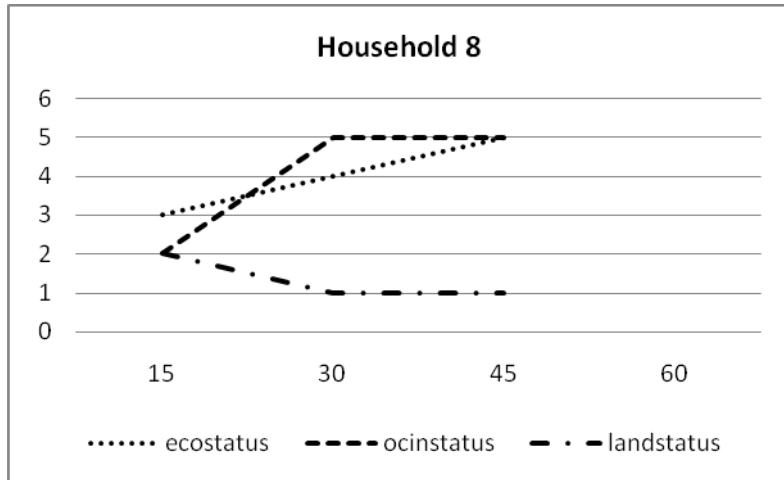
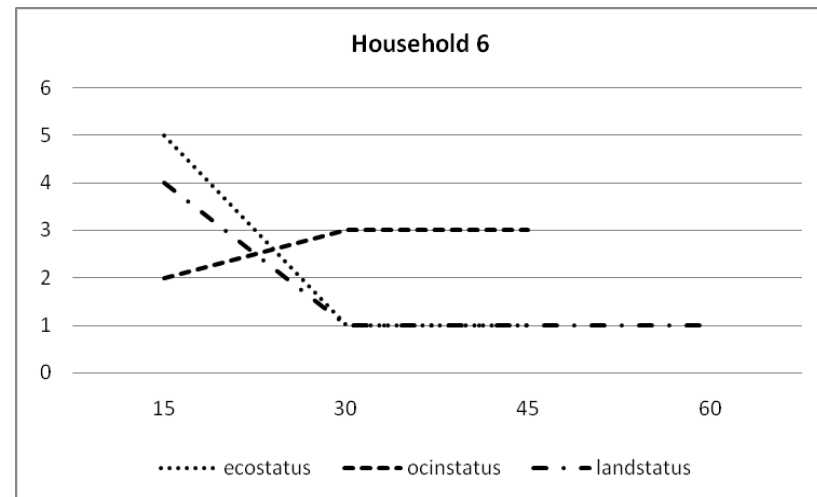
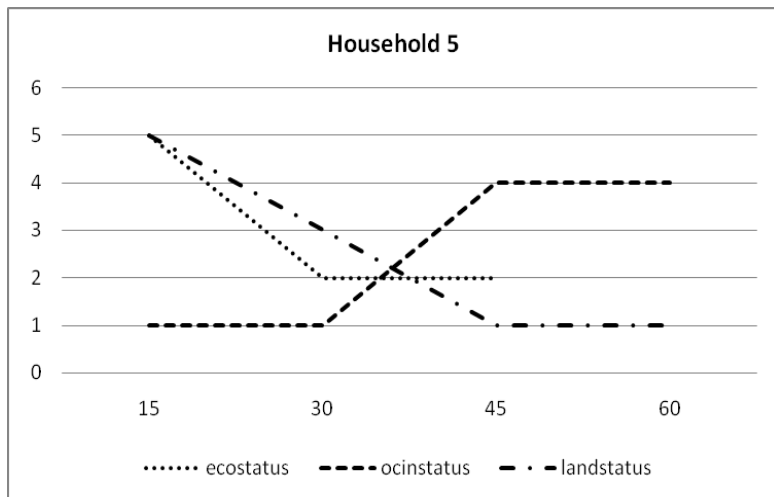


Figure 4. Prosperous households which became poor



Among the 12 households which started off in the middling category, the pathways of several are instructive. H7 gradually slid down to the bottom category while H8 rose to the top category. (We shall compare these two households in the next section which focuses on fraternal comparison.) This happened despite the fact that the former, after having lost some farmland at age 15-29 acquired considerably more during age 30-44 than was lost earlier. Prolonged ill health of the head of household that lasted for nearly eight years, which cut down the work force/days and the high amount and duration of expenditure incurred, was the principal reason for the downslide. The household owns only 0.4 ha of farm land. It mainly subsists by means of wage labor of three of the four members of the household and selling of goats and pigs. H8, on the other hand, has prospered much based principally on the educational accomplishment of the head of household that made it possible for him to become a tenured school teacher (Figure 3). Earnings from international labor migration of his son helped as well. In addition, H8 has invested in farmland over the years, which aids subsistence and augments the capital value. That there has been no large lumpy expenditure has helped. H12, in turn, has gradually fallen into the 'very poor' category despite have passed high school and his training as a welder and a child health worker. Notwithstanding his age of 38 years, he lives with his old father not because he wishes to help the old man but because he has been sick himself through the years and derives benefits from the farmland his father owns. In addition, he has also benefitted from the 0.6 ha farmland his wife received as a dowry from her parents at the time of her wedding. H12, however, is run as a highly undiversified unit. Farming, most of it dry-land farming, is the only source of income that it has. Coupled with high and long-term medical expenses and the disability that prolonged sickness forces, plus the fact that two of the four members of the household are dependents, forced it off the middling status it once had. Undiversified dry land farming plus prolonged ill health plus dependents. H23, in contrast, and despite the fact that two of the four members are young dependents, has made it to the top category (Figure 3). To top it off, almost all of this was achieved during last 11 years. H23, it should be emphasized, had slid down to the 'very poor' category by the time the head of household was 30 years of age. It was within last 11 years that a huge leap to the top category was made. This achievement was principally attributable to a determined effort to make good on a previously aborted attempt to run a mill which refined and pressed paddy, wheat and oilseed. It also rents out a power tiller. The entrepreneurship had begun when the head of the household was living within the stem family. But it had ground to a halt due to dissatisfactions related to work sharing and to managerial problems. H23 owns 0.3 ha of farmland but has rented it out to a tenant. All efforts are geared to the expansion of the enterprise and to the education of the two young children.

The climb of the 'well-to-do' to the prosperous category has relied on a number of factors. Multiplicity of sources of income and occupational diversification—both at the individual and

household levels, apparently holds the key. 'Urban contact' is another. This includes having had school-level or higher education in urban locations and holding of regular wage/salaried jobs in such locations. It also includes more regular wage work, particularly skilled and semiskilled work, in urban areas. Internal or international remittance-earning job is another. Regular sale of farm, livestock and other household-made products in the urban market is still another. Households which cultivate fresh vegetables in irrigated farmland and sell it in the urban market are making good in terms of economic status, despite the fact that such initiatives are very small in scale. The essential point of urban contact is (a) multiplication of sources of income, (b) diversification of part of household labor away from 'traditional,' underproductive and small farms, (c) a consequent articulation of diverse MOGLs and sources of income that does not 'put all eggs in one production basket' and instead paves the way for production, consumption, savings, and investment smoothing and, finally, (d) gears the household and its members to a new, growingly dominant, season-neutral and more or less regular, and possibly higher-paying historical platter of occupations and sources of income. Several households (i.e. H3, H4, H9, H10, H17, and H18 share some of these attributes. In contrast, some other households (i.e. H29 and H30), despite the fact that they use to own much more farmland than most other households, have fallen back both on landholding and economic status. Lack of diversification and lack of 'urban contact' would seem to be primary reasons behind such outcomes. This finding contradicts the policy recommendations of Prenchusha (1999) who sees agriculture as playing a key role in the lives of rural population in Nepal and recommends land ownership, land quality improvement and agricultural production. It also largely contradicts Bhatta and Sharma (2006: 6) who emphasize prioritizing rural assets enhancement and human capital formation for poverty alleviation in Nepal. These recommendations are not wrong as they are incomplete and mis-prioritized.

It should be noted that the extent of household diversification has increased substantially across most households over the years. The mean number of occupations that households performed when the interviewees were 15 was 2.0. The figure increased to 2.5 by the time the interviewees were 30. By the time the interviewees were 45, the number of occupations a household took on had further increased to 2.9. To a large extent, households which had a low level of diversification either remained in stable poverty or were heading toward it. On the other hand, households which had a high level of household diversification remained well-to-do or prosperous or were heading toward these economic status categories. There were some households which were exceptions to this rule. The 'exceptional households' were marked by large landholding, family support, multiple earners and, in a couple of cases, a high level of education.

Finally, the uneven fall of three of the four once-prosperous households (H5 and H6) has behind it some common and uncommon reasons (Figure 4). H2 has slid down only one step on the ladder. Sickness, death, weddings, and schooling of young have forced it to use up the regular income and sell a small household as well, not the least because it now comprise of only two middle-aged members and a student who commutes to a city high school. H5, which began as the only and true landlord—which owned 50ha of farmland and several elephants—could not

inherit because of the conflict between his father and his stepmother. He did utilize an opportunity to become trained as a junior health worker and medicine dispenser which since became his only source of livelihood. But he also took to drinking early and became an alcoholic. But he turned sober six years ago, and his slide downward has been halted. H6, who is landless, began repairing watches late in life. He also married late. He now cares for a son who is partially disabled. His wife, however, is a resourceful lady who earns as a wage worker and who also is the local junior health worker.

A note on women and dowry

A note on sisters and women is in order here. Because we have focused on comparing brothers, and because we selected households on the basis of whether or not it contained one of a pair of brothers, we have unwittingly lost sight of an extremely important category, that of women. Even otherwise, women have generally been 'out of sight' in the PPP literature, with a couple of important exceptions. Quisumbing (2006), in an illuminating and powerful paper, focuses on the significance of intergenerational transfers in the creation of poverty and prosperity. She also discusses the very high significance of structural arrangements of lineality, post-marriage locality, etc., and the consequences of such structural arrangements for intergenerational transfers of assets and, by implication, for the specific nature of the MOGL women can or cannot pursue. Gender-related divergence has powerful implications for women's lives. They shape their identities, inheritance, marriage, nature of relationship with other members of the household—as well as the wider society, as well as their PPPs. In addition, such divergence has highly significant implications for the PPPs of a household. Kothari and Hulme (draft, 2003) also discuss how the pathways to escape poverty can be divergent and much more difficult for woman compared to men.

Notwithstanding, this is an area that almost all other investigators in the PPP framework have failed to confront. Remedying this limitation could have very important policy uses. But this is not all. Confronting this limitation would open up historical-comparative and discussion on what kinds of structures, at various levels of social organization, are friendly to which social groups. Knowledge of correspondence between specific structures and specific social categories, in turn, is germane to enhancing knowledge on the relationship between the nature of households and pathways to poverty and prosperity.

As far as Sonapur is concerned, and among very many other changes, there has been a substantial increase in both the incidence and scale of dowry. This is a dramatic reversal of the routine that was in wide practice 50 years ago. Among the numerically dominant ethnic groups in Sonapur, bride price was compulsory, although it was, most often, not large in scale. But the groom was expected to feel grateful for the bride and act out the gratitude through the lifetime of the bride's parents. Members of other ethnic groups in Sonapur also paid bride price at the time of wedding. None, even in the latter category, recalls ever having been obliged to offer a dowry to the groom's parents. In contrast, and for the present, we are obliged to ask: Has an increase in patrilineally owned productive and financial assets, e.g. farmland, more convertible assets, education and training, and mobility, most of which accrues to boys and men than girls

and women and which are individualized than corporatized, hurt women's relative standing? Have men-women gaps in schooling, mobility, labor migration, income, some of which are now subsiding and others growing, done so? Has frontier settlement in the Tarai since the 1960s valorized men than women? Does frontier settlement in other parts of the world in similar historical conditions share this outcome? In addition, expected lifetime earnings would appear to increasingly favor men over women. Could the increase in the incidence and scale of dowry be a 'response' to this change?

VI. Generations and history

There is an inevitable connection between history and generation. Generations concretize, embody, live, and act out history. It is through the succession of generations and through the transitions within, between and among generations that history is played out. Alternately, and from the agency point of view, it is successive generations of human beings that continually recreate history. C Wright Mills' edict that good Sociology—and, by extension, good social science—calls for an account in which history and biography mutually interpenetrate gains powerful traction here. Of course, in this instance, we have to extend the basic edict to imply also that good social science ought to allow historical, generational, and biographical accounts to interpenetrate one another. A generation can be seen as a point where history and individuals interact together.

An intergenerational focus can be seen as a companion to a longer time span description and explanation of divergent PPPs. While a narrow time span account of PPP can focus on PPPs within a lifetime, a longer time span account may best adopt an intergenerational frame of inquiry. But, once again, for a valid description and explanation of the PPP that each generation traverses, it is necessary that each of the generations is situated in a historical time and, as such, is equipped with a definite set of historical and structural opportunities and, inevitably, limitations.

An intergenerational focus is also a companion to the life history method as it is to a household-focused strategy of data generation and analysis. As noted, we begin our interview with a head of household by asking about the old days, the days when he was stepping on his youth, when he was 15 years old. We wish to know about his life history and in an informal way. We do not interrupt often, although we inevitably do so at times. But accounts of childhood, youth, middle age and so on, recited in a sequential, informal and unhurried manner, often possess the quality of telling an interesting story. The focus is on the lifetime of the respondent but we ask and learn about his father, his son as well as other member of his household. In doing so, we gain some information about the substantive nature of the historical time of his grandfather or father and that of the generation that is following him. That the center of the conversation is the household, and that the household often comprises of two or more generations, also buttresses the case for intergenerational inquiry.

The households heads selected belong to different age cohorts. This will make it possible to carry out a historical and generational analysis. That we selected households in which the head

was at least 30 years of age, which we did in order to ensure that all interviewees had passed at least one economic-status related data point beyond age 15, and that 21 of the 30 interviewees were 40 or more meant that most households had at least two working-age generations living together in a household. On the other hand, our cases do include some younger (those aged between 30 and 39) heads of households because we wanted to contrast older PPPs with the more recent PPPs.

It should be pointed out that the older generations are, as far as inheritance and bequests go, in a condition of structural bind. Because they operate within a convention and a legal system of partible inheritance and their sons have customary and legal claims over household assets, the older generation is obliged to allocate part of the assets to a son who decides to form a separate household. This often, although not always, happens when the son is getting married, particularly among the ethnic group dominant there, who adopt a neolocal system of residence. The inheritance rule works like this: If a household head has two sons, all household assets will, at one or more stages, be divided into three, one-third each for parents and the two brothers. (The brothers, upon the death of the parents, will divide the parental share.) This puts the old parents into a distinct disadvantage. They are growing old and infirm. In many instances, they cannot work the fields. They cannot, most often, choose new MOGL patterns. In such circumstances they opt out to live together with one of the sons who will exercise a de facto control over the share of the parents. Sometimes this works out well enough. At others, this leads to financial, relational and other problems. A number of elderly persons in the settlements were reported to be estranged from their adult sons. Their daily necessities, it was reported, often remained unfulfilled. Some were observed to have possibly serious emotional problems. It was noted that these elderly persons had been struck by 'brain sicknesses'. Surely, the use of marijuana was reported to be relatively high in the settlement, particularly among the elderly. It is also possible that the customary love for pig's meat may, in some instances, have led to tape-worm diseases. These are mere locally reported possibilities, no more; and we, as social scientists, can merely recount the local reports. It does appear, however, that some of the 'brain sickness' may be related to family conflict and loss of belonging with ones sons due to the system of partible inheritance.

Let us come back to the idea of structural bind of the older generation. The older generation seeks to postpone bequests and inheritance to the younger generation. This is clear from the fact that what a son inherits is very often de facto and not de jure until the parents reach a very old age or die. Relinquishing rights to one's property legally and completely is not relished. But then one cannot remain without giving a son his due, given the customs and the law, in addition to the love one has for one's son, daughter in law and, above all, one's grand children. Everything works out well sometimes. Sometimes it does not. When it does not, the elderly pass through a pathway which rapidly leads them to poverty.

It is important to note that the current older generation is one which has invested much raising the younger generation. This relates particularly to their schooling and relatively urban and 'modern' upbringing. Members of the older generation were treated as producers during an

early age by their parents. Studies in Bangladesh have shown that children started to engage in productive activities when they were 8-9 years of age and took on more adult-like productive roles—and net producers—by the time they were 13-15. By 17-18, approximately, their lifetime production exceeded their lifetime consumption. A child, in essence, was mainly a productive asset and worker. This is much less the case among the younger generation now. In most households, children remain consumers for far longer than was the case just 20 years ago. In addition to direct investment on children that households make, there is also the dimension of high opportunity cost of raising ‘unproductive’ children. The question that the older generation now faces, then, is this: Will the historically much larger investment they have made on their children bring in returns? And will their children share the returns with them? The answer to both the questions, as of now, remains uncertain and highly conditional. The limited evidence yet shows that only some of the ‘well invested’ children have been able to benefit from the ‘new platter’. These children have helped parents materially when the parents have been in serious need. But most have not helped materially on a regular basis, not the least because they have to tend their own household. Emotionally, the record appears mixed. In times of stress, some of the children have come to the rescue of their parents. Some others, however, and in part because they live far away, have been absent through the stressful times.

Table 2. Thirteen major transitions which have reshaped poverty-prosperity pathways of households in Sonapur during last 60 years

| | | |
|----|---|--------------------|
| A. | Abolition of tax-free regime of landownership, nationalization of forest ownership and malaria control initiative by government, with the latter assisted by international agencies | 1956- |
| B. | Forest clearance; migration from Hills in Nepal and from adjoining settlements in India; expansion of settlement, households and farmland; changes in cropping pattern | 1956-1990 |
| C. | Constriction of irrigation ditches, with government-international agency collaboration, which irrigated one-half of the farmland in the settlement; non-monsoon season cropping rendered possible; increase in productivity; further changes in cropping pattern; rapid escalation of price of farmland | 1965- |
| D. | Sale of paddy, pulses, and goat, ducks, chicken locally, in Rangeli (an old nearby town) and Biratnagar | 1950s- |
| E. | Off-farm job more accessible in nearby Biratnagar and other towns in vicinity | 1960- |
| F. | Expanded government investment in schools, health services(mainly in continuing control of malaria and other communicable diseases, vaccinations and primary health counseling and care), irrigation, communication; these initiatives have led to highly important beneficial effects in controlling illiteracy, and morbidity and mortality and fertility | 1950s-1960s-1990s- |
| G. | Implementation of tenant-farmer friendly laws under which a tenant farmer was entitled to one-fourth of the land tilled; the ratio was increased to 50 percent; rules governing tenancy, during last 10 years, have become somewhat uncertain | 1964-1990-1999- |
| H. | Expanded labor migration and income-earning opportunities, successively, to north and northwest India, Kathmandu and others towns in Nepal and, increasingly to West Asia and Southeast Asia; smaller-scale labor migration to northeast Asia and to Europe | 1960-1980-1995- |
| I. | Expanded central government assistance to local governments and direct small-scale central government welfare assistance to senior citizens, Dalits, widows and disabled | 1995- |

| | | |
|----|--|------------|
| J. | Increase in diversification of cropping and creation of, and access to, 'modern' opportunities, e.g. running of tea shops and other retail business, pharmacy, rice-flour-oil mills and iron implements, bicycle, radio, etc, repair shops | 1980-2000- |
| K. | Large-scale (approx 100-150 workers/day) employment, except during the rainy season, in sand extraction along the banks of a river that runs through the settlement; the sand is largely consumed by the construction industry in Biratnagar; a substantial amount of royalty flows from the sand extraction industry to the local government which uses it for local welfare promotion | 2006- |
| L. | Cultivation of green vegetables and other relatively perishable crops which readily find a market locally and in Biratnagar | 1997- |
| M. | Acquisition of new sets of capabilities among the young; of these, general educational and vocational schooling at high school and college levels are probably the most important; access to media also provides important information and knowledge; in addition, travel to and work experience in towns and cities within and outside of the country broaden outlooks, provide a new set of values and impart new sets of skill; this transition has not yet found adequate job and income outlets yet; but if the economy and the platter of livelihood diversifies grows more rapidly, this last transition could generate novel MOGLs and PPPs for this generation and the next. Should the economy and urban connections with Biratnagar grow more dense, the capital value of the farmland in Sonapur will grow as well, as it has along settlements immediately beyond the boundaries of the city. | 1985-2000- |

We have earlier discussed the significance of history and the changing historical platter of occupations and sources of income and, therefore, for the pathways to poverty and prosperity. We have also made note, in this and the preceding sections, of the changes on the historical platter that were and are taking shape in Sonapur. We can now describe and account for such changes more concretely and in greater detail.

A historical survey covering the past six decades, carried out with the help of documents, informants in the settlement, and Dhakal (2007) shows that the historical platter of MOGL and the potential universe of poverty and prosperity pathways have changes considerably during the period (Table 2).

All transitions exert divergent impact on the PPPs of diverse social groups. This is a powerful reminder that historical-structural conditions and processes at the macro and meso levels, and not merely settlement, household and individual level endowment or agency shapes PPPs. These transitions exert divergent impacts on settlements, various categories of landowners and the landless, Dalits and non-Dalits, men and women, households—including those poor and prosperous and less diversified and more diversified, generations, individuals, etc. differently.

If Transitions A-G led some of the household heads aged 45 and above to prosperity, the rest of the transitions have led some of the younger heads of household to prosperity. Many of the household that are the most well off--or hold good prospects for future—are those which have articulated the old and the new elements of the platter and have etched different PP pathways have leveraged positive A-G transitions to make gains on the rest of the transitions. Some

successful households have both leveraged their success at Transitions A-G *and* sought to invest further in Transition A, i.e. acquisition of additional farmland. As noted, H1 and H2, have been relatively successful at this leveraging. H29 and 30, on the other hand, are gaining from newer transitions even as they are losing out on Transition A because they are gradually selling off their farmland. H29 and H30, in this sense, have successfully leveraged but failed to mutually articulate the old and the new sets of MOGLs. H23, in turn, is a 'modernist,' who seeks to maximize his gains from the newer elements in the MOGL while closing himself off from the older elements. He is not a diversifier either. He has chosen the new in lieu of the old. He has benefitted from it as well. But absence of diversification is riskier, in a variety of ways, than its presence. The growth and sustainability of the enterprise initiated by H23 is primarily contingent on growth of productivity of food grains and oilseeds. It is also contingent on the ability to compete against other similar enterprises and a host of other conditions.

How households are able to articulate different elements of the old and new platters—and how they are constrained from articulating a forward-looking platter—is crucial to their present and future wellbeing. The historically differentiated platters of MOGL and associated PPPs have, thus, been both shifting and supplementing. On the other hand, there are some households which made high gains on Transitions A-G and are living off it. They may slip into poverty within a few years. On the other hand, there are also household heads between 30-44, who are living off the A-G gains made by their parents but who, having been part of a 'lost generation' who have made no additional gain yet have, nevertheless, been creating conditions where their children, i.e. the grandchildren of those who made good by capitalizing on Transitions A-G, can potentially make gains from the newer set of transitions (e.g. H29, H30). In any case, households which are prospering have, in general, have been successful in seamlessly, although often fully deliberately, articulating together 'old' and 'new' pathways. Some households that had no foothold on Transitions A-G are also prospering, even if slowly, by fully engaging with Transitions H-M, e.g. households which engage in agricultural labor during the peak agricultural season, extract sand along the banks of the local river, operate tea and/or liquor shops, run repair shops, sell pigs and pig meat in market stalls and during fairs in and around the larger Sonapur, engage in labor migration, loan cash out on interest, sell green vegetables, etc. Skilled work, e.g. masonry, carpentry, wiring, repairing, etc., bring in substantial income when such jobs are in demand. Similarly, there is substantial income to be made from mills, renting water pumping sets, threshers, etc. Substantial income accrues from running tea and liquor shops as well.

But none of these equals the income to be had from regular salaried jobs, e.g. a permanent laboring job at a factory. The prosperity of the three school teachers interviewed is enough indication that they very probably earn the highest income among the interviewees. Success in these endeavors, even at of the level of a high school teacher, however, does not imply that they could rival the medium and large scale farmers in *property* holdings as such. The price of farmland is increasing fairly rapidly and income and savings generated through most other sources will not add up to the value of the landed property. But households that are fairly

diversified in terms of number of occupations and sources of income are prospering compared both to their past status and their neighbors.

There can be little doubt that the larger land holders are potentially better poised to leverage Transitions A-G in order to gain from Transitions H-M and to mutually articulate the two transitions and to diversify. Landholding can be used both to consumptive and investment use. A young person would stand a much better chance at making gains through Transitions H-M if his parents were 'well heeled' in relation to Transitions A-G. But it is also a fact that the new generation is much better placed now to escape from poverty even without ownership of farmland than was the case for their parents and grandparents. The shift in the historical platter has made this possible. Future economic expansion and diversification at local, meso, and macro levels will make this even more possible even as a squeeze on expansion and diversification will tie up households more closely with the assets they currently utilize.

Fixed and corporatized versus individualized and mobile assets and PPP

Transitions H-M favor the younger compared to the older generation. These transitions are also platformed upon much more individualized and mobile assets, e.g., labor power, knowledge, skill, capital, initiative. Individualized and mobile assets, in contrast to assets which are fixed and corporatized at the household level, could theoretically be expected to be much less tied up with the sustainability of a household, the nature of relationships it comprises and, indeed, to the practice of a relatively stable family, community, and society. Individualized and mobile assets could be expected to render the household much more fragile than had been the case when assets were largely fixed, landed, and relatively immobile. An individual, in this 'rational choice' view, would wish to pool as little resource and income as possible to run a household (or a friendship, and so on) as he could get by with. One could well make the argument that the individualized and mobile assets are correlates, if not foundations, of capitalist 'modern' societies.

One way of testing of whether fixed and corporatized assets keep a household relatively intact and, as a corollary, whether individualized and mobile assets render a household's integrity fragile and vulnerable is by comparing the age of interviewees, who ranged between the landless and relatively large land holders, at the time they split from the stem household and formed a new one. The expectation would be that interviewees from landless and near-landless households would have set up new and independent households substantially earlier than interviewees from household with larger holdings.

The empirical data shows that, interviewees from landless and near-landless households did indeed form new households much earlier compared to interviewees from households with large holdings (Table 3).

Table 3. Mean age of heads of household at the time they set up a new household

| Status of landownership of stem household when heads of household were 16 years of age | Range of age at which new household formed | Mean age at formation of new household |
|--|--|--|
| Six heads of landless and near-landless households | 19-26 | 22.0 |
| Four heads of largest-land holding households | 25-40 | 29.5 |

The data is meager and therefore ought to be tested on representative and larger data sets, e.g. the NLSS. What it suggests is that young men in households which own no corporate and fixed assets (i.e. H12, H13, H25 H26, H27, H28) are much less attached to the stem household compared to young men who are from households with considerable corporatized and fixed assets. Continued attachment with stem households, in such a condition, would almost inevitably push them to a path to poverty. Not only would they be likely to be poor but the stem household may become poorer as well because of their continued stay there. Young men from households which owned considerable landed assets (H1, H2, H5, H10) when the young men were 16, on the other hand, are likely to remain attached to the stem household for much longer. It probably makes sense for them to live within the stem household longer because they can work the assets and build further credentials for the inheritance of the asset. It is quite possible also that such stem households also create conditions within which the household as a whole benefits from the longer stay of the young males within the stem household.

Data for the poorest households also suggests that young men from landless or near-leadless stem households but with marketable skills split even earlier than young men from similar households with no specific skill to sell. Head of H26 split from his landless stem family at 19 by which time he was learning some mechanical skills in a factory. This skill has served him well on his path to relative prosperity. So also with H25. The two split from landless parents at ages 24 and 22, respectively, capitalized on their skill, and escaped poverty. H13 split from a near-landless household when 21. He became extraordinarily successful for a variety of reasons described earlier.

The case of H12, another interviewee from a landless household, is somewhat different. He has trudged through the path of poverty through his life. He split when he was 26. Actually, he and his parents split up from his brothers. His father continues to live with him. He has had some training in child health promotion as well as welding. But he has derived little benefit from his skill training primarily because of his protracted ill health. His interminable stay in the 'poverty trap' also has to do with his father's ill health and disability.

This takes us to another theoretical possibility: If young men in the new generation—and the generations to come—are equipped with individualized assets and mobile skills and the assets and skills are marketable, they will valorize the old stem-household assets less and less. Nor is this a hypothetical possibility. The new historical platter, much more than the old one, prizes and leads to individualized and mobile assets. In such a context, and regardless of their own prosperity, households in the older generation, more and more, may be left to fend for

themselves because decreasing attachment with stem-household assets may translate in decreased attachment with the older generation, including parents. Should that happen, a substantial proportion of the older generation may slide into poverty for lack of labor to work the assets as well as for lack of care. Combined with the predicament that the elderly face due to the regime of partible inheritance discussed earlier *and* the shift in the historical platter which is in favor of the younger generation and individualized and mobile assets, the elderly may, face a bleaker future than generally expected. While a lack of emergence of successively new historical platters will hurt the young, making property rights impartible and provisioning for social security will stop the downslide of a large section of the elderly to poverty.

VII. Fraternal trajectories

The final departure the present study makes is one of comparison between brothers. The intention here is to compare the PPPs of individuals who start out the race to poverty or prosperity from the same or nearly-same endowments and constraints. Brothers, more than any other pairs, fit this condition nicely. Fraternal comparison, in principle, is only second to the psychologists' comparative studies of twins, in terms of its potential for 'controllability' and natural experimentation. (See below, however.)

PPP studies often exercise statistical control against variations in assets and other endowments by selecting a group of households which belongs to the poor category and another group which belongs to the not-poor category at the time the households in the respective groups begin their further journey along the PPPs. Then, it has been a matter of convention in the PPP literature to track such households to a second data point a few years later and to compare the lack of transition or transition of the two sets of households across the 'poor' and 'not poor' divides. The 'causes' behind the non-transition or transition of the households over the two (and rarely three) data points are then discussed and policy implications discussed.

This paper exercises control in a different and, hopefully, more refined manner. The attempt here has been to track and compare pairs of brothers who are likely to be initially highly similar to each other at the initial point because they grow up in a given household with a given endowment, have the same set of parents and can, in general, be expected to be brought up under similar circumstances and manners. The 15 pairs of brothers we selected were from the 30 households we generated the information for this section of the write up.

However, a series of caveats are in order. An interviewed respondent often had more than one brother. (Indeed, the number of brothers an interviewee had ranged from 1 to 5 and the mean number of brothers was 3.6.) A few of these brothers, however, were no more. Some others were living at a rather distant location ranging from half-a-day of walk to hours of air travel. The rest resided in the settlement, some in the vicinity and the rest at a relative distance. Because we did not wish to risk 'fraternal attrition,' i.e. the likelihood that a potential interviewee's brother may not be available for interview during the period of our short fieldwork, in which case the accounts of the person we did interview would be 'wasted,' we focused on a pair of brothers both of whom would be available for interview. Further, we decided to compare only

two of the brothers even in cases where more than two lived in the vicinity. This was done both to ensure uniformity of two-brother comparison as also to minimize the chances of 'wastage'. Second, we selected a pair of brothers in the immediate vicinity because it was possible to seek assent, as well as arrange a time slot, for an interview with both of the brothers. On occasions, a research assistant interviewed one of a pair of brothers when the researcher was interviewing the other. We learnt to do so after learning from a couple of 'wastages'. Third, so that the 'demographic/household cycle' does not create much of the divergence in the MOGL and PPP among the interviewed brothers, we also decided to select brothers whose age difference was 15 years or lower. The range of age difference between the interviewed brothers was 1 to 15 years. The mean difference in the age of the pairs of brothers was 7.1 years.

Whatever the reason and the branching-off point for the divergence, that we zeroed in on pairs of brothers who lived in the vicinity probably has a substantial conservative implication for divergences in MOGLs and PPPs between brothers, which may well underestimate the 'true' extent of divergence among them through their lifetimes. The extent of underestimation may progressively increase as the age of the brothers advances and as they give birth to and incorporate new members in their households, as their households split, and so on. Brothers residing at different locations are also likely to diverge with respect to the acquisition or loss of productive assets at different rates. They may, partly in consequence, have fewer or more children and other dependents which may have some bearing on their poverty-prosperity pathways. In addition, children of such pairs of brothers may also have fewer or more children. Brothers who live close by, on the other hand, are much more likely to be similar to each other in both MOGL and PP track they follow through their lives. This is likely to happen because they—and other members of their household—are likely to respond to similar elements in the MOGL platter.

That we focus on brothers living in the vicinity, in essence, may underestimate, misrepresent and partially hide the true nature and scale of historical transitions in both MOGL and PPP. In addition, the nature and scale of historical transition will be misrepresented and underestimated in cases where an entire household, and *all* the brothers there, move out of the settlement and are, as a result, excluded from our cases. What does this exclusion imply? This implies that a household which might have taken a novel and distinct PPP has been, as it were, hidden out from our purview and missed out from the empirical dataset. The nature of the transition, which has taken out the household away from the settlement, most probably for reasons related to MOGL and PPP, has been left uncovered and the nature and scale of the transition missed out. In addition, the exclusion of a brother who does not reside in the vicinity or of households and brothers who have left the settlement will also lead to a measure of mis-assessment of the relative significance of some specific pathways. In particular, the significance of non-localized, non-rural and non-agricultural PPPs is likely to be 'underestimated' simply because the design excluded households which moved off to other, particularly urban locations and for non-agricultural pursuits. On the other hand, although much less likely, that a few households which were previously urban and non-agricultural may, having failed to make a living, have moved to rural areas. In such a case the potential significance of the rural and

agricultural to poverty reduction and prosperity promotion may be underestimated as well. Future studies should take care to avoid such limitations.

Divergence will be marked, even within the short run, if one brother, out of a pair, moves to an urban location, engages in a regular 'urban' job (even a low-paid but regular job) or starts an enterprise, and/or invests some of the returns on procuring productive assets for his household and its members. One of a pair of brothers who took up international labor migration may have a different PP trajectory than the other brother who tends to 'traditional' and/or have meager off-farm opportunities for labor, enterprise, and so on. The divergence will be sharp particularly if the capital value of the asset rises or goes down sharply.

Furthermore, brothers who currently reside in different locations may have been divergently endowed even while living together in the stem household. It may be that a brother who has moved out did so precisely or partly because he was substantially divergently endowed to begin with. It may be that one of the brothers grew up during a period when his household was in a protracted low point of the poverty-prosperity pathway, i.e. in the so-called 'poverty trap,' because of a crisis or its aftermath while the other brother grew up during protracted household prosperity. It may be that one brother grew up during a period when diversification was 'in the air' while the other grew up during a period when one-occupation or one-income households were modal. It may be that one brother grew up at a time when there was a high work demand in the household and could not get through the school while the other could engage in his schooling unencumbered by household tasks. It may also be that one brother was enrolled in a higher-quality private school while the other one went to the lower-quality public school. It may be that one brother, usually the older one, had started to earn an income by the time the other, younger brother asked and received a loan from the older brother, and began to take a divergent PPP by making profits from the investment.

Finally, it should be noted that brothers do not split from a stem household and form new households at the same time or age. Some split early on when the stem household had been relatively poor even as some others might stick on and split when the household becomes relatively well off. It is also possible that those who split at an early age, depending upon whether or not they are able to access 'modern' elements of the MOGL platter, may lead a life which sees more 'eventful' lives in terms of poverty-prosperity transition than those who live a relatively staid life with fewer poverty-prosperity transitions. There are, thus, many conditions why 'fraternal control' and comparison may not be perfect.

Yet, there is no denying that fraternal comparisons can be insightful. In the following we shall carry out two sets of brief fraternal comparisons. We shall compare brothers who followed a more or less similar trajectory *and* between brothers whose poverty-prosperity trajectories diverged substantially. We shall, in particular, see whether occupational diversification and multiplicity of sources of income, landownership status, and number of earners in household made a salient impact on this divergence. We shall also attempt to find out if there is more or less divergence among the older and the younger generations. To the extent that there is

divergence between the generations, we shall, in addition, attempt to identify factors which might have lead to it.

Brothers with similar trajectory

Nine of the 15 pair of brothers interviewed have followed similar trajectory, i.e. remained fairly stable, rising or falling *together* not more than one step in the five-step economic-status ‘ladder’ (i.e. H1 and H2, H3 and H4, H9 and H10, H15 and H16, H17 and H18, H19 and H20, H29 and H30), moved towards prosperity *together* (i.e. H27 and H28) or slid toward poverty *together* (i.e. H5 and H6).

Table 4. Brothers in convergent and divergent paths to poverty and prosperity

| | Number |
|---|--------|
| Pairs of brothers walking convergent paths | 9 |
| Pairs in convergent and stable paths | 7 |
| Pairs in convergent paths toward poverty | 1 |
| Pairs in convergent paths toward prosperity | 1 |
| Pairs of brothers walking divergent paths | 6 |
| Total number of pairs of brothers | 15 |

That as many as seven out of 15 pairs of brothers traverse poverty-prosperity pathways in a *stable* and ‘convergent’ manner has to do, in a powerful and systemic way, with the nature of the structure of production and employment as well as the nature of specific macro institutions. The stable and convergent paths that pairs of brothers traverse has to do, to a major extent, with the relatively stable nature of agricultural—as against other types of—production and the high ratio of employment in agriculture (which, nationally, occupies about two-thirds of the labor force despite the fact that it contributes only one-third of the GDP). It also has to do, again in a major way, with rules and practices of inheritance of assets. Fraternal pathways could be expected to converge much closely in a society which keeps the rule of ‘equal inheritance’ among sons compared to states and societies which practice primogeniture or ultimogeniture. Universalistic standards of schooling, healthcare, social welfare, etc. would also tend to suppress potential divergence between brothers, as they would among the population in general.

The high significance of inherited farm ownership, thus, implies a relatively long term convergence between brothers with respect to their poverty-prosperity pathways. Convergent pathways among brothers could also be expected where rural but nonagricultural occupations were ‘inherited’ as they used to be in most parts of the world till the 18th century and as it largely used to be in South Asia right till the 1960s. In fact, such ‘inheritance’ continues to be salient among some segments of the population, e.g. the Dalits who work as tailors, leather workers, iron smiths, etc., as well as the Brahmin priests. In the settlement studied, however, the salience of ‘inherited occupation’ is limited to two Dalit brothers.

It must also be noted, as implied earlier, that the magnitude of ‘convergent brotherhood’ may, to some extent, be an artifact of the exclusion of brothers who did not reside in the settlement or the immediate vicinity. Pairs of brothers one of whom resided outside the settlement and the immediate vicinity, as discussed, may be much more likely to follow a divergent poverty-prosperity pathway compared to those brothers who do not.

Convergent pathways between brothers, however, do not necessarily imply that brothers own and work the same set of assets. The assets initially inherited are, by and large, and for most brothers, of the same nature and quality. Over the years, brothers and other members of their households, even while working the inherited assets, may engage with additional and/or alternative occupations and sources of income, which, nonetheless, and at the aggregate level, produces a convergent walk along the poverty-prosperity pathway. That is, diversity of occupation and sources of income does not necessarily imply a divergent poverty-prosperity trajectory. Convergent PPPs are often fashioned out of diverse modes of generation of livelihood. (The first of the pair i.e. 1, 3, 5, in the pair 1-2, 3-4, and 5-6, (is the older one.)

A couple of pairs of brothers have fashioned and maintained stable and long-term trajectory to *prosperity* based on fairly large-sized farmland (H1 and H2) (Figure 5). But, then, one of the pair has made it good on the basis of a high level of household diversification and a very small-sized family made up of adults as well as an absence of chronic illness and disability in the household. Assistance from grown-up sons who are employed gainfully in or out of the settlement has also been an alternate route to stable prosperity. On the other hand, there are two pairs of brothers (i.e. H3 and H4) who have fashioned their prosperous or well-to-do status based not on ownership of large-sized farmland but largely on the basis of very high level of household diversification (Figure 6). Commercial dairying, more conventional farming, renting oxen and other farm implements out, running tea shop, international labor migration, accessing regular employment as a teacher, wage worker, etc., have been the key components of this diversification.

Note that household diversification and having multiple earners in a household are not the same. A household has multiple earners when it has, illustratively, several members working on the family farm. But household diversification entails that its members are holding different occupations and/or that a single member holds multiple seasonal or part-time jobs.

There are also a couple of brothers who have remained in the middling category in a stable manner based on a modest level of diversification and a modestly sized farmland, i.e. H15, H16 (Figure 7A) and H25, H26 (Figure 7B). There are, as always, variations here as well. Size of farmland owned and extent of diversification are not substitutes in the case of most households. For rapid scaling up, diversification is holds the key. But a substantially-sized farmland is often an insurance against poverty. And then there are other somewhat substitutable features: number of workers in household, absence or presence of chronically sick and/or disabled member in

Figure 5. Brothers in long-term trajectory of prosperity platformed on large farm holding

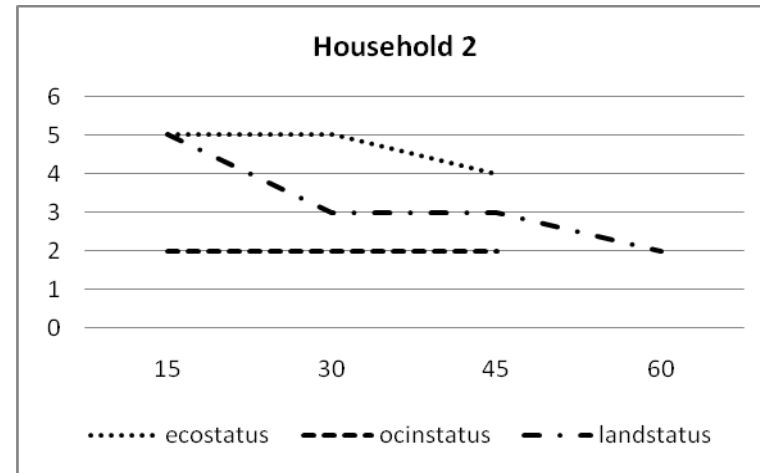
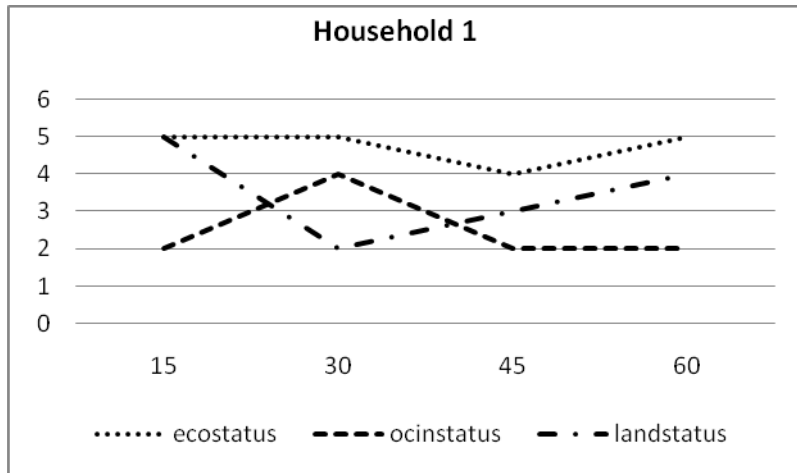


Figure 6. Brothers newly in a trajectory of prosperity based on intense diversification

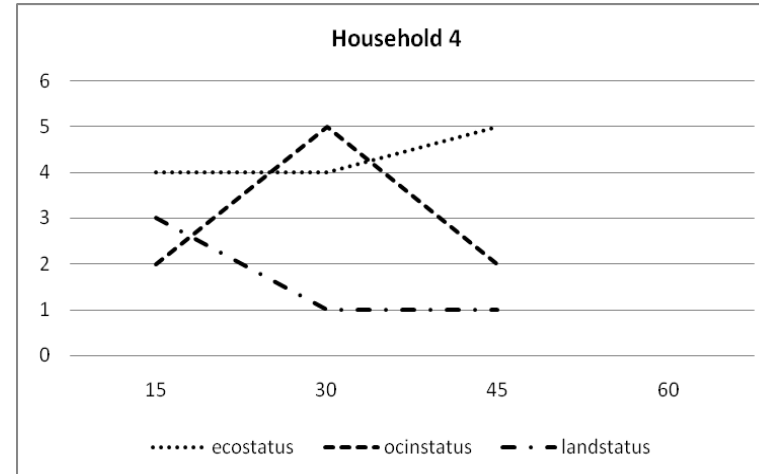
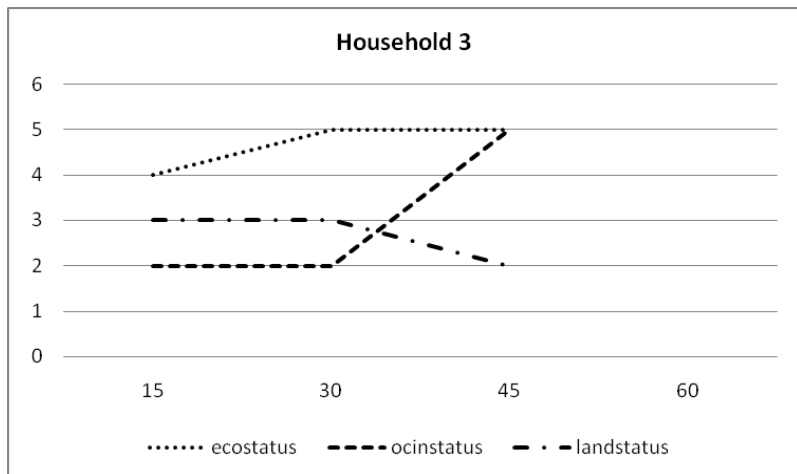


Figure 7A. Brothers in middling economic status based on modest farm land on modest level of diversification

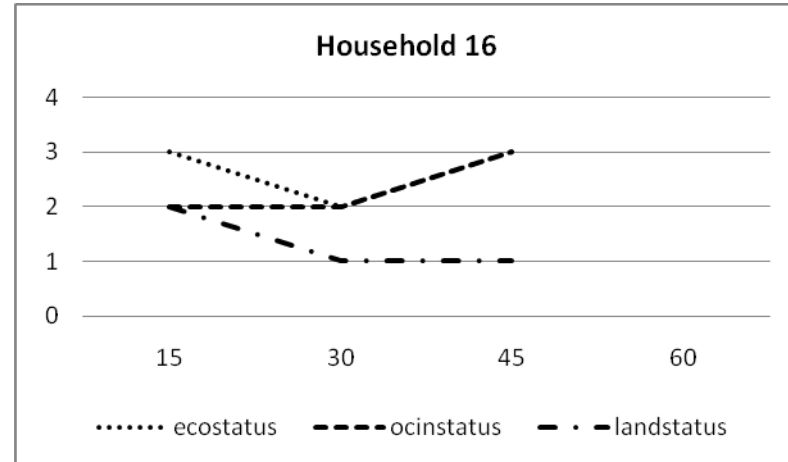
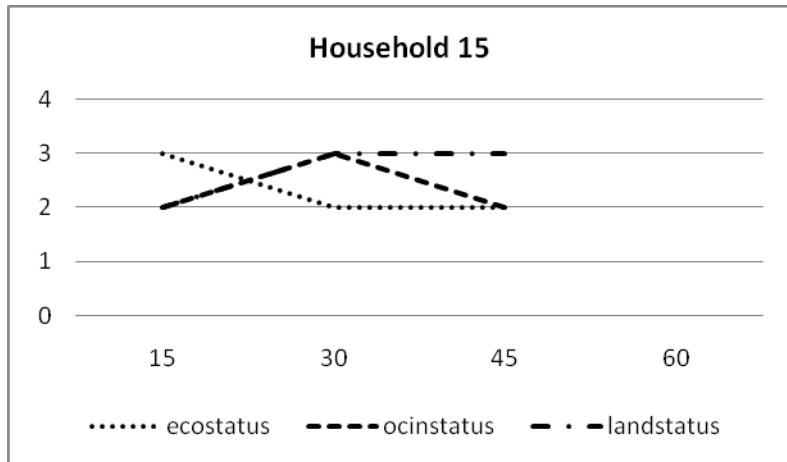
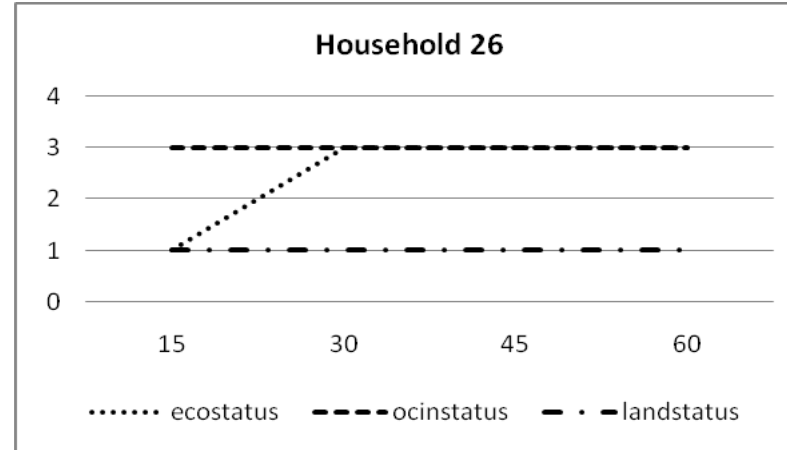
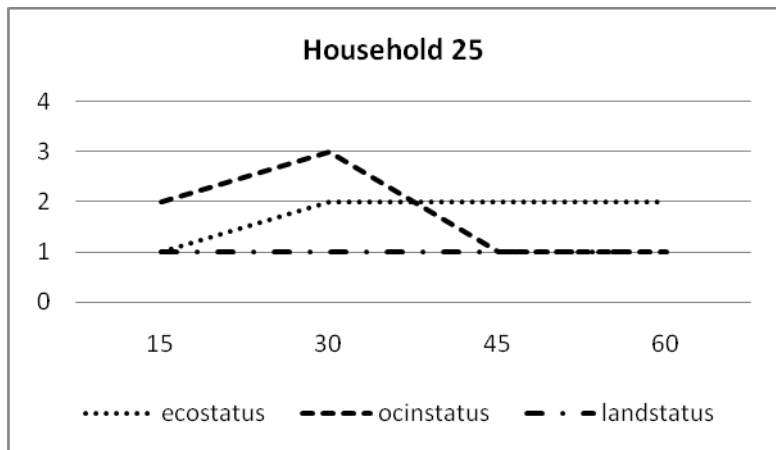


Figure 7B. Brothers in middling economic status based on modest farm land on modest level of diversification



household, multiple lumpy expenditures, which are usually incurred during wedding rituals, accidents, etc., within a short span of 1-3 years.

There is a pair of brothers which has escaped poverty together (i.e. H27 and H28). They have both been able to walk this path platformed largely on diversification. It is important to note that these two households, not the least because the couples involved are young and their children have not moved out, belong to only a few which have very high dependency ratios. The households are climbing out of poverty despite a high dependency ratio. It is notable also that the households are landless. It is this landlessness, and the fact that the adult members there both 'inherited' and are plying and upgrading a set of nonagricultural skills which are increasingly in demand in a changing settlement, that they have been able to escape poverty. Clearly, in this case, fraternal convergence is based on 'inherited skills,' much like a pair of brothers maintaining a stable status based on inherited farmland. In this case, however, the brothers have been able, possibly in consort, to upgrade their skills as well as their professional material base.

There are two pairs which slid toward poverty together, i.e. H5, H6 (Figure 8A) and H29, H30 (Figure 8B). The first pair, which was the most prosperous of all the pairs, and who were members of the only true landlord household in the settlement, when 15 years' of age, was suddenly thrust into poverty due to domestic and legal conflict which rendered them landless. The older brother, however, became a junior health worker and ran a small pharmacy shop which potentially could have put him to a path to prosperity. But, till recently, his alcoholic nature did not allow him to really climb out of poverty. The other brother, with the help of his wife, has recently, and at a late age, begun to diversify. But climbing out of poverty has not become yet possible. Brothers in the other pair, who belonged to a large land holding household, have gradually become poorer over the years. Both of them have sold a considerable portion of farmland they used to own. The principal reason for this slide is absence of diversification. There are additional household-specific reasons as well. The older brother valorizes education and has decided that he will spend as required on the schooling of his daughters. This also means that he has to pay wage workers since he wants to keep his daughters busy with their schooling and education. There is evidently a case to be made here his expenses will subside once his daughters' complete their schooling and, possibly, start to earn. The condition and prospects of the younger brother are darker. He has considerable direct and indirect costs to bear because of chronic ill health of his mother who lives separately and by herself.

Brothers with dissimilar trajectory

It is more interesting, and possibly more enlightening, to describe and interpret life histories of brothers who have traversed a divergent trajectory since they began their journey from the 'same point' at the age of 15 (Table 5). Six of the 15 pair of brothers interviewed diverged in their respective poverty-prosperity pathways considerably, with one of a pair rising or falling two or more steps in the economic status ladder (i.e. H7 and H8, H11 and H12, H13 and H14, H21 and H22, H23 and H24, H25 and H26). It should be noted that this is a conservative

Figure 8A. Brothers which slide down to poverty

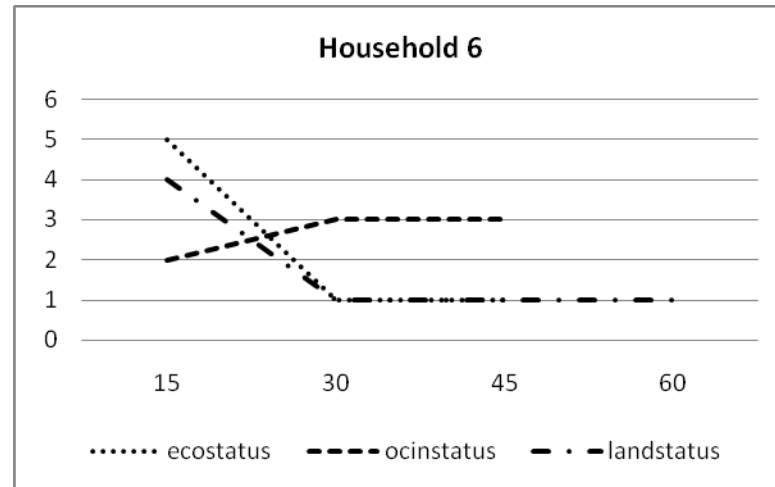
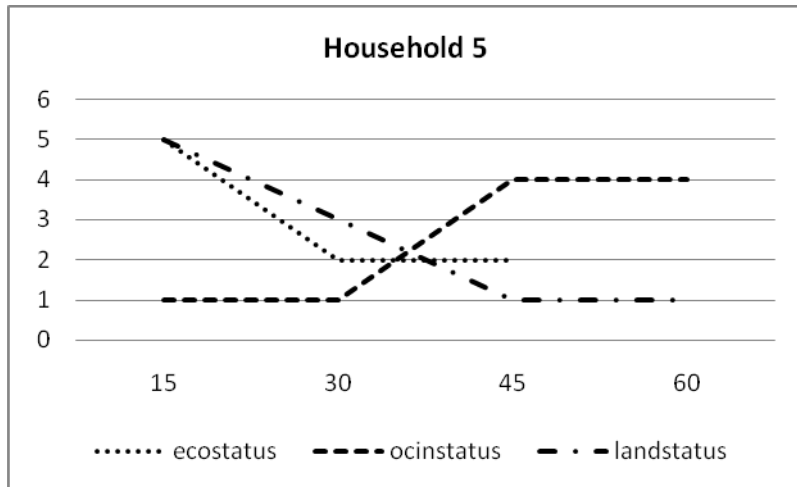
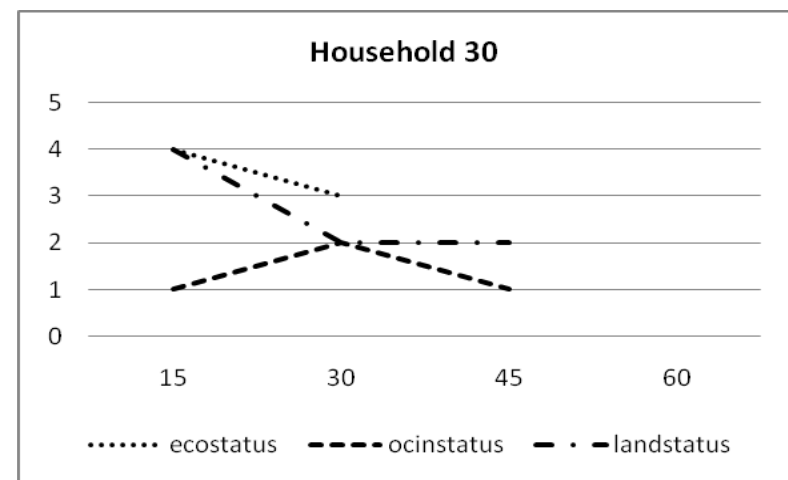
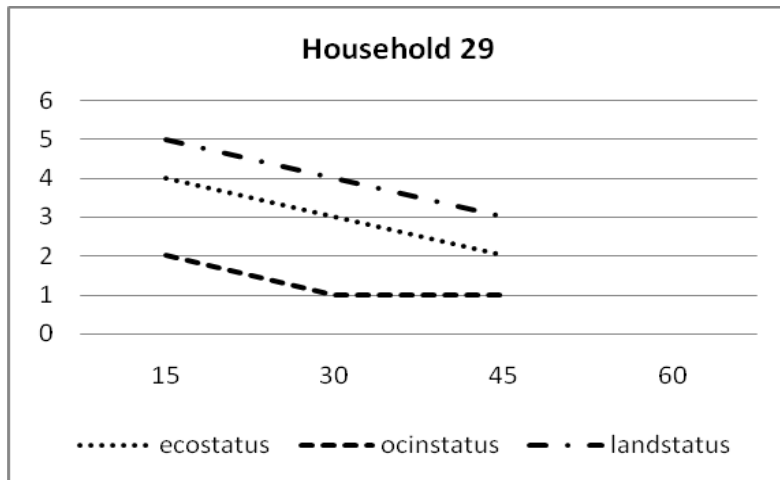


Figure 8B. Brothers which slid down to poverty



measure of fraternal divergence inasmuch as a brotherly pair, in which one of the brothers does not reside in the settlement or immediate vicinity, and is likely to diverge to a much larger extent than brothers both of whom reside within the settlement, has been excluded from the cases studied.

Table 5. Household-level comparison between ‘divergent’ brothers’ poverty-prosperity trajectory

| Household | Nature of poverty-prosperity trajectory | Factors underlying trajectory |
|-----------|--|---|
| H7 | Gradual slide from middling to very poor | Low diversification; head of household chronically sick; substantial rented-in farmland |
| H8 | Gradual rise from middling to prosperous | College graduate; high school teacher; international labor migration of son; small holder |
| H11 | Late-period rise from middling to well-to-do | High school graduate; primary school teacher; high diversification; substantial land holding |
| H12 | Gradual slide from middling to very poor | No diversification despite skill; substantial own and rented-in farmland; two, out of four, members of household chronically sick |
| H13 | Gradual rise from poor to prosperous | Very high diversification; sizable farmland |
| H14 | Rise from middling to well-to-do and slide to middling again | Small holder; quit regular job due to sickness that lasted 10 years; small holder |
| H21 | Late-period rise from poor to well-to-do | Middle diversification; sizable own and rented-in farmland, son in international labor for 4 years |
| H22 | Middling status throughout | Middle diversification; sizable own and rented-in farmland; vegetable farming during late period |
| H23 | Fall from middling to very poor and rise again to prosperous | Almost complete shift to nonagricultural occupation; high school graduate; wife has passed Grade 10 |
| H24 | Slide from middling to poor | Near landless; basic training in motor repair but no employment; wife works for wages and runs a small retail store; small holder |
| H25 | Early rise from very poor to poor and no change thereafter | Largely a tenant farmer; rents out plough oxen; large medical expenses early on for both parents; |
| H26 | Early rise from very poor to middling and no change thereafter | Largely a tenant farmer except recently; part-time mason |

A review of the data shows one fundamental attribute of those pairs of brothers who have diverged in economic status since they were 15 years old. Only one of the 12 ‘divergent brothers’ currently owns 4ha or more of farmland, the largest ownership category. A second one owns 0.10-0.99ha. The rest, i.e. ten of the 12 brothers, are landless or near-landless (i.e. those owning 0.1 ha or less). Almost all 30 households own much less farmland than they used to. But 7 of the 18 ‘convergent brothers’ own more farmland than any of the ‘divergent brothers’. Landlessness, then, is a singular feature which leads to divergence among once ‘similarly endowed’ brothers. In other words, inherited farmland has been the singular feature which has kept brothers convergent, i.e. walking a stable and similar trajectory vis-à-vis poverty

and prosperity. The implication, of course, is that once the relative significance of inherited farmland is lowered, either by means of a diminishing size of inheritance, sale of farmland, or the rise of relative salience of other occupations and sources of income, fraternal trajectories will become more and more divergent. Further, the relative significance of initial endowment, which is high now, and which now keeps brothers relatively convergent, will decline.

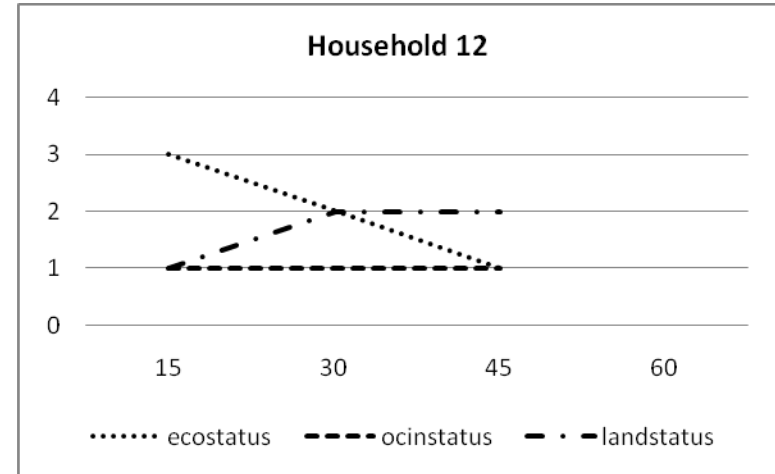
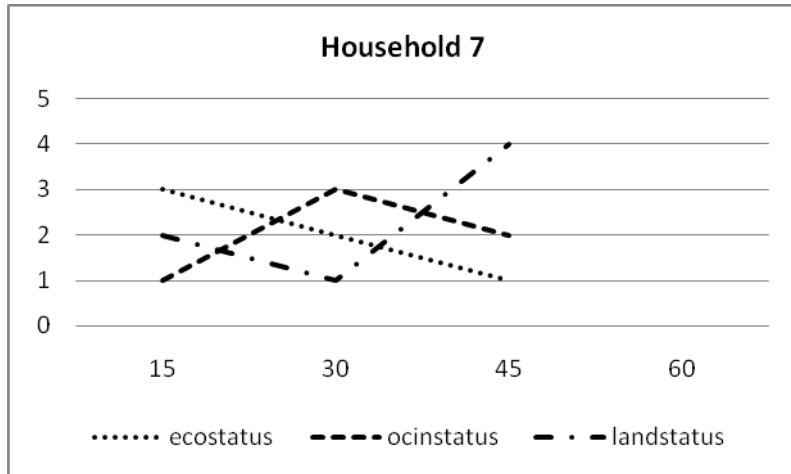
Second, in the case of four of the six pairs 'divergent households' (i.e. H7 and H8, H11 and H12, H13 and H14, H21 and H22), it appears that households which are moving toward prosperity rely less and less on farm ownership. Indeed these households appear to deliberately divest farmland and opt out of agriculture and into nonagricultural occupations and sources of income. Indeed, even among 'convergent brothers,' two (H3, H4) noted during the interview that they were gradually opting out of agriculture. Thus, 12 out of 30 households are not only diversifying from agriculture but also thinking of the day their descendants seek a pathway to prosperity away from agriculture. This is, in a way, not surprising at all because almost all heads of household, even those with larger holdings, hope and attempt to ensure that their children are able to secure a nonagricultural, preferably urban, occupation and source of income in addition to or in lieu of agriculture. It is notable also that these four households were the top diversifiers among the 30 households.

Third the two 'divergent households' (H7 and H12) which do own sizable farm (between 0.1-3.99ha) are not in prosperity or escaping poverty (Figure 9). These households have gradually slid down, over the last 30 years, to the status of the 'very poor' economic status category. H7 and H12 both have slid down to poverty because of low level of diversification and chronic ill health of members of the respective households. In essence, in the case of small and medium land holders, farming is highly unlikely to keep them save them from sliding into poverty. Nor will such households be able to escape poverty. Only those small and medium holders whose farms are irrigated and who engage in intensive and commercial production may not slide into poverty or be able to escape poverty. Households which can take such a course, however, are unlikely to attain prosperity.

VI. Conclusion

The poverty-prosperity pathways literature suffers from three flaws. One, it is much too attached to explaining poverty and prosperity in micro, localized, proximate and short-run terms. In so doing, it very often detaches the problematic of poverty and prosperity from large scale and transformative institutions and processes related to modern history and structure such as capitalism, democracy, the nature of the state, and the nature of redistribution. The literature also detaches itself from the nature of household formation and reformation, the nature of lineality and post-marital locality, the nature of inheritance and access to other resources, the implications of age and gender, etc., all of which have a trans-household implication for poverty and prosperity. It does not implicate these institutions and processes in describing and explaining why households traverse specific poverty-prosperity pathways in the way they do.

Figure 9. Households which have become very poor due to lack of diversification and chronic ill health of household members



Two, and as such, much, although not all, of the PPP literature implicitly assumes that a household is an autonomous and highly flexible actor and traverses the poverty-prosperity pathways pretty much on its own and without changing its own structure. However, as is obvious from the literature in a variety of disciplines, households have undergone and are undergoing rapid shift which, in turn impact on the PPPs of those households. Households, in a very important sense, remain at the center of the encompassing and tumultuous transitions which has been taking hold in recent history. As one illustration, the nature of ownership of assets by a household appears to have become increasingly individualized than corporatized, which could be expected to generate very important consequences for the nature of relationship among members of a household. The PPP literature does not ask why households are morphing and why the features of a household, i.e. its structure, size, 'function,' and the nature of relationship among its members are constituted. It would seem important for the PPP to pay more attention to the process of reconstitution of households because such reconstitution may generate substantial impact on poverty and prosperity.

Three, by not inquiring upon the nature of the historical processes which create poverty and prosperity, it tends to shut itself off from ever-newer modes in which poverty and prosperity are generated and, therefore, from historical-comparative analysis of poverty and prosperity whether at the macro or the household level. The mode in which households and individuals in the newer generation are becoming poor or prosperous is not homologous to the one which was experienced by the older generation. The tumult has created novel terrains of poverty and prosperity. World regions, states, settlements, households, and individuals often articulate the old and new terrains and PPP in ever-novel ways. Some households continue to prosper while remaining in what is left of the old terrain. Many others have been devastated because they remain unable to shift themselves to the new terrain and pathways. This is often missed out or understated in the PPP literature.

Much of these flaws flow out of the fact that the PPP literature was, and largely remains, wedded to centers of policy making and action on poverty rather than to independent and comparative-historical inquiry on poverty and prosperity. Much of the early, if not current, intellectual, policy, and funding impetus for the PPP studies flowed from such centers. In addition, there is surely an otherwise commendable philanthropic impetus which platforms the PPP literature. The essential point is that the PPP literature has gained significant policy traction even as it is on the brink of losing the intellectual-theoretical edge. The motto of the PPP literature, it appears, has been action rather than illumination.

That the large scale and the long run are important by no means implies that the micro and the short run are unimportant. The household is not an autonomous actor but it is an important actor nonetheless. The household is an important actor not only because of agency—what conscious and voluntary decisions it makes, but also because the way it is structured in terms of access to resources and nature of relationships within and outside the household. (The design

in which households are structured may, of course, also reflect its past voluntary decisions.) Both of these—the decisions and features of a household—affect the way in which a household traverses the poverty-prosperity pathway.

It would seem that the transition in the structure of the economy, under which the share of agriculture has been reduced, has had a polarizing effect on the economic standing of case households. (It may be noted that, at the national level, the share of agriculture in the GDP has been reduced by one-half within 3.5 decades.) The fundamental lesson that can be drawn from the case studies is that households which were able to diversify their modes of generation of livelihood by stepping or putting one foot on to the ‘new economy’ have been able not only to avert poverty but to maintain or upgrade their economic status.

‘Old’ and ‘new’ economies are not fixed entities. The ‘new economy’ is one which offers a novel platter of livelihood opportunities. The ‘new economy,’ however, does not remain new forever. It is supplanted by another ‘new economy’ which offers a platter which is novel yet. All ‘new’ economies get old. The ‘new economy’ 50-30 years ago was accessing very cheap forestland (which could be converted into farmland) or farmland. The ‘new economy now’ is a diversified holding of livelihoods at the household level.

The new ‘new economy’ basically comprises of urban and market connection in relation to commodities and labor. Households which can access skilled and semi-skilled or even regular unskilled work in urban locations—in and out of the country—are unlikely to become poor. Households which seek and are able to benefit at a higher level from irrigated agriculture, e.g. by cultivating more skilled and labor-intensive but much more profitable green vegetables and selling the produce in urban locations, are able to thwart poverty as well. The ‘new economy’ also includes access to opportunities provided by the sand mine which has recently been in operation in the settlement. The ‘new economy’ also offers a number of new entrepreneurship opportunities. Those households which are able to grasp such opportunities, e.g. running a teashop, a dairy, a grain and oil mill, a pharmacy, a smithy, a pig and pork selling enterprise, a labor contracting enterprise, etc. are able to thwart poverty and climb to prosperity as well. In an important sense, the rise of such opportunities constitutes evidence that the urban is slowly but gradually coming to the shores of the rural settlement. Households and individuals which/who can access regular government jobs such as school teaching are, among the case households, are the ones who have prospered much more than others.

Whether and how households are able to articulate the old and the new economies are germane to their poverty-prosperity pathways. Most of the case households which have prospered have carved a niche in the new economy, which potentially offers access to a new platter of livelihood opportunities, by leveraging on the old landed economy. The manner in which the old and the new economies are articulated—and whether the two become significantly articulated at all—is crucial for prosperity. Nevertheless, some households, which had no foothold in the old economy, have prospered as well because of a firm grip on the new economy. On the other hand, there are households which were prosperous under the old

economy but have not been able or have refused to grasp the new economy firmly enough. Such households have slid down the economic status ladder.

It should be noted that prosperity has a habit, as it were, of moving away from rural areas and the agricultural sector. The cases, as noted do not include households which moved away from the settlement and the immediate vicinity. Most households which moved out have prospered.

Two other factors gain high salience in the path to poverty and prosperity. The first is the number of working persons in a household. A sizable number does not only imply that there are more hands. It also means that there are more persons doing more things, i.e. a diversified reach. A diversified portfolio of livelihoods which is mutually well articulated almost never fails to raise economic status or to maintain it at a high level. Such diversification is often able to withstand occasional adversities, e.g. 'lumpy expenditures' due to wedding, death, and so on.

The second is chronic illness and disability. Such conditions lead to 'unnecessary' expenditure. More importantly, such conditions reduce labor input while at the same time keeping consumption high. In addition, chronic illness and disability requires that the healthy members of the household take care of the sick. Taking care takes away considerable time on a daily basis. Further, over a long period, taking care often physically and emotionally drains the person who is the primary care taker. Caretaking which drags on for years can sap the energy of the entire household.

The mode of generation of livelihood is historically constructed and it is becoming more fluid than ever. The 'new economy,' or the new platter of livelihood, belongs much more to the younger than the older generation. The 'new economy,' as it were, is the 'natural' habitat of the young. Those households which are able to create space in the 'new economy' for their younger members and keep the older members engaged in the old economy are often more prosperous than the rest. The emerging entrepreneurship in the 'new economy' discussed earlier, e.g. in dairying, smithy, pig and pork marketing, etc., is almost always handled by the young. It is mainly the young who are involved in sand mining and in wage work in urban areas.

The young, in preparation for entry to the 'new economy,' are educating and training themselves in significant numbers. A large number of parents are investing in schooling and training of the young. The new parents, unlike their own parents are, in addition, willing to forego the opportunity costs of schooling as well. It is not clear, however, whether schooling and education will pay up at the same or higher rate than is the case at present. Education and skilling of the young will pay up only if the economy expands and many more job slots are created compared to the present. Labor migration to neighboring and other countries can also be part of the resolution. But given the ongoing prolonged downturn in the cyclic movement of world capitalism—and the increasing degree of financial and economic connectedness of world market and consequent globalization—the prospects of an upturn in right-wing led rise in xenophobia cannot be dismissed out of hand. During such a period, the younger generation

shall not be welcome in distant lands. The investment in education and skilling may then bring in lower returns.

The older generation, as noted, is making substantial investment in the schooling and training of the young. This is the first or the second generation ever that has been making an extensive of investment in the training of the young. Many of the investing parents, however, may not realize returns from this investment. For one, many of the young may not be able to engage in entrepreneurship or access jobs in an economy which is growing at a slow rate. For another, to the extent that jobs are created in distant points rather than locally, it may augment the emotional distance between the parents and the children. That the younger generation prefers to move to urban locales for a variety of reasons including access to social services does not auger well for the older generation either. If the 'new economy' largely belongs to the young, the older generation is saddled with running the old, often small, and often low-productivity farm together with a few heads of old-breed livestock. Some of the older generation remains landless as well.

The older generation may not realize—or realize to a much lower extent—returns from their investment in their children because of another fundamental shift. This shift has to do with the nature of property rights in the 'new economy'. The 'new economy,' unlike the old, is largely characterized by individualized rights to ownership of income and property. The old farm was an asset which was, in a customary sense, owned by a household, although the head of the household, often an elderly male, had circumscribed legal rights to it. It was circumscribed because the male head of the household could dispose of the entire asset only with the concurrence of his wife and sons, who were the co-parceners of the asset. In contrast, the property right in the 'new economy' is invested in an individual person, i.e. the person who earned the income and who has an account in a bank. The newer sets of resources—labor, education, skill, entrepreneurship, investment, etc., are also far more mobile than a localized and immovable farmland. Parents are not legally-sanctioned coparceners of the income or property a son earns or keeps. The landed asset—the key asset of the old economy and the older generation, thus, is corporatized in contrast to the other assets which are individualized. The older generation, thus, has no legal claim over the returns on their investment.

There is another serious problem that the older generation faces. Even as parents cannot legally claim co-parcenary rights over the income and assets earned and kept by their son, under the prevailing partible inheritance system, the sons have a legal claim to the asset parents own and operate, particularly that portion which has been handed over by grandparents. There is an asymmetry here which may force the older generation to a trajectory toward poverty. The partible inheritance system might have been 'understandable' in a stable and relatively stagnant farm-based economy with widely spread ownership rights. But the rise of the 'new economy' which has moved substantially toward de-ruralization and 'de-agriculturalization', toward employment than self-employment as well as toward individualized and 'mobile' property rights and assets much of which caters to the younger generation, the older generation may be facing a double jeopardy.

Finally, the fact that there are more 'convergent' than 'divergent' brothers in the rural settlement studied implies the salience of the relative stability of the agricultural type of production as compared to the other types. It powerfully implies the salience of inherited assets as well. Finally, it also implies the leveling or 'convergent' effect of an inheritance regime which mandates that all co-parceners, a set of brothers among them, apportion the inherited asset equally. (As noted, the seeming convergence may have been an artifact of the case selection procedure under which a potential interviewee was excluded if his brother did not live in the settlement or the immediate vicinity. This rule of 'exclusion' might well have suppressed actual fraternal divergence because migrant and non-migrant brothers may often live out disparate poverty-prosperity trajectories.)

To the extent that the 'new economy' grows and expands, de-ruralization and 'de-agriculturalization' is expedited, wage- rather than self- employment becomes more pronounced, and diversification and differentiation is intensified the level of fraternal convergence will, inevitably decrease. Some of this is already noticeable. One of a pair of brothers who runs a diversified household diverges considerably from the other of the pair who runs a household within the 'old economy' and with minimal diversification. One of a pair of brothers who is educated and has accessed a stable job is far more prosperous than the other of the pair who limits himself to tending the farm. One of a pair of brothers who has landed a livelihood from the new platter, e.g. running a dairy, a teashop, a pub, or becoming a semi-skill urban wage worker, etc. is walking a trajectory which is leading to prosperity compared to the one who runs the old farm.

On the other hand, it is also the case that the poverty-prosperity pathways, including that of brothers, are strewn with many uncertainties, fortunes, and dangers. Chronic sickness and disability in particular, while not completely randomly distributed across households cannot, in many cases, be predicted or controlled. Several fraternal divergences owe to the fact that one brother out of a pair lives through this misfortune for a considerable part of his life even as the other brother is saved this misfortune.

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