

ABSTRACT:

A Socio-economic assessment of the Land for the Landless programme and its impact on farmers at River Plantation, St. Philip.

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This study comprehensively examined the passage of farmer developmental cycles and change, as examined in the context of land settlement projects in the short term, in a small developing country context, as a component of the Integrated Rural Development model. The harsh experiences of landless farmers operating in the socio-economic vacuum of the plantation era, is invariably negated by this social model of empowerment in the modern post-emancipation democratic society.

A longitudinal study was instituted to explore and measure the socio-economic changes of twenty research clients/farmers based at River Plantation, St. Philip, Barbados, over two definitive time periods. December 2005 was regarded as the base year and December 2009 was established as the end year. The study took on the appearance of a before and after study where the farmers' asset base was quantitatively measured to definitively identify and correlate possible material change solely to the settlement of the subjects at River Plantation. Complete enumeration of fourteen farmers was effected due primarily to the non response of six farmers in answering the questionnaires. The survey was conducted over a six month period beginning in September 2009 and it was concluded in February 2010. The major data collection tool was the printed questionnaire supplemented by personal interview and direct observation of the farmers. The raw data from the above exercise was critically examined and collated into useful information. The findings of the core research hypothesis were invalidated and rendered

inconclusive due to the non response of the farmers to the question on wealth accumulation. The farming respondents as a single group viewed questions into this private area of their lives as intrusive. Causality in this sensitive area was not established and this hypothesis would need to be retested to demonstrate that a positive linear relationship between the study variables was not due entirely to chance. Further refinements and rationalizations of the sampling and data collection methodologies to determine causality in this area for future research have been identified.