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REVIEWS IN BRIEF

Striving for Economic Equality, B. V. Pandya, Popular Book Depot, Bombay, 1959. Pp. xi+362. Rs. 22.50.

This book is a part of the thesis submitted by the author for the Ph.D. degree of the University of Bombay in 1957. It presents the results of an intensive enquiry into the occupational pattern and standard of living of 344 selected Scheduled Caste families in the Ahmedabad District of Bombay State. The object of the study was to probe deep into the nature and extent of impediments to occupational progress and to find out newer and better avenues of employment. The first chapter of the book gives an account of the general occupational pattern of the Scheduled Caste population in Ahmedabad District. Chapters II to V give a detailed analysis of the conditions and problems of the Scheduled Castes and various sub-castes in the important occupations both in the rural and urban areas. Chapter VI deals with the standard of living of the Scheduled Castes and Chapter VII with indebtedness of the selected families. The last chapter presents the conclusion.

The main conclusions of the enquiry are as follows: The occupational pattern revealed a wide variety of low-income yielding occupations. The backward class cultivators were share-croppers in main, but carried on other subsidiary occupations such as farm labour, handloom weaving, tanning and leather making, etc. A sample study of 50 cultivators' families from 17 villages in the district showed that not a single one found it possible to survive without undertaking subsidiary occupations. The average monthly income of a Scheduled Caste cultivating family was only Rs. 40. The co-operative societies had not done much to improve the socio-economic conditions of the Scheduled Castes. The rigidity of the caste barriers still acted as a powerful obstacle to their progress.

Farm labour was the chief source of providing means of livelihood for 77 per cent of the total rural families studied. The labourers were selected by the *Gharaki* system which is widely prevalent in the district. The average income per rural family from agricultural labour was Rs. 21.10 per month, while the average income from all sources was Rs. 35.44 per month. This indicated their despicably low standard of living.

Handloom weaving and tanning and leather making are the important subsidiary occupations for the Scheduled Caste families. The average income obtained by the selected families from these subsidiary occupations was very low, being only Rs. 10 per month per family in the case of handloom weaving and Rs. 48.50 per family in the case of tanning and leather making. Dearth of capital, inadequate raw materials, lack of adaptation and knowledge of new production techniques and absence of well-developed market for products were some of the important factors, limiting the prospects of Scheduled Caste weaver families and tanners to improve their income and standard of living.

Menial service, viz., scavenging and sweeping, provided employment to a large number of Scheduled Caste families in the city of Ahmedabad. Next in importance was textile labour. The socio-economic conditions of these classes were deplorable.

The intensive enquiry revealed that the average annual debt was Rs. 487.5 per family in the rural areas during 1953-54 while it was Rs. 517 per family in the Ahmedabad city. The proportion of indebted families was higher in the rural areas than in the city, being 93.5 and 89.6 per cent respectively. The burden of debt per family in the district was Rs. 502 while the average indebtedness of an indebted family was Rs. 548. The burden of debt among the different occupational groups in the rural areas varied from a low of Rs. 281.40 on an average per family of farm labourers to a high of Rs. 800.50 in respect of cultivators and farm labourers taken as a whole.

Among the various credit agencies, moneylenders provided 55.8 per cent of the total loans in the rural areas and 65 per cent of the total in the city. Relations and friends were next in importance, providing a little less than 29 per cent of the respective group totals in each. Co-operatives advanced only 5.7 per cent of the total loans in rural areas as against 2 per cent in the city. The study revealed that despite the provision of a number of constitutional safeguards for the Scheduled Castes and several legislative enactments, "welfare" in the real sense of the word has not been achieved by them.

Report on an Enquiry into the Pace and Pattern of Market Arrivals of Foodgrains—1958-59 Season, Ministry of Food and Agriculture, Government of India, Delhi, 1959. Pp. 404. Rs. 5.25.

The Report embodies the findings of a quick enquiry conducted by the Agro-Economic Research Centres at Delhi, Santiniketan, Madras and Sehore (Madhya Pradesh) and the Farm Management Centre at Waltair (Andhra Pradesh) to find out in detail the pace and pattern of the flow of rice and wheat from rural areas into markets and the subsequent disposal of supplies by wholesale traders and millers in the 1958-59 marketing season (April to March for wheat and October to September for rice). The enquiry also made an assessment of the factors responsible for changes in the behaviour of the producers, traders and consumers in the current crop season. It was confined to only a few markets in different parts of the country. The survey was organised both at the market centres and in the villages (generally 6 to 8) selected from the hinterland of each market centre. The selection of markets, villagers and cultivators was purposive.

The Report provides a clue to the understanding of some of the forces which have lately been active in the food economy of the country. Market prices of foodgrains in 1958-59 season were on the whole responded inadequately to the level of production secured in the year. There was general evidence to show that a shrinkage in market arrivals was one of the major reasons for this phenomenon. The main findings of the enquiry by the five Centres are as follows.

In the case of wheat, the price consciousness of the producer was combined with his capacity to withhold his produce. The outturn of crops other than wheat was also very good during the 1958-59 season in all the wheat producing States. Larger output of these crops together with their high prices had enabled the producer to realize enough cash income to meet his immediate needs and in certain areas of Madhya Pradesh even the cash needs for a number of months ahead. He was, therefore, not under the compelling necessity to part with his wheat har-

vest immediately. Moreover, the producer has had better access to cash resources including co-operative credit and Government loans and grants during the period than in the previous year. Traders did not seem to be directly responsible for low arrivals of wheat. The overall impact of the support to wheat prices provided by Government purchases and low market arrivals had been some rise in the prices of all agricultural commodities sustained by speculative stock-building of traders who had diverted their operations from wheat to other commodities. In the case of rice, the position regarding disposal of produce by the growers during 1958-59 season varied from State to State. It was however noticed that with the exception of West Bengal where there was a considerable fall in production, resulting in reduced sales, in the other States of Orissa, Madhya Pradesh, Bihar, Andhra Pradesh and Madras, there were deferred sales and increased withholding of stocks by the medium and big producers. There was also a tendency among traders to manipulate the flow of supplies to the markets by dubious ways in order to evade Government procurement and price control. While in West Bengal, the disparity between the open market and controlled prices had induced the producers to keep stocks with them and sell it in small quantities at black market prices, in the other States the foodgrains policy had induced larger flow of supplies to the market.

Selected Plan Statistics, Planning Commission, Government of India, New Delhi, 1959. Pp. 94.

This brochure presents selected statistics about First and Second Five-Year Plans. The statistics relate to physical targets of production and achievements, financial provision and actual outlay, contribution to national income and generation of additional employment. The first section gives the overall statistics, the other sections give the corresponding statistics for different sectors — agriculture and community development, irrigation and power, industry and mining, village and small-scale industries, transport and communications, and social services. The last section gives data regarding authorisation and utilisation of external assistance during the First and Second Plan periods, projected population of India by States, provision and progress of actual outlay in the States during the First and the Second Plan.

Effects of Bhakra Dam Irrigation on the Economy of the Barani Villages in Hissar District, 1953-54, Publication No. 50, Board of Economic Inquiry, Punjab (India), Chandigarh, 1959. Pp. iv+95. Rs. 2.80.

This study into the effects of Bhakra Dam irrigation on the economy of *Barani* Villages in Hissar District aims at comparing the rate at which and the extent to which irrigation measures have contributed to the prosperity of the cultivator and to his standard of living and to the economy of the district as a whole. The enquiry relates to the year 1953-54. A sample of 30 villages has been selected on the basis of random method, representing the three different types of villages — 15 villages from the Bhakra Dam Irrigated Tract, 8 from the previously irrigated tract and 7 from the *Barani* tract. Besides the study of these 30 villages, the report presents the results of a study of five agricultural holdings in five selected villages scattered in four tehsils.

The report is divided into 6 chapters. Chapter II describes physical conditions of the Hissar district. Chapter III deals with the general economy of the sample villages and the measurement of the economic gains due to new or extended irrigation. Chapter IV discusses the economic conditions of the selected holdings and measures in precise terms, the rate of improvement in their agriculture, effect of such changes in utilisation of labour and resource, increase in net and family earnings, etc. In Chapter V, an attempt has been made to bring out the shifts in the dietary habits, clothing and the standard of living of the families studied. Chapter VI gives a summary account of the findings.

The study reveals that the value of production per acre, land value and income per family increased as a result of the introduction of irrigation in the *Barani* areas. The value of production per acre (cultivated) was Rs. 29.55, Rs. 40.56 and Rs. 19.43 respectively for the Bhakra Dam, previously Irrigated and *Barani* villages during 1953-54 as compared to Rs. 5.93, Rs. 34.68 and Rs. 11.44 for the three types of villages respectively, during 1952-53. Similarly, the value of land per acre in the Bhakra Dam and previously Irrigated villages increased from Rs. 288.4 and Rs. 210.4 during 1950-53 to Rs. 335 and Rs. 632.7 respectively in 1953-54. In the *Barani* villages, on the other hand, the value of land per acre declined from Rs. 122 to Rs. 89 during the same period. The year-end budgetary position of 1953-54 disclosed an average surplus of Rs. 407.70 per family as against a deficit of Rs. 1,395.82 per family during 1952-53. The farmers' community as a whole has benefited by the irrigational facilities of the Bhakra Dam.

Cost of Production of Wheat and Wheat-Gram (Mixture) in the Punjab for the years 1954-55—1956-57, Publication No. 53, Board of Economic Enquiry, Punjab, Chandigarh, 1959. Pp. x+101. Rs. 4.35.

This publication deals with the study into the cost of production of wheat and wheat-gram (mixture) in the Districts of Amritsar and Ferozepur of the Punjab State for the years 1954-55 to 1956-57. It is divided into 13 chapters. Chapters I to III discuss respectively with the general agricultural conditions of the districts, scope of the inquiry and method of working out cost of production of the crops. Chapters IV to VII deal with the costs and returns from wheat and wheat-gram (mixture) on irrigated and unirrigated lands respectively on simple average basis. An attempt is made in Chapter VIII to compare the costs and returns between different enterprises studied on simple average basis. Chapters IX to XII deal with the costs and returns of wheat and wheat-gram on irrigated and unirrigated lands respectively on weighted average basis; while the last chapter is devoted to a comparison of costs and returns between different enterprises studied on weighted average basis. About 110 statistical tables, 5 diagrams and 4 appendices supplement the study. The study draws heavily on the data of the Survey "Economics of Farm Management for the years 1954-55 to 1956-57 on 200 holdings in the region" conducted by the Advisory Board under the auspices of the Research Programmes Committee of the Planning Commission, Government of India.

The study reveals that growing of wheat on irrigated lands was more profitable than any of the other three enterprises, the profit per acre on the basis of Cost A, B, and C being Rs. 74.42, Rs. 38.74 and Rs. 1.69 respectively. Taking

all the enterprises together, there was a net loss of Rs. 7.53 per acre on basis of Cost 'C'.

Index Numbers of Parity (Statistical Analysis) between Prices Received and Paid by the Farmer in the Punjab, 1956-57, Publication No. 55, Board of Economic Inquiry, Punjab (India). Pp. iv+76. Rs. 2.65.

The index number of parity between prices received and paid by the farmer in the Punjab are being published by the Board in the form of annual series since the year 1950. This publication is the ninth of its kind and relates to the year 1956-57. The series aim at studying the economic position of the cultivator with reference to variations in prices of agricultural produce sold by him, and in the prices of commodities included in the domestic expenditure and farm cultivation costs. The report presents the statistical analysis of the parity indices under the three main parts: (1) Index numbers of prices received by the farmer, (2) Index numbers of prices paid by the farmer and (3) Index numbers of parity between prices received and prices paid by the farmer.

During 1956-57, the index of parity increased by as much as 4.6 per cent at 103.7 as against 99.1 per cent in 1955-56. The improvement in the parity position was caused mainly by a proportionately higher increase in the index of prices received (+17.6 per cent) as compared to the percentage increase in the case of prices paid (+12.4 per cent). On the whole, the farmers did not suffer on account of disproportionately low level of agricultural prices during the year under report and the terms of trade were favourable to them.

Farm Accounts in the Punjab 1956-57, Publication No. 56, Board of Economic Inquiry, Punjab (India), 1959. Pp. 95. Rs. 3.60.

This publication is the tenth of the series of "Farm Accounts" in the Punjab (India). It covers the study of the accounts of 35 holdings of various types situated in 12 districts of the State, representing all the different agricultural tracts in the State. The object of this inquiry is to assess the yearly income and expenditure of the cultivators in the Punjab and also to determine the amount of bullock labour and manual labour employed during the year. It throws light on (i) how a peasant-proprietor fares and how he compares with a tenant farmer (ii) proportion in which landlords and tenants divide the income and expenditure in case of share rentals; (iii) the proportion of the net assets of farming taken by State in the form of land revenue; (iv) the return to the farmer for his work compared with that of the hired labourer; and (v) the scope for undertaking farming on business lines. It is supplemented by 12 statistical tables, 2 diagrams and 2 graphs.

During 1956-57, there was an overall increase in respect of gross and net incomes and expenditure both for irrigated and unirrigated areas as compared with the preceding year 1955-56. In the case of irrigated area, gross income per acre increased by Rs. 14.56, from Rs. 267.86 in 1955-56 to Rs. 282.42 in 1956-57; expenditure increased only by Rs. 1.15 per acre from Rs. 120.58 to Rs. 121.73 during the same period; net income per acre increased by Rs. 13.41 — from Rs. 147.28 to Rs. 160.69 during the same period. So far as the unirrigated area

is concerned, the gross income per acre increased by Rs. 36.32 from Rs. 117.80 to Rs. 154.12 and net income per acre increased by Rs. 28.30 from Rs. 76.13 to Rs. 104.43 for the corresponding period. On the other hand, the expenditure rose by Rs. 8.02 per acre from Rs. 41.67 to Rs. 49.69 during the same period.

Family Budgets of Twenty-Two Cultivators in the Punjab for the year 1956-57, Publication No. 57, Board of Economic Inquiry, Punjab (India), Chandigarh, 1959. Pp. 65. Rs. 2.03.

This is the tenth volume in the Punjab (India) after Partition and the 23rd volume in the continued series of the Board of Inquiry (United Punjab) publication on the "Family Budgets" of cultivators. This enquiry deals with (1) the income from different sources (2) the cost of various items of household expenditure, and (3) the extent to which the commodities consumed were (a) produced on the farm or (b) purchased from outside. During 1956-57, the accounts of twenty-two families of peasant-proprietors from 12 districts of the State were studied. They represent more or less the typical peasants of the Punjab (India) working on the hill and sub-montane regions and in the plains where all the chief means of irrigation, viz., well, canal, as well as *barani* farming are found. The publication is divided into three sections. Section I comprises 'General Summary', Section II 'Details of Family Budgets' and Section III 'The Detailed Statistical Data' in the form of appendices.

The report revealed that the income of the selected families varied from Rs. 741.49 to Rs. 7,821.22, the average per family being Rs 2,707.77. Average *per capita* income per annum was Rs. 318.73. The income of these families was chiefly derived from cultivation which contributed 63 per cent. A peasant-proprietor family spent on an average, 58, 13, 8, 4 and 4 per cent of its income on food, clothing, housing, fuel and education respectively. The balance of 13 per cent was spent on lighting, medicine, travelling, religion, social amusements, etc. Fifty per cent of the total expenditure was incurred on commodities purchased from outside. During the period under review 13 peasant-proprietor families showed a surplus whereas the remaining 9 families showed a deficit; on an average, all the selected families showed a surplus of Rs. 226 per family.

Agricultural Advisory Services in Europe and North America, 1957, European Productivity Agency of the Organisation for European Economic Co-operation, Paris, 1958. Pp. 166. \$2.00.

This report contains the Proceedings and Papers presented at the International Working Conference of Directors and Senior Officers of Agricultural Advisory Services in member and associate countries held at O. E. E. C's Headquarters in Paris in June, 1957. The Conference was organised with a view to review reports on recent developments of agricultural advisory services in Europe, the United States and Canada, review the E. P. A./O. E. E. C. international projects in advisory work, to discuss difficulties limiting further developments in advisory services and ways of overcoming them and make suggestions regarding future national and international action and specific proposals for desirable follow-up activities or new activities. The first twelve sections deal with the Conference

report and recommendations, followed by 16 papers on different aspects of agricultural advisory services.

Land Consolidation: Cheaper and More Simplified Methods, European Productivity Agency of the Organisation for European Economic Co-operation, Paris, 1959. Pp. 129. \$1.25.

This report of the Seminar on land consolidation, organised on behalf of the E. P. A. by the Federal Ministry of Food, Agriculture and Forestry of Germany and held at Wiesbaden in June-July, 1955, presents nine technical papers and discussions on the legal, administrative and financial aspects of land consolidation work as well as problems involved in land surveying, land improvement and road construction. Seventy experts from fourteen European countries participated in the Seminar. The programme of the Seminar provided for an exchange of information and for reports on progress and new developments in the sphere of land consolidation in different countries. Particular attention was given to the simplified methods recently adopted in some countries and to allied questions, such as the removal of farm buildings from villages, settlements on reclaimed land, surveys of the need for consolidation and the importance of research and of Agricultural Advisory Services in connection with consolidation schemes. The report, in addition, gives the recommendations of the Seminar for speeding up and simplifying land consolidation work at the national level and also for international co-operation on this subject, country reports and descriptions of selected practical examples of land consolidation work in Germany.

All-India Rural Credit Survey, District Monograph — *Bhatinda*. Pp. xvi+104. Rs. 5.50.

District Monograph — *West Godavari*. Pp. xiv+140. Rs. 6.50.

District Monograph — *Coimbatore*. Pp. xvi+89. Rs. 5.00; Reserve Bank of India, Bombay, 1959.

The publications under reference are the twelfth, thirteenth and fourteenth in the series of district monographs brought out by the Reserve Bank of India. They give an integrated picture of the working of the rural credit machinery in these districts.

The main findings of the survey in the three districts under reference are as follows.

In *Bhatinda* district (Punjab) agriculture is the main occupation for 77.4 per cent of the population. Area under cultivation comprised 72 per cent of the total area of the district. The net area under irrigation was about 56 per cent of the net area sown and almost the entire area was under canal irrigation. About 50 per cent of the total number of holdings was less than 10 acres and the average size of holdings in the district was about 20 acres. Nearly 64 per cent of the cultivators and 74 per cent of the non-cultivators were indebted. The debt per family was Rs. 1,363 among cultivators and Rs. 822 among non-cultivators. The debt per indebted cultivating family was Rs. 2,142. Nearly 36 per cent of debt of the selected cultivators was outstanding for more than ten years. Forty-nine

per cent of the cultivators were reported to have borrowed during the Survey year (1951-52), and the average borrowing per family was Rs. 436 for cultivators and Rs. 233 for non-cultivators. Purpose-wise analysis of borrowings revealed that nearly 51 per cent of the borrowings of cultivators were for family expenditure and only 23 per cent of the borrowings were for capital expenditure in agriculture. The repayment performance in the district was poor, the average repayments per family being Rs. 161 for cultivators and Rs. 55 for non-cultivators during the year of the Survey. Average investment and disinvestment of the cultivators in the district were of the order of Rs. 506 and Rs. 535 respectively, resulting in a net disinvestment of Rs. 29 per family.

Of the rural credit agencies, agricultural and professional money-lenders provided respectively nearly 49 per cent and 26 per cent of the total borrowings of cultivators. Government as a supplier of credit played a very minor role by advancing only 0.4 per cent of the total borrowings of the cultivators. It is significant to note that no borrowings were reported from co-operatives. This may probably be due to the fact that there was not a single co-operative society working satisfactorily in the eight villages selected for the demand side of investigation.

In *West Godavari* district (in the Andhra State) agriculture supported 82.4 per cent of the population. Paddy accounts for over 80 per cent of the total sown area, most of which is irrigated. The average size of cultivated holding per rural family was 8.9 acres. The average debt at the end of the Survey year was Rs. 871 per cultivating family, the incidence of debt being Rs. 98 per acre. The intensive enquiry data revealed that the level of debt per cultivating family for the district as a whole was Rs. 1,027.5 and it was Rs. 1,625.5 and Rs. 429.6 among the upper and the lower strata cultivators, respectively. The size of borrowing was Rs. 751.5 per family for the district as a whole. The borrowings of the upper strata cultivators amounted to Rs. 1,199 per family and those of lower strata cultivators to Rs. 304 per family. Regarding the purpose of borrowing, borrowing for farm business (current as well as capital), family-living (and other purposes) and non-farm business accounted for Rs. 42.5 per cent, 38.3 per cent and 19.2 per cent respectively. Repaying capacity of the cultivators was found to be satisfactory. Average repayments per family amounted to Rs. 177 for all families. The borrowings and debt of cultivators, though high in monetary terms, constituted a small proportion of the value of land and other assets owned by them. The cultivating families incurred a substantial expenditure on capital investment in agriculture and their borrowing activity during the Survey year was largely geared to meeting such expenditure. The calculations of the balances of transactions on capital account during the Survey year showed a small net investment on the part of all cultivators in the district, the average net investment per rural family being Rs. 39.

The study of functioning of the rural credit agencies revealed that money-lenders accounted for 82.4 per cent of the total borrowings of cultivators during the Survey year. The proportion of borrowing of cultivators from Government and co-operatives to their total borrowings was 2.1 and 3.1 per cent, respectively. Relatives, landlords, commercial banks and others together accounted for less than 5 per cent of the total credit supplied. The Government and co-operatives had not made much headway although the potentialities for the development of co-operative credit were considerable.

The agricultural economy of *Coimbatore* district (Madras) is characterised by an appreciable degree of commercialisation and lack of irrigation facilities. Nearly 78 per cent of the population depended on agriculture for their livelihood. Two-thirds of the agricultural population in the rural areas were cultivators and one-third were agricultural labourers. During 1951-52, 76 per cent of the cultivators were indebted. The debt per indebted cultivating family was Rs. 1,583. The average debt per indebted cultivating family was the highest at Rs. 5,251 for the big cultivators and it was comparatively very low being Rs. 583 for the small cultivators. A large portion of the total debt of selected cultivators was incurred for agricultural (39 per cent) and consumption (32.6 per cent) purposes; only 2.1 per cent of the debt of cultivators was reported for non-agricultural purposes; repayment of old debts constituted 11.1 per cent of the total debt, and the balance of 15.4 per cent was incurred for various other purposes. Personal security was by far the most important type of security accounting for 71 per cent of the total debt of all cultivators. Regarding borrowings, it was found that nearly half of the cultivators and almost a fourth of the non-cultivators reported borrowings. The proportion of borrowing families was the highest among the big cultivators (63 per cent). The borrowings of large cultivators constituted a little over 65 per cent of the total borrowings of all cultivators, while those of medium and small cultivators came to 26 per cent and 9 per cent respectively of total borrowings. The average borrowing per borrowing cultivating family was Rs. 1,023. Of the total borrowings of cultivators, as much as 51.3 per cent were for agricultural purposes and 30.4 per cent for family expenditure. The investment and disinvestment transactions for all rural families showed a deficit of Rs. 18 per family. For the cultivators as a whole there was an excess of investment expenditure over disinvestment to the extent of Rs. 24 per family.

The private money-lenders were the most important credit agency operating on a large scale in the rural credit structure of the district. They provided 83 per cent of the total borrowings of all cultivators. The commercial banks and the co-operatives provided 9 and 4 per cent respectively, while government finance was insignificant. Though the co-operative structure in the district was well-organised, the co-operative credit movement did not seem to have covered large segments of the rural population. The possibilities of development of co-operative credit in the district are great since the required organisational structure is already established.