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contain detailed information on government policy, demand and supply position, prices, action taken by the Government, analysis of the situation by special committees appointed by the Government to study certain problems regarding specific commodities and such other useful information.

The chapter on the Place of Agriculture in the British economy reviews the position of agriculture in relation to the total economy particularly in the light of the data made available in the 1958 Blue Book, the E.E.C. and the O.E.E.C. Statistics. The land prices and rents, distribution of holding, labour employment and earnings, credit situation and various grants and schemes of the Government operating during the years 1958 and 1959 are reviewed in another chapter. The last chapter on 'Inputs' contains information on the consumption and prices of fertilizers, feeding stuffs and machinery.

The publication thus contains valuable information compiled with immense amount of research by the staff. The book should be of value to policy makers and others from our country as also from other countries. The value of the book could be enhanced by proper summing up of each chapter or a summary of the entire book.

D. P. APTE

*A New Rural Co-operative System for Comilla Thana: Rural Co-operative Pilot Experiment—First Annual Report, 1961*, Henry W. Fairchild and Shamsul Haq, Pakistan Academy for Village Development, Comilla, East Pakistan, July, 1961. Pp. 88. Rs. 2.00.

*Experiments in Co-operative Farming—A Study in East India*, Agro-Economic Research Centre, Visva-Bharati University, Santiniketan, West Bengal, 1961. Pp. 71. Rs. 2.50.

The first report under review presents useful information on the genesis of the rural co-operative pilot experiment in Comilla Kotwali Thana in East Pakistan, about its objectives, method of organisation and plans and programmes and its results. The report is descriptive and does not contain an analytical study of the activities organised in the Comilla Development Area. Despite this limitation, it provides an insight into the working of the pilot experiment in a very backward area for a period of eighteen months from January 1960 to June 1961 and sets out in bold relief the hurdles to be overcome and focusses attention on the essential requirements of a solution. Behind the experiment lay much patient but hard work by a band of enthusiastic co-operators. It unfolds the story of the pilot experiment covering twenty-five village co-operative groups with a total membership of 1,122 members in Comilla Thana.

The social and economic problems of the region are similar to those of most of East Pakistan. The area typified one in which all the problems associated with the tradition bound feudalistic society and overpopulation existed. Naturally the Pakistan Academy is motivated by a desire to bring about an improvement in the economic and social conditions of the people of the area.

Briefly, the chief objective of this pilot project is to promote the formation of small co-operative groups of farmers for the purpose of adopting improved methods of cultivation, implements and machines. This is to be achieved through an intensive programme of co-operative education among the inhabitants in the selected area in the first instance and imparting proper training to representatives of small homogeneous groups who have organised themselves for any joint economic action as a result of the co-operative education received. The aim of the small groups is to become self-sustained, by learning to save and collect their own capital and invest it in better farming. Essentially, the experiment uses "the concept of building a system based upon individual freedom and personal initiative."

The method of organisation of village co-operatives into compact and homogeneous groups in Comilla Thana is noteworthy. It consists in "hiring a group of leading farmers" in the thana who were designated as extension agents. After a course of intensive training imparted to them at the Academy, they are sent out to organise small homogeneous village co-operatives on the basis of one society for one village or a compact group representing a smaller or bigger area. The groups when formed are enjoined to follow the following ten points of policy: (i) to organise and get registered; (ii) hold weekly meetings with compulsory attendance; (iii) make cash and in-kind regular savings; (iv) select a trusted man for their organiser; (v) keep good accounts; (vi) do joint planning to improve their business; (vii) use supervised credit; (viii) adopt improved practices and skills; (ix) join the Thana Federation; and (x) engage in member education discussions. The programme represents many of the principles of sound group organisation and is designed to foster the development of group loyalty among members. With the formation of a co-operative village group, the role of the extension agent ceases; he is replaced by an organiser appointed from among the group, who acts as a liaison between the Academy and the group. The dominant idea which governs the programme is the necessity for providing the highest possible level of training in village development for the leadership of the nation. It is a well-known fact that lack of fundamental education in the principles and practices of co-operation was one of the main reasons for failure of most co-operative organisations in the Thana as also in other Asian countries in attaining full stature as voluntary economic joint ventures of the people. The programme of co-operative education chalked out by the Academy with methodical care is designed to fill up this gap.

The results achieved by the Academy in the pilot project area during a short period of eighteen months are indeed modest. Among the more important activities in the project area, may be mentioned the use of power pumps and tractors. The use of power pumps provided a great stimulus to production and income in the villages inasmuch as the area under cultivation and the total yield recorded a three-fold increase in 1960-61 over that in 1958-59. The progress in regard to encouragement of thrift and saving is indeed commendable; twenty-five village groups had saved Rs. 29,700 in cash and had entered into an in-kind savings programme involving 2,602 maunds of paddy. They had borrowed Rs. 47,300 from the Central Co-operative Bank and used it in a supervised credit programme. The supervised credit system is yet to make its impact widely on the group members, for its success depends on the preparation of realistic plans of farm production

by the members themselves. Although the Academy has done much work in the field of member education, its success in this direction is severely limited owing to the existence of a large number of illiterate members who cannot actually read. Expansion of literacy is an essential precondition for the improvement of the educational programme in other ways.

An appendix examines certain important problems such as what should be the educative process under the pilot project?; what should be the organisational process in that connection?; should there be smaller or bigger primary co-operative units under the pilot project for the thana than those now existing or hitherto tried?; should there be a separate central co-operative organisation (as a federation of primary units) for the thana under the pilot project?; should there be any co-operative marketing under the pilot project and how should it be started?; etc. The report rightly recognises that the shape and method of execution of a pilot co-operative project in the development area will emerge only when correct solutions are found to the problems posed above taking into consideration the actual situation prevailing in the locality. That the project has to encounter many technical and organisational problems is not disputed. It is however noteworthy that in the course of a year, a workable pattern for organising village-groups has emerged in the Comilla thana. The experiment has just scratched the surface in the introduction of improved methods. Much remains to be done in persuading farmers to use more fertilizers, to tend the cattle better and more efficiently and to improve literacy among the villagers. But obviously not much time has elapsed as yet to provide much of this kind of social and economic impact in the area. Though not much experience has been gained in the organisation and working of federal co-operatives and co-operatives for joint purchasing and sale of production requisites, it is the hope of the authors of this report that these are areas for future expansion. Success in these directions would be marked with interest particularly by co-operators in the South-Asian region.

The report on *Experiments in Co-operative Farming* presents the results of an investigation into the working of 18 co-operative farming societies in East India comprising of the States of West Bengal, Bihar and Orissa, conducted during 1958-1960. Though the scope of the investigation was restricted to obtaining specific understanding of the motivation of co-operative farming in this region and the clue to its actual achievement, the investigation tries to throw light on the efficacy of co-operative farming as a vehicle of social change. No attempt was made to subject the different co-operative farms studied to a common pattern of investigation with the result that there is no uniform criteria followed in the examination of their performance. The case studies, therefore, tend to be more descriptive than analytical. The samples included in this study represent societies that are successful and those that are not doing so well.

The report starts with a brief definition of the types of farming co-operatives, and a few pertinent observations on the preconditions of their success, followed by a brief survey of selected co-operative farming societies in each of the States of East India, barring Assam, in Chapter 2. Chapter 3 presents an analysis of the accounts of money expenditures, assets and liabilities of four co-operative farming societies located in the district of Burdwan in West Bengal, and gives an account of the working of seven joint farming co-operatives in West Bengal (including one composite type of society), of four joint co-operative farming societies in Bihar

and of three societies (of which two are collective farming) in Orissa as also the difficulties experienced in their organisation and working. The last chapter gives the main conclusions of the study.

Some of the salient features of these co-operatives may be noted. Almost all the societies have an existence of over 5 years. The operational area of the selected farming co-operatives varied between 7 and 312 acres in West Bengal, 25 and 214 acres in Bihar (the area pooled in the case of one society which does not strictly conform to the joint co-operative farming type, is not given), and 200 to 300 acres in Orissa. It is worth noting that societies composed of small number of farmers and pooling a small acreage of land have shown evidence of vitality and progress. This principle does not apply to large farms. In West Bengal, lands of 5 selected societies out of 11 were cultivated by tractors largely owing to shortage of labour. As such, the societies achieved considerable economy in the use of labour, labour cost varying between 27 and 43 per cent of the total cost. (p. 11.) It was found that with the exception of one society, all societies were below the optimum size from the viewpoint of tractor cultivation. Four farming co-operatives (all in the districts of Burdwan) were working at a loss, five showed some profit while in the case of two societies profit and loss account was not available. In Bihar, of the four joint co-operative farming societies studied, only one society was working well. In Orissa, where co-operatives were formed for settling the landless labour, of the three societies, two made profit. The report presents details of capital formation and developmental activities undertaken by some of the farming co-operatives.

The report brings out the fact that experiments in co-operative farming in the three States of East India have not proved to be a success for various reasons, which are now only too well-known to need any repetition here. It is, however, surprising that in spite of the existence of favourable conditions in West Bengal particularly in the district of Burdwan, the co-operative farming societies are not found to be economic propositions. One important factor which has put a break on the growth of the movement is the imposition of an agricultural income-tax whose effect has been found to be highly regressive. This factor has checked the entry of a large number of farmers into the membership of co-operative farming societies thereby preventing them to attain a higher level of efficiency in farming. It is fundamental for the development of co-operative farming that farmers should feel the necessity of organising themselves into a co-operative for the realisation of a common cause. More importantly, the development of co-operative movement depends upon effective tackling of its operational problems.

The subject matter could have been presented in a better way avoiding repetition of facts, though this does not, however, seriously detract from the value of the report. In the table (section 3.18) on page 21, there appears some discrepancy in the data about production, sale, distribution and stock of paddy during 1954-55 and 1958-59.

Experiments in co-operative farming are being conducted in different parts of the country but the results of such experiments are not widely known and available for shaping agricultural policy. This report is indeed a welcome addition to the literature on the subject.

I. R. SUNDARAM