



AgEcon SEARCH
RESEARCH IN AGRICULTURAL & APPLIED ECONOMICS

The World's Largest Open Access Agricultural & Applied Economics Digital Library

This document is discoverable and free to researchers across the globe due to the work of AgEcon Search.

Help ensure our sustainability.

Give to AgEcon Search

AgEcon Search
<http://ageconsearch.umn.edu>
aesearch@umn.edu

*Papers downloaded from **AgEcon Search** may be used for non-commercial purposes and personal study only. No other use, including posting to another Internet site, is permitted without permission from the copyright owner (not AgEcon Search), or as allowed under the provisions of Fair Use, U.S. Copyright Act, Title 17 U.S.C.*

Vol XVII
No. 4

ISSN 0019-5014

OCTOBER-
DECEMBER
1962

INDIAN JOURNAL OF AGRICULTURAL ECONOMICS



INDIAN SOCIETY OF
AGRICULTURAL ECONOMICS,
BOMBAY

REVIEWS IN BRIEF

Report of the Study Group on the Welfare of the Weaker Sections of the Village Community, Volume I, Ministry of Community Development and Co-operation, Government of India, New Delhi, October 1961. Pp v+70.

The Study Group on the welfare of the weaker sections of the village community was appointed by the Government of India on 8th December, 1960 under the chairmanship of Shri Jayaprakash Narayan. The terms of reference of the Study Group were (a) to study how far and in what manner the Community Development Organisation and/or Panchayati Raj institutions at Village, Block and Zila levels can promote the economic development and welfare of the weaker sections of the community, and (b) to suggest steps by which the development schemes of the Central and State Governments and local authorities and the financial assistance available can be effectively utilized for the benefit of the weaker sections of the community. The report is divided into six chapters. After a brief discussion of the objectives and approach to the study of the welfare of the weaker sections of the community in the first chapter, the report deals with the definition and size of the problem in chapter II. Chapter III considers the ways and means to secure the utmost possible welfare of the weaker sections while chapter IV examines the role of the community development programmes in promoting the welfare of the weaker sections and how effectively and purposefully block funds and other developmental funds could be utilized. Chapters V and VI discuss the role of co-operatives and of Panchayati Raj institutions in securing the welfare of the weaker sections respectively. The last chapter briefly outlines the organizational set-up at the Centre and the States and presents a summary of main conclusions and recommendations.

The Study Group defines the weaker sections of the community as to comprise families having uneconomic land holdings, landless agricultural labourers, village artisans and workers engaged on small crafts, fishermen, etc., groups living in backward and unproductive regions, Scheduled Castes, women, nomadic tribes and destitutes. As an initial step in assisting the weaker sections, the Study Group has suggested a "means test". As a general formula, it has been suggested that about 80 per cent of the rural households having an annual income of less than Rs. 1,000 would cover cases of chronic economic backwardness. Within this low income group, following Gandhiji's concept of "*Antyodaya*", priority of assistance is recommended for about 50 per cent of families with an annual income of less than Rs. 500. Families with an annual income of less than Rs. 250 should be regarded as destitutes. It has been urged that they should be taken care of in first instance by suitable welfare measures which should be the responsibility of or routed through the Panchayati Raj institutions. No means test is applied to the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes, the entire community of which has been regarded as forming part of the weaker sections and deserving assistance. The major recommendations of the Study Group are as follows.

Great importance is attached to the public works programme as providing the "quickest and widest possible relief" to the weaker sections. Rural industrialization is another recommendation of the Study Group both for lifting the

economy from the morass it has fallen into as also for raising the standard of living of the economically and socially weak. It is, however, pointed out that rural industrialization should not be conceived of as being limited to what are termed at present as "rural industries" or agricultural processing industries. There must be an even spread of industries throughout the countryside.

The grant of educational assistance is an essential requirement for the weaker sections. The Study Group has recommended the provision, subject to a "means test", of free education and free boarding and lodging in mixed hostels upto the higher secondary stage.

On the role of Community Development, the Study Group states that the programme should be regarded not only as a means but also as the *end*. Having regard to the national priorities laid down in the Third Five-Year Plan, the funds under grants and loans should, as a rule, be devoted only to schemes involving community participation specially benefiting the weaker sections besides extension work including demonstration.

Examining the role of co-operatives in ameliorating the lot of the weaker sections, the Study Group has recommended that the risk fund should be suitably augmented and co-operative credit societies which are prepared to undertake the risk of cultivation on marginal lands should be helped. In regard to co-operative farming, it has been recommended that (i) the pooling of land should be for a minimum period of ten years; (ii) loans should be provided to enable farm labourers to take shares in co-operative farming societies, and (iii) as a general principle, 40 per cent of the produce (after meeting interest, revenue, labour and other charges) should be distributed to those who have contributed land to the co-operative; 40 per cent to labour; and the rest should be credited to the reserve fund.

Stressing the role of Panchayati Raj, it is reported that the whole bias of Panchayati Raj institutions has to be towards the weaker sections of the village community. Responsibility should be vested in the village panchayats for providing full-employment either in the works programme of the panchayats or by the utilization of idle manpower in public works under the proposed government's guaranteed employment scheme and for providing the minimum essential social services needed by village community.

Looking Ahead: Prospects of India's Economy and Trade in 1981, National Council of Applied Economic Research, New Delhi, 1962. Pp. v+102. Rs. 6.00.

This brochure attempts to project the growth of the Indian economy in 1980-81 and examines in what directions will the economy develop in these years. Its primary object is to focus attention on planning efforts in terms of mobilization of human and material resources in the most productive way so as to achieve, in the shortest possible time, the national goals of eradication of mass poverty, substantial improvement in the standard of living of the growing millions, liquidation of illiteracy, provision of fuller employment to all, reduction of inequalities in income and wealth, reduction of regional disparities, etc. The projections that