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ANNOUNCEMENT

SUBJECTS SELECTED FOR THE NEXT CONFERENCE OF THE SOCIETY

The 34th Annual Conference of the Society will be held sometime in December, 1974. The dates and venue for the Conference will be intimated in due course. The following subjects have been selected for discussion at the Conference.

- I. Wages and Incomes of the Weaker Sections in Rural India.
- II. Economics of Commercial Crops.
- III. Strategy for Agricultural Growth and Equity.

The synopses of these subjects are given below. Papers (in triplicate along with summaries) for discussion at the Conference should reach the Society's Office not later than 15th September, 1974.

SYNOPSIS

Subject I

WAGES AND INCOMES OF THE WEAKER SECTIONS IN RURAL INDIA

During the last few years the economic condition of the vast mass of rural landless labour and small farmers, generally referred to as the 'weaker section' in rural society, has attracted considerable attention. One aspect of this problem, relating to employment and unemployment has received of late considerable attention in the literature and was the subject for papers and discussion in our Conference only a couple of years ago. The other aspect, namely, wage rates and earnings of the wage labourers has not received the same attention. Even so, the two aspects of the problem, cannot be studied in isolation. Monthly data on the prevailing wage rates in most of the districts of India have been regularly published by the Government of India for more than two decades now. Similarly, periodic surveys, like the different rounds of Agriculture Labour Enquiry and the N.S.S., contain data pertaining to particular years and regions. These and other relevant information may be used to discuss following problems :

1. The trend of money and real wage rates in agriculture over the years and the circumstances (including the quantum of employment) affecting it. The level of wage rates partly reflects the trend in the level of earn-

ing of the working class. The trend of real wage rates in any region is therefore of interest in this context. Some students have noticed that the money wage rates are lagging behind commodity prices or cost of living. Is this borne out by the experience of the last two decades? In particular, how have wage rates behaved in areas of rapid agricultural growth or Green Revolution? A systematic examination of the available empirical data should help to throw light on the question.

2. Another aspect of the question relates to the seasonal pattern of wages. Is there a seasonality in wage rates? If so, what accounts for this seasonality? Is it possible to use the seasonal index of wages as an indicator of seasonal unemployment? How has the seasonal pattern been affected by 'Green Revolution'?

Changes in the level of employment in the rural areas over the years and over the seasons of a year may have to be analysed in order to throw light on the above problems.

3. Governments have enacted laws fixing minimum wage in agriculture. It would be interesting to examine the basis for such minimum wages, and compare them with the reported minimum wage levels over the years. How far has such legislation been successful?

4. Has organized action on the part of the agricultural labourers been able to improve the wage rate? In what circumstances has this been possible? Examination of specific experiences would appear necessary for the purpose.

5. Finally, it may be interesting to examine the relative level and trend in rural and urban real wages in order to see if the latter exert any influence on the former, and if the organized urban labour has fared better than the unorganized rural labour through the years.

Subject II

ECONOMICS OF COMMERCIAL CROPS

(*Please Note* : The term commercial crops means non-foodgrain commercial crops such as cotton, jute, tobacco, various oilseeds, fruits and vegetables. It also includes garden, plantation and tree crops, excepting large-scale plantations like tea, coffee, etc. Studies may cover any one or more of the commercial crops at the macro or micro level. Papers confined to items I and II *only* noted below will have low priority.)

- I. Role of commercial crops in economic development:
Past performance and future prospects.

II. Review of past production of commercial crops.

Trends in production.

Relative contribution of area and productivity to the growth of production of commercial crops.

III. Factors behind past trends in the production of commercial crops.

Relative importance of physical, technological, economic and other factors.

Impact of relative price trends.

Impact of yield increasing technologies of foodgrains crops on cultivation of commercial crops.

IV. Cultivation of commercial vis-a-vis foodgrain crops.

Geographical production pattern.

Comparative advantages of different regions.

Factors determining allocation of land and other resources between commercial and foodgrain crops.

Impact of commercial crops on farm income and investment.

Factors behind low productivity of commercial crops.

Spread of HYVs of commercial crops.

Economics of cultivating new varieties vis-a-vis old varieties of commercial crops.

Prospects for the new varieties of commercial crops.

V. Public Policy

Estimation of the future requirements of commodities such as cotton, jute and various oilseeds.

Research and input requirements for continuous growth in the production of commercial crops.

Identification of different instruments of public policy in accelerating the production of commercial crops, relative efficacy of these instruments.

Regional specialisation in the cultivation of commercial crops vis-a-vis regional self-sufficiency in foodgrain production.

Role of public policy in promoting regional specialisation.

Subject III

STRATEGY FOR AGRICULTURAL GROWTH AND EQUITY

Different models of agricultural growth have placed varying emphasis on key factors (like technology, organization and institutional change) as also on the policy variables (like input and output prices, fiscal policies, quantum and nature of investment, etc.) in explaining the path of agricultural development. The strategies suggested in these models have their implications in terms of equity.

The gains/losses accruing from agricultural growth may be distributed on an inequitable basis among the producers and the consumers, among factors-owners and factors-users and, among different strata of agricultural producers within a region or between different regions. There is some thinking, supported by empirical evidence, on the narrower issue of income distribution among different classes of producers in the traditional as well as in the transitional setting. But the other aspects, and the problem of the demarcation of the area of conflict between equity and growth in the agricultural sector, deserve a systematic discussion. The Indian experience of past 20 years or so in this respect may be examined to explain the relationship between various approaches to agricultural development and equity. In addition to the discussion of the broad strategies of growth, an evaluation of different programmes from this viewpoint may also prove fruitful.

Further, there is some scope for discussing the likely impact of various policy instruments in diverting the flow of benefits in socially desired directions. What policy instruments can be used and to what effect is another aspect on which discussion can be organized with profit.

GUIDELINES FOR SUBMISSION OF PAPERS BY AUTHORS

1. **Subjects:** The objective of the *Journal* is to provide a forum for dissemination and exchange of findings of research on agricultural economics. Purely descriptive material is not appropriate for such a journal. Papers dealing with (i) new developments in research and methods of analysis, or (ii) which apply existing empirical research methods and techniques to new problems or situations, or (iii) which attempt to test new hypotheses/ theoretical formulations or modifications of existing theories or policies to explain economic phenomena especially in the Indian context, or (iv) papers based on research done by the authors bringing out new facts or data presented in an analytical frame will be preferred. Younger economists are advised to seek guidance from their seniors in the preparation of the paper for the *Journal*. A one-page statement indicating the author's own assessment of the importance and relevance of the findings reported in his paper in the context of recent researches would be welcome.

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