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Vol XXXI
No. 1

ISSN 0019-5014

JANUARY-
MARCH
1976

INDIAN JOURNAL OF AGRICULTURAL ECONOMICS



INDIAN SOCIETY OF
AGRICULTURAL ECONOMICS,
BOMBAY

REVIEWS IN BRIEF

Agricultural Colonization in India Since Independence, B.H. Farmer, Royal Institute of International Affairs, Oxford University Press, London, 1974. Pp. xi+372. Rs. 105.00.

This book presents a comprehensive study of agricultural colonization of wasteland in India since Independence based on field investigation in the principal areas of colonization and in a number of minor projects conducted by the author during 1963, 1968 and 1971-72 and on exhaustive discussions with policy-makers in the government. The important theme examined in the book is the misleading concept of culturable waste as was developed by the British Raj and the criteria which determine what land is cultivable. It is composed of 14 chapters. Chapter 2 indicates briefly the themes in the occupation of wasteland in pre-British period and describes the principal characteristics of wasteland policy and of colonization in the British period. The discussion of the historical background to agricultural colonization in India during the pre-British period is confined to three themes, namely, (1) the survival of forest and other wasteland and the associated pattern of discontinuous settlement, (2) the alternate advance and retreat of the frontier between settlement and waste almost throughout Indian history and (3) the practices and laws concerning the occupation for agricultural purposes of land previously held waste. Chapters 3 and 4 describe the main areas in India in which agricultural colonization has been in progress since Independence. The areas covered by the study are (1) the dry lands of Rajasthan and western Haryana, (2) the Tarai of Uttar Pradesh and Bihar, (3) Greater Malnad which includes the hill areas of Malnad, Wynad, the Nilgiris and the high ranges of Kerala, (4) Dandakaranya, (5) Assam, (6) a number of small regions in India, notably those in the Chambal valley and the Malwa plateau and (7) regions in which land has been made available for colonization by the intensification of existing cultivation, *e.g.*, the Raichur Doab. In the next chapter is outlined the general nature and scope of this colonization. The scale of colonization is compared with other means of opening up wasteland for agriculture and with the achievements of nearby countries in the same field. The broad categories of persons who have benefited from schemes of agricultural colonization and the considerations which have influenced the colonization policy are examined in Chapter 6. The principal natural difficulties and hazards confronting colonization are discussed in Chapter 7. A critical review of the role of the organizations concerned with the surveys of natural resources including wastelands and planning their use is provided in Chapter 8. Problems of land use technology, the economic status of the settlers in post-Independence colonization schemes, systems of agricultural extension, issues of land tenure and related structural aspects of the agrarian economy of the colonists and the social problems evident in the colonies are discussed in the rest of the chapters. The concluding chapter explores the criteria against which the future of agricultural colonization in India should be judged.

The term agricultural colonization is defined to mean "the establishment of people on wasteland by government organizations for agricultural purposes and in groups large enough to require completely new villages." Following this definition, the total area actually brought under cultivation as a result of the process of agricultural colonization in areas other than Assam, Dandakaranya and Rajasthan between 1947 and 1971 is estimated at about 6 lakh hectares of wasteland and families of 160,000 agricultural colonists or about 8 lakh people were settled in new villages. The impact of colonization on the wasteland of India as a whole is, however, by no means negligible. The beneficiaries of agricultural colonization were composed of unspecified landless, Harijans, tribals and old temporary cultivating lessees (44 per cent of the total), refugees (20 per cent), dispossessed cultivators (13 per cent), ex-servicemen, political sufferers, educated unemployed (7 per cent), ex-jagirdars (4 per cent) and other categories (12 per cent). Though in their choice of categories of settlers to benefit from colonization schemes, the Central and State Governments have been actuated by welfare motive, there were instances of possible conflict between the welfare motive and productivity. A significant observation relating to the administrative arrangements for colonization is that colonization is not seen as a single activity, but as one activity of each of a number of agencies engaged mainly in social welfare and rather less often in economic development. The deficiencies in the assessment of natural resources and of natural hazards and in the application of knowledge about these matters have adversely affected colonization of wasteland in India. The book contains suggestions and recommendations for overcoming them.

The study of colonization schemes as they were in 1963 illustrated the extremely wide range of responses to the possibility of modern technical innovation, and coupled with this, the very sporadic occurrence of highly positive responses. Another general theme recognizable in muted form in the colonization schemes was the emergence of large-scale capitalist agriculture. A strong plea is made for reviewing colonization policy in the light of the costs and returns of alternative means of conferring equal benefits on those whom it is designed to help, as for example, by the intensification of cultivation coupled with land reform. No other work has dealt comprehensively with the agricultural colonization of wasteland in India since Independence. On the whole, this book is a painstaking and well-documented study of agricultural colonization which will be of interest to the agricultural policy-makers and administrators.

Agricultural Development Planning: Economic Concepts, Administrative Procedures and Political Processes, Willard W. Cochrane, Praeger Special Studies in International Economics and Development, Praeger Publishers Inc., New York, U.S.A., 1974. Pp. xii+224. \$ 16.50.

This book discusses the conceptual process of agricultural development planning from organizational requirements to techniques for coping with the

political, economic and administrative aspects of planning. Attention is focussed on the process of planning and on such substantive areas as the society's demands on the agricultural economy, the resource and institutional requirements of agricultural development, the conceptual basis of development planning, procedural steps in planning, techniques of planning, policy issues in agricultural development planning, the role of programmes, projects and institutions in agricultural development and problems of plan implementation. The agricultural development planning efforts in three less developed countries (LDCs), *viz.*, India, Thailand and Tunisia are reviewed with a view to gain an insight into how those planning efforts might have been more effective. The central thesis of this study is that development planning in the LDCs should be limited in scope and application and should be concerned with those kinds of activities that the market does poorly or not at all. It is suggested that planning should be limited to three sets of activities, *viz.*, (1) the provision of physical and social infrastructure, (2) the pursuit of policies designed to induce private parties to produce and consume in changed ways and combinations, and (3) the pursuit of policies and programmes designed to reduce real income inequalities among the population. The production and distribution of consumer goods as well as intermediate goods should be left to the direction of the market. The merit of the book lies in building up its central thesis neatly, step by step, in a way easily intelligible even to a layman. Students of agricultural economics would greatly benefit by reading this book, specially Chapter 6—Planning within Agriculture and Chapter 8—Agricultural Planning in Three Countries. Chapter 6 focusses attention on the substance of agricultural planning, and the use of examples and illustrations in agricultural project analysis and appraisal makes the discussion meaningful.

The Green Revolution in West Pakistan: Implications of Technological Change, Leslie Nulty, Praeger Special Studies in International Economics and Development, Praeger Publishers, Inc., New York, U.S.A., 1972. Pp.+xxi +150. \$ 12.50.

Being in the nature of a case study in depth of the Green Revolution in West Pakistan, this book focusses attention on the issues relating to the role of agriculture in economic development as presented in economic theory and examines some of the theoretical propositions about the role of agriculture by reference to empirical evidence. This is followed by a description of the physical and organizational background of West Pakistan's agriculture. The contribution of the agricultural sector to the overall economic growth of the province is then quantified. The re-evaluation of the role of agriculture is done by examining the contribution of technological change to agricultural production, the economic incentives for higher agricultural productivity and the scope for further development of the agricultural sector. The epilogue succinctly sums up the important lessons derived from West Pakistan's experience in agricultural development.

The study observes that in the bulk of development literature, agriculture has generally been assigned an ancillary role which is limited to the supply of surplus labour to the industrial sector and wage goods for industrial labour, and, less frequently, to the supply of an economic surplus for investment in the industrial sector. The major elements of the dual economy model that are largely responsible for the subsidiary role accorded to agriculture are stated to be (1) the low elasticity of demand for agricultural output with respect to income, (2) the "constant institutional wage" and the sector's low propensity to save and invest and (3) the low productivity of labour. The study raises doubts about the validity and relevance of these assumptions in the light of empirical evidence from West Pakistan. The discussion has emphasized the imperative need for a serious re-evaluation of the major aspects of the role of agriculture in development, which have too long been considered actual or potential drags on the growth of the entire economy. The crucial factor which has made this reformulation of the development process feasible is an increase in agricultural productivity, arising from the adoption of new technology as embodied in private tubewell irrigation development and use of chemical fertilizers and miracle seeds. A more optimistic view of the potential contributions of agriculture to employment, savings and investment in West Pakistan has been presented, based on a reinterpretation of the relevant economic relationships characteristic of the sector. The study leads to the conclusion that whereas the agricultural sector has fulfilled its functions with regard to crop production and increased savings, continuation of tractor mechanization is likely to make it fall short in the function of creating more employment. A depressing conclusion of the study is that the prevailing distribution of economic and political power which permitted the vested interests to reap the larger share of the gains would nullify the development potential of the green revolution to raise general standards of living.

PL 480 Aid and India's Food Problem, B.R. Shenoy, Affiliated East-West Press Pvt. Ltd., New Delhi, 1974. Pp. ix+342. Rs. 60.00.

A perspective but incisive account of the Public Law 480 aid to India to meet her food requirements is presented in this book. It is divided into nine chapters. The first part composed of four chapters deals with the genesis, content, growth, effects and problems raised by the U.S. Agricultural Trade Development and Assistance Act, 1954, commonly called PL 480. In the process, it reviews, with special reference to India, the exports of U.S. agricultural surpluses under PL 480 and examines the economic effects of PL 480 imports and the monetary consequences of PL 480 finance on the Indian economy. The second part consisting of five chapters examines India's food problem, suggests remedial measures to the maladies caused by capital starvation of agriculture and reviews the recent policy measures taken by the Government during the period 1972-74 for attaining food self-sufficiency. The policy objective of PL 480 food aid was the attainment by the recipient

countries of self-reliance, which called for the limitation of food imports to the market deficit. Examining the economic effects of PL 480 imports on India, it is pointed out that imports of wheat into India during 1956-63 far exceeded domestic marketable surplus and repressed wheat prices and these excessive imports, via price repression, retarded the expansion of cereal production in India, thereby undermining the PL 480 objective of self-reliance. During 1963-66 though wheat imports were nearly double the domestic marketable surplus, wheat prices went out of control. When in the late 1960's, wheat imports declined to within market deficits, the domestic food production recovered and the wheat economy was released from price repression. It is argued that price repression and its ill-effects could have been avoided if PL 480 imports had been regulated by reference to the price trends in the *mandis*. The impact of PL 480 finance on domestic monetary stability was unsettling. The crucial factor in the expansionary character of PL 480 finance was the simultaneous creation of two counterpart funds, one represented created moneys and the other the sale proceeds of commodity aid. The inflationary rise in prices during the nine years from 1962-63 to 1970-71 was attributed to the expansion of money caused by the disbursement of these counterpart funds.

A critical assessment of the contribution of PL 480 aid to a solution of India's food problem revealed that the PL 480 strategy failed to overcome the marginal market deficit in food and to correct the nutrition deficit. It is observed that there is little hope of solving either aspect of India's food problem unless the capital starvation of agriculture as manifested by neglected capital formation on farms and the shortage of agricultural inputs is corrected. Examining the available evidence, the study showed that PL 480 aid did little more than finance some of the social overheads of agriculture but did precious little to correct this capital starvation. For promoting investment effort in agriculture, a basic transformation of prevailing agricultural policies is suggested. Pending the necessary restructuring of the overall economic policies, there is no escape from a return to PL 480 and other concessional imports.