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INDIAN SOCIETY OF
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ANNOUNCEMENTS

SEMINAR ON DISPARATE RATES OF GROWTH: CAUSES AND REMEDIES

The Gokhale Institute of Politics and Economics has kindly agreed to convene on behalf of the Society a Seminar on "Disparate Rates of Growth: Causes and Remedies." The Seminar will be held in the first week of June, 1977. A Key Paper on the subject has been invited from Dr. Yoginder K. Alagh of the Planning Commission. A few more papers reflecting different approaches or methodology have also been invited from a few scholars to make the discussions more comprehensive. About 20-25 scholars would be invited to participate in the Seminar.

SUBJECTS SELECTED FOR THE NEXT (37TH) ANNUAL CONFERENCE OF THE SOCIETY

The 37th Annual Conference of the Society will be held under the auspices of the Indian Agricultural Research Institute (ICAR), New Delhi-12 in December, 1977. The exact dates of the Conference will be intimated in due course. The following subjects have been selected for discussion at the Conference.

- (1) Economics of Nutrition.
- (2) Strategies for Integrated Rural Development.
- (3) Returns from Investment on Agricultural Research.

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 *1st August, 1977*.

SYNOPSES

Subject I

ECONOMICS OF NUTRITION

1. Introduction

It is common knowledge that inadequate intake of food would adversely affect the size, body weight, stature and stamina of individuals. In recent years, nutritionists have come up with some evidence, though not conclusive, in support of a link between the level of nutrition and mental performance. The findings of several studies have brought out the prevalence of widespread under-nutrition and malnutrition in developing count-

ries, a condition which can lead to steady degeneration, mental and physical, of large numbers of human beings. Such a prospect is alarming and unless timely and effective action is taken it will not only erode farther the welfare and quality of life of the vast masses of the people, but may defeat the goal of overall economic development of these countries.

In recent times, considerable research has gone into the dietary, clinical and socio-economic dimensions of nutrition in this country. There is a large and growing body of data covering various aspects of nutrition awaiting detailed analysis. Some of the important questions which may be borne in mind by social scientists while approaching the data are: What are the dimensions of under-nutrition and malnutrition? Which are the socio-economic groups affected? An insight into the nature and magnitude of the problem gained through a careful analysis of the data could also help us in making a critical evaluation of the current policies, including nutrition programmes.

2. Nature and Magnitude of the Problem

An alarm was sounded in the recent past about the "protein gap" or "protein crisis" supposed to be facing the under-developed countries. Now, it is slowly being accepted that the essence of the problem is not protein gap, but merely a low intake of food. Various attempts have been made—on the basis of the required calorie intake, as recommended by the Indian Council of Medical Research, and consumer expenditure data thrown up by the National Sample Survey and other sample surveys—to estimate the proportion of the population deficient in calorie intake. How valid is the recommended dosage a correct basis for arriving at such proportions? How adequate are the data on consumer expenditure for making these estimates? More critical and probing analysis is called for to provide a proper understanding of the problems of under-nutrition and malnutrition.

3. Diagnosis of the Problem

What are the causes of such widespread under-nourishment in these countries? Several hypotheses are offered to explain the phenomenon such as low level of development and income, insufficient food, inequitable distribution of purchasing power and available food supplies, ignorance and taboos, etc. Will economic growth and rise in per capita income lead to improvement in the nutrition status of the masses? Does an increase in food output necessarily make a dent on the level of nutrition of the masses? Has the substantial increase in the production of foodgrains in India in recent years caused a perceptible improvement in the intake of the poorer sections of the population? What impact did the Green Revolution have on the area under, and production of, coarse cereals, millets and pulses, the major sources of calories and protein of these groups? These are some of the questions which need to be investigated in depth.

4. *Nutrition Programmes*

With the support from various international organizations like the FAO, UNICEF, WHO, etc., a number of nutrition intervention programmes are being implemented in India and other developing countries. These programmes consist mostly of direct delivery of food to certain vulnerable sections of the population. Without a drastic change in the overall development strategy oriented to generating greater employment opportunities and income of the masses of the people, can the current nutrition programmes make any lasting dent on the problem?

Subject II

STRATEGIES FOR INTEGRATED RURAL DEVELOPMENT

The concept of Integrated Rural Development (IRD) got crystalized in the process of the experience of planning for economic development in the country during the last two decades. Serious problems of misutilization and waste of national natural resources, malallocation of the resources between sectors leading to inefficiencies in resource utilization, leakages of the benefits of investments made in the rural areas to 'metropolitan centres' leaving the rural periphery under-developed, tardy rate of growth in expansion of employment opportunities in the rural areas, etc., arising in the course of development have given rise to the anxiety regarding strategy for proper development of the rural areas and hence the emergence of the concept of Integrated Rural Development.

It would be appropriate, at this juncture, to examine in depth this approach both at the conceptual as well as at the operational level.

Strategies to achieve integrated development of various sectors of productive activity may be elaborated in relation to specific regions. This would be mainly relevant for special resource regions rich in forest, fish or horticultural resources. These could provide raw materials for new processing and manufacturing activities and thus help generate new activity networks. Rural areas predominantly agricultural in character producing traditional industrial raw materials, *viz.*, cotton, oilseeds, pulses, etc., have limited potential for development as secondary activity based on the use of these raw materials is already well-established in the urban centres. With the technology currently in use in these industries, the rural areas cannot compete with the developed urban centres due to lack of the necessary infrastructural, market and other facilities. A design drawing upon an entirely new technological mix, delinked from the international forces, suggesting gradual modifications in the technological/products mix at the national level with

basic elements of the technology derived from the rural local resources development needs will have to be formulated and illustrated with reference to specific regions.

Another useful exercise could take up the problem of integrated development of the various factors of production at the rural level. Today, because of the skewed distribution of land, the proportions in which capital and labour are applied to a given land unit vary considerably with the size of land holding. As the land, labour and capital markets are fragmented the costs of these factors are not the same for small and large cultivators and this leads to non-optimal resource allocation. In view of these problems, the exercise could indicate how the land, water and other natural resources together with the available human resources can be optimally used in a given region. It is important to work out not merely the physical considerations of growth potential and its optimal utilization but also to indicate the need and the capacity for changes in the local political, social, administrative and financial institutions particularly in relation to their accessibility to different groups. The restructuring of resource use together with the strategies for investment and modifications in the organizational set-up can, thus, form the basis for research papers. The appropriate implementing agency and the mode of involvement of the people in the IRD programme may be suggested.

The problem of integration of the various activities—primary production, storage, processing, manufacturing and the modifications in the activity linkage pattern so that the base of commodity production widens, processing and manufacturing activities expand and higher levels of skills get developed in the process—can also form the subject matter of research to be elaborated, again, in relation to specific region.

It would be useful to work out the implications of the IRD Project indicating the anticipated distribution of gains of such development among the various groups in the rural areas and the gains likely to flow out into the urban areas. IRD schemes are being evolved with particular target groups, *viz.*, poorer sections of the population in view. It would be valuable to examine how far the benefits from such schemes lend strength to the economic position of the weaker sections and if there are leakages, the reasons for the same. Attempts are being made to help the rural poor through Minimum Needs Programme. The role of health, nutrition, hygiene and rural housing schemes in rural development and how these can form an integral part of IRD programme may be examined.

It is important that the schemes/programmes suggested are elaborated with reference to conditions and problems in specific regions and extensive use of the field investigations and field experience is made in the exercise.

Subject III

RETURNS FROM INVESTMENT ON AGRICULTURAL RESEARCH

A number of empirical studies over the last decade have shown that investment on agricultural research has paid rich dividends. However, with some exceptions, work on pay-offs to research in developing countries has received little professional attention. Yet it is for this group of nations, which face severe financial and other resource constraints, that this kind of an exercise has utmost importance.

The most critical difficulty confronting researchers in this area is the unavailability of data on levels of research expenditures. Ideally, one would like to have these data at a fairly disaggregated (commodity, region or problem-area-wise) level. In order to obtain this information one would need to scrutinise the expenditures statements of State Governments in considerable detail. There are problems of comparability and lumpy investments in the capital stocks (laboratories, buildings, experimental farms, etc.), which make the job compilation of research expenditures series extremely arduous. Then there are centrally sponsored research projects (under several All-India Co-ordinated Research Projects of the Indian Council of Agricultural Research) in each State. Estimates of expenditures for these and other ICAR research Institutes (if any) have to be obtained from a different source. One must also be careful about including investment in agricultural extension and schooling. As a cross-check, it would be useful to look at the scientific manpower position. Thus, compilation and refinements in cost data would be the first essential step.

In fact, analysis of these time-series data would itself be an extremely rewarding exercise, particularly in terms of showing up inefficiencies in the existing allocation pattern of research resources.

Several approaches have been used to evaluate the contribution of research. One could relate research expenditures to productivity index or use research expenditures (or a suitable proxy, *e.g.*, stock of scientific manpower) as a separate variable in a production function. Or, one could use the consumer-producer surplus approach. Each one of them is fairly demanding in terms of data and analytical skill.

The analysis of returns to investment in agricultural research could be conducted at several levels. One could compare investment and benefit at region, State or national level. The problem in working at region or State level is that one has to account for the contribution of research in other regions or States. Or, one could take individual commodity or research project or group of commodities and work out the pay-offs. Each one of

the above has its use. Specifically, it should be our endeavour to answer the following kind of questions:

1. What is the size of investment in agricultural research? Are research resources allocated in accordance with priorities?
2. What has been the pay-off to investment in agricultural research? At aggregate, region or commodity level?
3. What is the nature of interaction between agricultural research and other components of the knowledge sector, *viz.*, extension and schooling? Between research conducted within the region and that conducted outside?

DOCUMENTED INDEX OF ARTICLES RELATING TO AGRICULTURAL ECONOMICS

The Indian Society of Agricultural Economics, with the financial support of the Indian Council of Social Science Research (ICSSR), prepared in 1971 a documented index of 11,039 articles relating to Agricultural Economics published in Indian and foreign periodicals, covering the period 1951-70. The index is classified according to the Dewey Decimal System and computer-printed. Copies of this index can be made available to Universities and research institutions at cost (Rs. 350 per set), provided four orders are received at a time.

A similar index of articles has been prepared covering each of the years from 1971 to 1975. The index for 1975 covers 913 titles. Thanks to financial assistance received from the ICSSR, the index is supplied at a subsidised cost of Rs. 25 per set for each of the years 1971-75 (excluding forwarding charges) to enable a larger number of research institutions and Universities to avail of this facility. References can be made available in specific fields provided a minimum of four orders are received. This service is rendered on a non-profit basis. Orders for the supply of these indexes may be placed with the Hon. Secretary of the Society.

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Foreword by

Prof. M. L. Dantwala

This index consists of six parts: Author Index, Title Index, Subject Index, Index to Book Reviews, Reviewers' Index and Appendix embodying the subjects discussed at the Annual Conferences of the Indian Society of Agricultural Economics.

"..the index would prove useful to teachers and research scholars in universities and other research institutions engaged in Agricultural Economics research."

Prof. M. L. Dantwala in his Foreword

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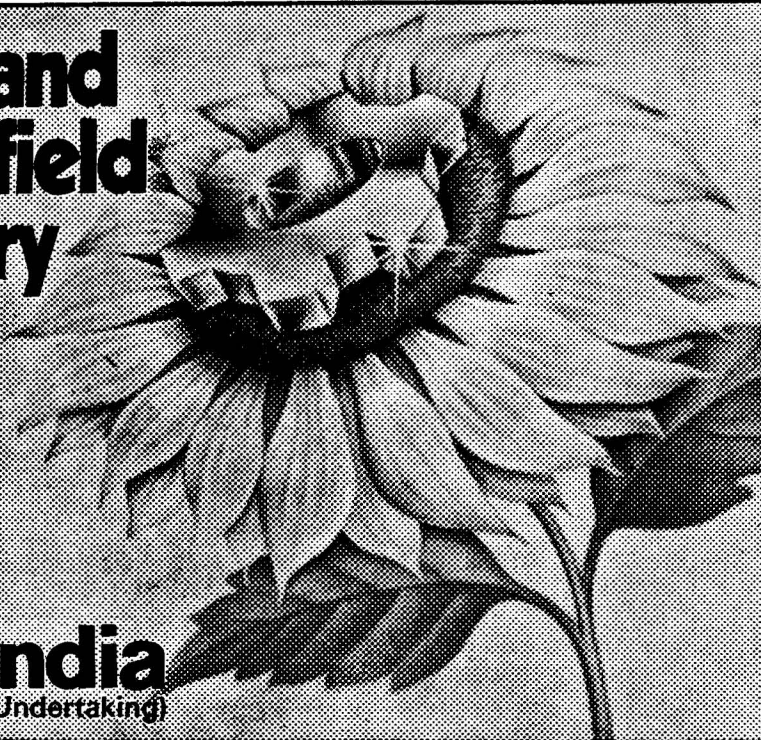
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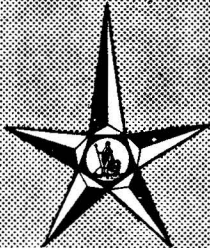
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Bruce A. McCarl, Wilfred W. Candler, D. Howard Doster & Paul R. Robbins
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