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Vol XLII  
No. 2

APRIL-  
JUNE  
1987

ISSN 0019-5014

# INDIAN JOURNAL OF AGRICULTURAL ECONOMICS



INDIAN SOCIETY OF  
AGRICULTURAL ECONOMICS,  
BOMBAY

## REVIEWS IN BRIEF

*Studies on Agrarian Reform and Rural Poverty*, M. R. El Ghonemy, K. H. Parsons, R. P. Sinha, N. Uphoff and P. Wignaraja, FAO Economic and Social Development Series No. 27, Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, Rome, Italy, 1984. Pp. vii+104.

The five studies included in this brochure contribute to the debate on the complex issues of agrarian reform and rural poverty in the third world countries. The first study on "The Crisis of Rural Poverty: Can Participation Resolve It" examines the linked questions of whether the alleviation of rural poverty is conditioned by giving the poor increasing opportunities for economic and political power in order to participate effectively and how this could lead to sustained development. It comes to the conclusion that the crisis of rural poverty cannot be expected to be resolved by participation through redistribution of power and opportunities in the agricultural sector alone. It emphasises that the interdependency of rural-urban economic and social relations also needs to be reformed. The second study on "The Place of Agrarian Reform in Rural Development Policies" points out that attempts to formulate agricultural development policies for the less developed countries would be more successful if economists better understood the nature and modes of transformation of the institutional order; this is particularly important for an understanding of the issues of agrarian reform. The third study considers the major problems associated with the landless, its magnitude and the remedial measures adopted to overcome the problem of landlessness and poverty. It concludes with a note of pessimism that even if a radical redistribution of land were feasible, it would only provide a breathing space in the densely populated countries unless population growth were brought down to manageable proportions and industrial development grew fast enough to absorb the additions to the labour force. The fourth study discusses the central role of local organisations and supply-side bureaucracy in rural development strategy of the developing countries for promoting greater efficiency in development efforts, enhancing equity and empowerment in the rural areas. It also spells out the elements of the strategy for strengthening local organisations for rural development tasks. The fifth study presents a critique of the old (anti-rural) model of development and its reformist option, attempts to demystify some specific elements of the model in the light of recent experience and draws some lessons stemming from actual development experiments at the macro national level and the rural micro grass-roots level. It suggests that some more coherent conceptual framework needs to be evolved to guide rural development activity, based on the emerging reality and the 'seeds of change' which it contains, through a new social praxis. The book makes an useful contribution to the literature on agrarian reform and rural poverty.

*The State of Food and Agriculture 1984*, Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, FAO Agriculture Series No. 18, Rome, Italy, 1985. Pp. xx+185.

This annual report reviews some of the developments that have occurred since the early 1970s as a background for its yearly assessment of the current food and agricultural situation in the world. It focusses on selected issues that have evolved from the time of the food crisis of the early 1970s, with particular reference to the food situation in the developing countries. The report is divided into two chapters. To mark the tenth anniversary of the World Food Conference, a part of the first chapter of the World Review analyses the trends and developments in global food supplies during the past decade. The second chapter focusses on the implications of urbanisation trends and rural-urban migration on food production and marketing.

The first chapter on World Review deals mainly with the economic, financial and trade environment, current food and agricultural situation and outlook, long-term trends and issues relating to food availability and utilisation, food and agricultural production, structural changes in agricultural trade and trends in external assistance to agriculture, and the natural resources sectors of fisheries and forestry. Estimates of world agricultural production for 1984 indicate that it was 4.5 per cent higher than in 1983. World production of cereals rose between 9 and 10 per cent. Production of cereals was particularly high in North America and Europe. In the developed countries food and agricultural production has gone up by 5 to 5.5 per cent. Agricultural output of developing countries increased by 2.9 per cent, the increase was less than the average annual rate of growth of 3.6 per cent during the last five years (1980-84). Despite some improvement in the food situation in some West African countries, a large number of countries continued to face food emergencies in 1985, particularly East Africa and Sahel. The worst drought of the century reached its peak in 1984, searing 21 countries in the African continent. By the end of 1984, 34 countries were reported to be experiencing abnormal food shortages, 26 in Africa, five in Asia and three in Latin America. The study shows that concessional multilateral assistance to agriculture suffered a sharp reduction of more than 15 per cent in 1983. Partly in response to the starvation in Africa, food and emergency food assistance expanded.

The review showed that in 28 developing countries with a total of more than 350 million people, per capita food supplies and dietary levels deteriorated between 1969-71 and 1979-81. It also revealed that food supplies increased most frequently in countries that achieved the most rapid rates of economic growth, either through their own production or through increased capacity to finance imports of food. Though more countries adopted cereal stock policies and national food security systems and evolved innovative regional arrangements to cover emergency food needs, much still remains to be done. An assessment of the long-term trends shows that the per capita

dietary energy supplies have improved in two-thirds of the 90 developing countries.

The report highlights the impact of recession on world trade, particularly on the developing countries. Faced with the problems posed by growing pressures for agricultural adjustment, deteriorating farm incomes and limited opportunities for alternative jobs outside agriculture, many trading countries, both developed and developing, resorted to protectionism in agricultural markets and import restrictions. The trade in food products in 1983 was more depressed than that of other main groups of agricultural commodities. While world food exports stagnated, cereal trade increased only marginally. The increase in export earnings from raw materials and beverages, which are of major importance to many developing countries, was insufficient to compensate for the losses incurred in recent years. The overall decline in world agricultural trade in 1983 reflected a reduction of about 2 per cent in the export value of crop and livestock products. There was, however, a moderate increase in the trade of fishery products and in the exports of forestry products. Developing countries as a whole emerged as net agricultural exporters in 1983 after having shown a net trade deficit in 1981 and 1982, but the improvement in the agricultural trade balances of the developing countries was precarious and slender. The main economic and market factors responsible for the reduction in agricultural trade in 1983 at a time of ample international supplies are: (1) improved domestic supply conditions and reduced import requirements in such large importing countries as the U.S.S.R., China, Brazil and Saudi Arabia, (2) inability to finance food import costs in many developing countries facing balance of payment and debt problems and (3) a reduction in demand caused by the appreciation of the U.S. dollar, which implied for many importing countries higher prices in their own currencies.

The special chapter on urbanisation examines the problems and opportunities created by urbanisation in the developing countries as they relate to the production and consumption of food, its marketing and distribution. Of the six sections in this chapter, the first section gives an introduction to the problems at hand, and the second section shows how urban and rural population is expected to grow and examines some of the causes of this growth. The third and fourth sections examine the consequences of urban growth for agricultural production and nutrition, while the fifth section analyses its implications for food marketing, with examples drawn mainly from developing countries. The last section presents suggestions for pacing the rate of growth of urbanisation to achieve harmony with broader development objectives and examines approaches that have been used by various countries to alleviate the problems for agriculture created by rapid urbanisation. The study suggests that rural-urban migration, rapid urbanisation and the excessive rise of primate cities can be modified by governmental actions in such a manner that the negative effects on people of too rapid urbanisation on an agrarian city can be mitigated. The sum of such measures may amount to no more than removal of an urban bias in

development policies or co-ordinating such policies. In other cases, more substantive measures may be required involving movements of people from one rural area to another or bringing jobs to rural people. Direct actions to mitigate some of the worst problems associated with the effects of urbanisation and rural-urban migration include policies directed towards (1) modifying migration, population redistribution and population growth through improving rural infrastructure, services and living conditions, creating employment through rural industries, rural family planning assistance, (2) helping food systems to adjust through marketing development and small farmer co-operation, local market development, and by increasing public and private complementarity in food marketing, better nutrition for low-income urban groups, and (3) rational and efficient use of natural resources. The report is supported by a wealth of data presented in as many as 37 tables and 21 annexure tables and 14 illustrative figures, which enrich its usefulness.

*Rural Employment and TRYSEM (A Case Study from Rajasthan)*, S. N. Mishra, Inter-India Publications, New Delhi-15, 1985. Pp. xix+145. Rs. 190.00.

This report is one of the series of evaluation studies of Training of Rural Youth for Self-Employment (TRYSEM) and reviews the progress of its implementation in Rajasthan. Divided into five chapters, the first two chapters deal with the meaning and significance of the scheme, the objectives of the study and methodology, and the profile of the two selected districts, namely, Alwar and Bhilwara, respectively. Chapter 3 assesses the responses and reactions of the selected trainees and trainers regarding the selection of trades and the methods of training programmes operating in the two selected districts and examines the quality and standard of training imparted to the trainees to achieve the objectives of self-employment. Chapter 4 presents the observations of the sample respondents relating to the objectives of the scheme, training methods and post-training facilities and the achievements and limitations of the scheme in the two districts. The last chapter provides some suggestions in regard to the TRYSEM scheme in particular and Integrated Rural Development Programme in general and suggests how best the scheme could be implemented with the help of effective participation of target groups.

The main objective of the TRYSEM scheme is to impart training in different trades and avocations to the selected rural youths and equip them with necessary skill to seek wage/self-employment. The main criteria used for the selection of trainees were that their income should not exceed Rs. 60 per month per member in a family and they should be in the age group 18-35. The analysis is based on data collected from 104 respondents (80 trainees and 24 trainers), selected from four blocks in the two districts of the State relating to the year 1982-83. The study comes to the conclusion that in spite of the sincere attempts on the part of trainers and officials, no proper training

was imparted to the trainees due to the lack of infrastructural facilities in training institutions. The trainees were deprived of proper post-training facilities due to lack of enthusiasm on the part of officials with the result that instead of settling in self-ventures, most of them sought wage employment. One of the limitations of the study is that it does not address itself to the question whether the trainees found secured employment in the trades for which training was imparted. Neither does it discuss why certain trades were favoured for training, nor does it consider whether the level of income was higher for the trained youth. The suggestions of the study are concerned only with the administrative arrangements for the successful implementation of the training programme in the rural areas.

*Women in Popular Movements: India and Thailand during the Decade of Women*,  
Gail Omvedt, United Nations Research Institute for Social Development,  
Geneva, 1986. Pp. xiv+65.

This short text presents the findings of a study carried out in 1985 in India and Thailand under the Popular Participation Project of the United Nations Research Institute for Social Development to examine the nature and extent of the role of women in the social movements and participatory organisations. The study analyses in historical perspective the encounters between social movements and social forces, structures and ideologies that maintain an inequitable distribution of power and wealth, and looks more particularly at the role of the state in these encounter sequences. Particular attention is given to the development of capitalist forms of production, which led to mass male out-migration from rural areas in India. The study notes the significance of political change towards authoritarian governments in both India and Thailand during the Emergency period. It outlines the development of new women's liberation movements and then examines some important issues of organizing rural poor women in order to trace the effects of the 'dialectics of participation'. It highlights the importance of alliances between educated middle class women activists and popular social movements and illustrates the difficulty with which social movements adopt and maintain a clear stand in relation to political parties and more traditional interest groups. The study makes a good contribution to the general debate on women's participation in social movements and female collective action.

*Agriculture in China: Prospects for Production and Trade*, Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, Paris, France, 1985. Pp. 84.

The report analyses the major factors influencing agricultural production, trade and food demand in China and includes a medium term outlook for agricultural production and commodity trade. It is divided into six chapters. The introductory chapter, which is too brief, describes the place

of Chinese agriculture in the general economy of the country. The first part of the second chapter presents the history of agricultural production and policy in China from 1953 to 1982. These 30 years are divided into five periods in terms of government policy and production system, *viz.*, 1953 to 1957 (formation of agricultural producer co-operatives), 1958 to 1962 (formation of people's communes and subsequent decline in agricultural production), 1963 to 1965 (recovery of production through policy changes), 1966 to 1978 (strengthening of the collective economy by the Cultural Revolution) and 1979 to 1982 [transition to private management of agriculture in accordance with agricultural policy of the Third Central Committee of the Communist Party (CCCP) Plenary Session (responsibility system)]. The next two parts in this chapter deal with crop production and livestock production respectively. The third chapter considers the conditions governing agricultural production in China and deals with (i) the major themes of agricultural policy of the Third CCCP Plenary Session, which are of particular importance to China's rural economy, namely, (a) recognition of the production team's right to self-determination (b) changes in the distribution policy and resultant changes in the organisation of production, (c) proposed reform of the structure of agriculture and (d) price policies, (ii) investment in agriculture, and (iii) use of agricultural inputs. The fourth chapter discusses the broader implications of agricultural policies for increasing agricultural production and examines agricultural production targets in the context of the sixth five year plan and the long-term plan. The fifth chapter deals with the trends in food consumption and the outlook for food consumption in the year 2000. The sixth chapter examines the pattern of trade in agricultural products, particularly wheat, maize, rice, barley, soyabean, cotton and sugar and assesses the outlook for agricultural commodity trade in 1985 and 1990.

Even though the Chinese data lack precision, consistency and clear definition of terms, they do illustrate a rather slow development away from the agrarian society and economy. Since 1978, the total area under crops has tended to decline while agricultural production expanded at an annual rate of 3.2 per cent during 1953-82 due to an increase in yields of crops through improved cropping techniques. Capital inputs contributed to the rise in yields per hectare particularly where they consisted in irrigation construction, seed selection and fertiliser application. Recent policy changes in agriculture introduced a system of responsibility at production unit level and provided more income and price incentives for individuals or small groups. Various systems of responsibility linking renumeration with output were introduced following the Third CCCP Plenary Session in 1978. The 'family farm commitment' which spread to the whole of China since 1981 took the country close to a *de facto* dismantling of its collective farming system. Though the land is still 'collective', labour organisation, production and distribution management are now run by the individual families. These policy changes stimulated grain production and resulted in unusual growth rates—over 9 per cent annual growth in 1982 and 1983, compared with an average of 3 per cent per annum over the preceding 20 years. Grain pro-

duction increased much more rapidly than in the past to achieve, on a much reduced area sown to grain, a record level of 387 million tonnes in 1983 as compared to 164 million tonnes in 1953. New price policies brought about an important change in cropping pattern favouring industrial crops at the expense of grain crops as a result of which production of cotton, sugar and oil-bearing crops increased over-proportionately. Livestock production accounted for only 17.4 per cent of agricultural production in China. The bulk of meat production consisted of pork, its share being 94 per cent in 1982. Milk production was about 1.37 million tonnes in 1980. The country's trade in agricultural products increased substantially by over 25 per cent in 1980 while the growth of agricultural imports remained under ten per cent. Exports of agricultural products which accounted for 55.7 per cent of all exports in 1953 declined sharply to 17.2 per cent in 1981. Imports of agricultural products constituted one-fifth of total imports in 1982. An average Chinese had a per capita daily intake of about 2,400 calories in 1982 of which 86 per cent was derived from grain. The recent increases in grain production and grain imports have helped China to eliminate shortage of grain and to embark upon more diversified agricultural development. At the same time, the country is moving away from food rationing towards a stage where income factors will have a larger role in determining food consumption patterns. Despite the unreliability of statistics for some sectors of the agricultural economy, the study will help the reader to arrive at a better understanding of the recent developments in Chinese agriculture.