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held at Cuttack, December 1956

SUBJECTS

1. PATTERN OF EMPLOYMENT OF HIRED LABOUR IN AGRICULTURE IN INDIA.
2. EFFECTIVENESS OF PROVISION IN THE TENANCY LEGISLATION FOR (i) SECURITY OF TENURE AND (ii) IMPROVEMENT IN TENURIAL STATUS OF TENANTS.
3. TRENDS IN THE OPERATION TECHNIQUES AND ORGANISATION OF AGRICULTURAL MARKETING IN INDIA.

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PREFACE

The current issue of the Journal contains the Proceedings of the 17th Annual Conference of the Society held in December 1956 at Cuttack. The Conference was attended by nearly 130 members from Central and State Governments, Universities and Research Institutions.

The subjects chosen for discussion at the Conference were :

- 1) Pattern of Employment of Hired Labour in Agriculture in India.
- 2) Effectiveness of Provision in the Tenancy Legislation for (i) Security of Tenure and (ii) Improvement in Tenurial Status of Tenants.
- 3) Trends in the Operation Techniques and Organisation of Agricultural Marketing in India.

An unusually large number of papers were received and read on Subject I, while on the other two subjects also there were select contributions. The level of discussions was maintained at the usual high level.

Unlike the previous Conference, it was not possible to arrange for a tape-recorder to record the discussion. Instead, arrangements were made to take down notes of the discussion by stenographers. However, notes have not been taken of the speeches of all the participants in the discussion. Hence, the discussion part on the respective subjects contain only reports which could be made available.

We take this opportunity of thanking the Utkal University under whose auspices the Conference met. We specially record our grateful thanks to Dr. S. Misra, the Local Secretary of the Conference, who had made excellent arrangements and to the Members of the Reception Committee for their generous hospitality.

15th May, 1957

Manilal B. Nanavati

President

converting of minimum wage into living wage, and the extending slightly of the period of remunerative employment. The long spells of enforced idleness still remain. Therefore a positive programme for canalising agro-industries and light industries into this region is urgently needed. In fact, Government may have to function here for a time as the biggest employer of casual and unskilled labour in a determined effort to ensure to it a wage characterised by both adequacy and stability.

PATTERN OF AGRICULTURAL LABOUR IN UTTAR PRADESH

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The data used in this paper were collected as part of a sample inquiry, conducted by the Department of Economics and Statistics, U.P. Government in rural areas of Uttar Pradesh.

Sample Design

The State was first divided into four regions : eastern, central, western and hills. Each region was stratified into non-overlapping strata, each stratum consisting of one district. Multi-stage sampling was then used involving (1) selection of two tahsils with probability proportional to size and with replacement, size being measured by the population in the year 1951, (2) selection of one village from each sample tahsil with probability proportional to size and with replacement, size being again measured by the population in the year 1951, and (3) stratification of all families of the sample village into three strata, namely cultivators, agricultural labourers and others, the basis of stratification being principal occupation. From each stratum in a region the number of families from the sample village has been so determined that the sample is self-weighted for each type of families at the region level.

The total number of sample households in the sample from a particular region and type has been obtained by first working out the total number of sample households (of all types together) for a particular region by distributing the total sample size for the State in proportion to the population of the regions and then allocating them to the three types of families in the proportion of 46 : 23 : 31 for the eastern region, 57 : 18 : 25 for the central region, 48 : 23 : 29 for the western

region, and 44 : 17 : 19 for the hill region. The total size of the sample for the State as a whole is 1224 households. The total number of households selected in a village varies from 5 to 19.

Scope

In view of the difficulties involved in distinguishing women who were normally engaged in economic operations from those women who were not so engaged and functioned as only housewives throughout the year, to secure reliable primary data, and also because the problem of unemployment and under-employment seems to be more important in respect of men, the data collected and used for this paper cover only men and completely exclude all women. All the 51 districts of Uttar Pradesh are, however, included.

Method of Collecting Data

The data are collected by Economic Intelligence Inspectors of the Department who are posted at each district headquarters and who visit the selected villages regularly once in a month and stay there over-night. They personally meet the selected family and collect information in accordance with a prescribed questionnaire. The information regarding economic status, industrial status and detailed labour time disposition is collected for the preceding seven days, while information relating to labour force participation pertains to the period of preceding 30 days.

CONCEPTS AND DEFINITIONS

(1) *Working Days* :—A village holiday on which no work is generally done in the village either because it is a festival or an important bathing or “*parva*” day or a *mela* day or a *bazar* day or because of unworkable weather conditions is not considered as a working day.

(2) *Normal Working Hours* :—The number of hours for which a man in the village would work on a day taking into account all economic activities, if there were no dearth of gainful work to be done and if he were to be regarded as having done a full day’s work, constitutes the normal working hours.

(3) *Labour Force* :—The number of men available for gainful work on the preceding day constitutes the labour force.

(4) *Regular Labour Force* :—The number of men who were regularly in the labour force during the period of preceding 30 days constitutes regular labour force.

(5) *Casual Labour Force* :—The number of men who were casually in the labour force during the period of preceding 30 days constitutes casual labour force.

(6) *Earners* :—A member of the labour force whose income is sufficient for his own maintenance and who does not receive financial assistance from others for his maintenance is considered an earner.

(7) *Earning Dependant* :—A member of the household who is a member of the labour force and whose income is inadequate for his own maintenance and who obtains financial aid for maintaining himself is an earning dependant.

(8) *Non-earning Dependant* :—A member of the household who is a member of the labour force but is neither an earner nor an earning dependant is considered non-earning dependant.

(9) *Full Employment* :—A man is considered fully employed if the total hours worked by him are not less than the total hours he was available for gainful work during the reference period. If a member of the labour force was with job but not at work because of personal reasons such as sickness and was not available for work, he would still be considered as fully employed.

(10) *Unemployment* :—If the number of hours worked by a member of the labour force is zero during the reference period (i.e. preceding seven days), although he was available for gainful work, he is considered as unemployed. It does not matter if he was "seeking work" or was "not seeking work but was available for work."

(11) *Under-employment* :—If the number of total hours available for gainful work during the reference period is greater than the number of total hours worked by a member of the labour force, the member is considered under-employed.

Period

The data used in this inquiry cover a period of full 12 months, from August, 1955 to July, 1956.

AGRICULTURAL LABOUR VS. HIRED LABOUR IN AGRICULTURE

It may be pointed out that not only is the scope of this paper limited to Uttar Pradesh (as against India), the data for this study cover agricultural labour in rural areas of Uttar Pradesh, which may be slightly different from hired labour in agriculture. For instance, the entire labour time disposition of the agricultural labour family selected for this inquiry is taken into account, even though a part of the time may have been spent not as hired labour but on its own piece of cultivated land. It is not unusual for a household in rural areas of Uttar Pradesh falling under type of agricultural labour because of its principal occupation, to have a small piece of land for purposes of cultivation.

AGRICULTURAL LABOUR POPULATION

The total population of agricultural labour came to about 15% of the total corresponding population in the rural areas of Uttar Pradesh. The percentage varied from 12% in the central region to 18% in the eastern region, but there was no marked variation from month to month.

In order to ascertain the margin of sampling error, calculations were made in respect of four months, namely, August and November, 1955 and February and May, 1956. The average for these four months, however, did not show any marked variation from the average for the whole year, and the coefficient of variation came to about 5%

A comparison with corresponding figure in the 1951 census, however, shows that the agricultural labour population was about 7% of the total rural population. It is not possible to say how far this difference is due to difference in definition or to defective collection of primary data or to actual change in the position during the five years from 1951 to 1956; the significance of the last item has to be judged particularly in view of the abolition of Zamindari in the meantime.

Agricultural Labour Force

The total agricultural labour force came to about 16% of the total rural labour force in U.P., which is very near the proportion of the total agricultural labour population to the total rural population. The proportion varied from 14% in the central region to 18% in the eastern region, but here again, there was no marked variation from month to month.

The average proportion of agricultural labour force to total rural labour force for the four months of August and November, 1955 and February and May, 1956 came to about 15.5% for U.P. as a whole and its coefficient of variation was about 5.5%.

Nature of Participation in Labour Force

Eighty-two percent of agricultural labourers in U.P. constituted regular labour force, as against 87% for all types of families together. The proportion went down to 79 in the western region, but rose to 86% in the central region. Over the year, it stood lowest at 66% in December but reached its peak of 88% in May and June. In July it was 87% and in November 86%.

Economic Status

Eighty-four per cent of agricultural labourers were earners, as against 78% for all types of families together, in the State as a whole. Only 1% constituted non-earning dependants, which is not surprising, considering that the data relate only to men and to members of the labour force. It is, however, of interest that earning dependants constituted 15% for U.P. as a whole; this percentage went down to 12 in the eastern region and rose to 20 in the central region.

Average Hours available for Work per Day

The average number of hours for which a member of the agricultural labour force was available for work per day came to 8.5, as against 8.3 for all types of families together. There was not much of variation from region to region, the figure varying from 8.2 in the central region to 8.6 in the western region. But

monthly figures showed considerable dispersion, varying from 7.3 in July to 9.4 in October in the central region.

Employment Status

About 61% of agricultural labourers were fully employed over the year as a whole, compared to 66% for all types of families together; about 33% were employed and 6% unemployed. These figures have to be considered carefully in the light of definitions given earlier. It would be of interest to observe that for the year from July, 1954 to June, 1955 when the definition of full employment was based not on hours available for work but on a uniform standard of eight hours per day, the percentage of fully employed came to about 40% on an average for the year, while those under-employed were about 57%. It thus follows that, subject to such change as might have actually taken place during the period of one year, about 20% of agricultural labourers who would be regarded as under-employed if the definition of full employment were based on a uniform standard of eight hours of work per day would come to be regarded as fully employed if the definition were based on hours available for work. The completely unemployed, however, are evidently unaffected by the change in definition and they seem to stand at about 5%; the actual figure for the year as a whole and for the State as a whole was 6% for agricultural labour, as against 4% for all types of families together. The averages for the four months of August and November, 1955 and February and May, 1956 did not show any marked variation from those for the year as a whole. The coefficient of variation came to less than 4% for the fully employed and about 6% for the under-employed, for the State as a whole; in case of the unemployed, however, it was high, being about 19%.

There was a significant variation from region to region, the percentage of fully employed over the year as a whole going down to 44% in the western region and rising to 80% in the central region; the corresponding figures for the under-employed being 48% and 15%. Likewise, as expected, monthly figures also showed considerable dispersion: the percentage of fully employed varied from 50% in May, when the *rabi* has been harvested and there is comparatively little to do on the fields, to 71% in December and April when the *kharif* and the *rabi* are respectively harvested, the figures for March and November—the two months in which part of the harvesting is done—being 68% and 67% respectively. The figure also rose to 68% in the months of June and July, when ploughing and manuring operations generally take place. The difference in the different regions with regard to harvesting time are brought out: the eastern region, where harvesting is done earlier, has its highest percentage of fully employed, namely, 85% in March, whereas the corresponding figure for the western region, where harvesting takes place later, is only 34, which, however, jumps up to 60 in the subsequent month of April.

The percentage of unemployed for the State as a whole varied from 2% in October to 9% in August, 10% in January and 14% in May, which is understandable keeping in mind the cycle of agricultural operations.

INTENSITY OF UNDER-EMPLOYMENT

The actual hours worked by under-employed agricultural labourers, on the average, came to 5.8 per day for the State as a whole the figure varying from

5.4 in the central region to 5.9 in the other two regions. It is significant to observe that during the earlier period when the definition of full employment was based on a uniform standard of eight hours of work per day, the actual hours worked by the under-employed came to about the same figure.

The monthly variation in the actual hours worked by under-employed agricultural labourers was appreciable. For the State as a whole the hours varied from 4.9 in May to 6.3 in July and 6.5 in April and October. Taking regional monthly variation into account, the figure never went below 4.1 (January in the central region) and never higher than 7.7 (October in the central region).

To make a detailed study of intensity of employment amongst under-employed, data were tabulated under four classes of intensity of employment, namely (1) upto 25%, (2) from 26% to 50% ; (3) from 51% to 75%, and (4) from 76% to 99%. For the State as a whole, 42% of the under-employed fell under the last class while 36% came under the class of 51% to 75% of intensity of employment. In other words, more than 75% of the under-employed were on an average, gainfully occupied for more than half the time they were available for work. The corresponding figures for all types of families together are not much different.

The figures in the different regions point to more or less a similar conclusion. There are, however, as expected, wide variations from month to month both for the State as a whole and in the different regions. For instance, the number of under-employed agricultural labourers with an intensity of employment from 76% to 99% varied from 28% in January and May to 58% in April.

Loss in Man-Hours

(1) To Under-employed Agricultural Labour

On an average, for the State and the year as a whole, about 33% of the hours of under-employed agricultural labour available for work were lost because of under-employment. The figure for all types of families together was about the same. The variation from region to region did not appear to be significant, the percentage of man-hours lost due to under-employment amongst agricultural labourers to total hours of under-employed agricultural labour available for work varying from 32% in the eastern region to 35% in the central region. The dispersion from month to month was, however, appreciable : for the State as a whole the loss varied from 25% in April to 39% in May.

(2) To Total Agricultural Labour

About 17% of the total available working hours of agricultural labour in rural areas of Uttar Pradesh were lost due to unemployment and under-employment amongst agricultural labourers. This was made up of three groups : (1) unemployed or under-employed, but not seeking work (12%) ; (2) not at work

but with job (4%) ; and unemployed or under-employed and seeking work (1%). This distinction is somewhat significant, as it tends to show that the under-employed agricultural labourer does not generally "seek" work, even though, on being asked, he may state that he was available for more work. As expected, there is a large amount of variation from month to month, the loss varying from 10% in April to 28% in May. The regional figures of the loss from unemployment and under-employment amongst agricultural labourers in rural areas, in terms of man-hours as a percentage of total available man-hours of agricultural labour, show wide variation : the percentage varies from 11% in the central region to 24% in the western region.

(3) *To Whole State*

If the total loss to the State from unemployment and under-employment in all the three types of families be taken as 100, the loss from unemployment and under-employment of agricultural labour amounted to about 22%. The corresponding figure of loss if only under-employment be considered came to 17%. Considering that agricultural labour itself formed about the same percentage of the total rural labour force, it would follow that under-employment amongst agricultural labour was not disproportionately high compared to other types of families. There were, however, wide variations from region to region and month to month.

Applicability Limited to One Year

It may be added that, as is well-known, agriculture in Uttar Pradesh, as in India, presents marked variations not only from season to season within a year but, in many respects, from year to year. The figures which form the basis of this study relate to only one year and the conclusions based on them are, therefore, to that extent, of limited applicability. Whether the pattern of agricultural labour and its employment is also subject to wide variations from year to year is, however, an important point for consideration in the interpretation of these data for practical purposes.
