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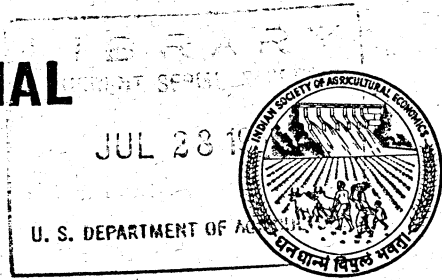
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# THE INDIAN JOURNAL OF AGRICULTURAL ECONOMICS



(Organ of the Indian Society of Agricultural Economics)

Vol. XIV	JANUARY—MARCH 1959	No. 1
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## BOOK REVIEWS

*India's Food Resources and Population*, P. C. Bansil, Vora & Co., Publishers Private Ltd., Bombay. Pp. 252. Rs. 10.

Dr. Bansil, in this study, examines the problem of how to find additional food for the growing population in India. The study begins with a historical review of the food situation since 1920, when India became a net importer of foodgrains. The historical part is devoted to an analysis of effects of the separation of Burma, the second world war, the partition of India on India's food situation and to the evolution of food policy during this period.

The author then proceeds to examine the food potential in India and projects the food potential of the country during the coming two decades. According to him, India's cereal potential can be increased to 120 million tons by 1970-71, showing an increase of about 96 per cent over the production of 1953-54. This increase, he states, is possible under the present cropping pattern and that too, without introducing any far-reaching changes in the agricultural economy.

While discussing the future trend of population growth, the author considers that taking into account various socio-economic factors at work at present, the rate of growth may be slightly more than one per cent during the current decade and one per cent during the next two decades. According to him, the total population would be 402 and 450 millions in 1961 and 1971, respectively. Thus, annual food requirements for human consumption would be of the order of 69 and 76 million tons in 1961 and 1971, respectively. For estimating total food requirements of the country some allowance would have to be made for other uses, cattle feed, seed and wastage, etc. The author is of the view that taking a long-term view the neo-Malthusian conclusion of the population out-stripping the growth of food supply is not valid particularly in the light of the efforts being made at present for increasing agricultural production potential. There may be some difficulties of a short term nature because of vagaries of monsoons and natural calamities but these can be met by building up adequate reserve stocks and improvement in storage and warehousing facilities.

The large number of references to published and unpublished sources indicate the efforts the author has made to study the most difficult problem of Indian agricultural economy. In the context of the present food situation his analysis of India's food potential appears rather more optimistic. An examination of the practical problems in realisation of the potential to the full extent in a country of millions of small farmers would have been very useful. As against the estimate of rate of growth of population of about 2 per cent made by some demographers, the author considers it around one per cent on the basis of data on female population during the reproduction age-groups. The correctness of these estimates can be checked only after the 1961 census results are available. The book is an interesting and well documented study of one of the major problems of Indian economy.

V. M. JAKHADE

*Food Production in India : Principles and Problems*, S. Y. Krishnaswamy, Bhamati Books, Madras, 1958. Pp. iv+156. Rs. 3.75.

The problem of feeding India's growing population which has undergone through various phases continues to be a problem even after ten years of Independence. In the book under review Shri S. Y. Krishnaswamy examines very critically the scheme for increasing food production and their implementation and suggests some remedial measures.

The food problem in India, according to the author, is primarily a rice problem and food production plans in India should pay more attention to increasing production of rice than that of any other crop. These plans should be more in the direction of intensive than of extensive cultivation. Though the possibilities of further intensification of various schemes of food production are large, he feels, that the specialisation of their potentialities is handicapped mainly due to organisational than to technical defects. The present departmental hierarchy, he feels, ignores both unities of nature, *i.e.*, water-sheds of rivers, compact backward areas and minor catchments and certain living economic institutions like periodical shandy. Referring to the River Valley Projects on which the food production plan places major reliance, he opines that the present approach to them is completely pragmatical. The constitution of River Boards shows the absence of co-ordination at the working level and of the technicians. The intensive programme for selected areas envisaged under the Development Blocks which forms another important part of the food production plan, he feels, is discriminating and capable of political manoeuvring. To overcome these defects, the author has suggested a new scheme. According to this scheme, the country may be divided into four regions, two for rice and two for wheat (both surplus and deficit). The aim of food production should be to maximise the surplus in surplus zones and minimise the deficit in deficit zones. The work of integrated development of all the resources of the region should be entrusted to three Boards one each for river water-sheds, backward areas and minor catchment and tank chains. These Boards should be regional and autonomous in the fullest sense and may transgress State boundaries where necessary. The minimum working unit prescribed within the jurisdiction of each of these Boards is a shandy and the technical officers employed are to be controlled not district-wise but in accordance with larger natural units. Implementation of this plan, however, appears to be doubtful in the present political and constitutional set-up in the country.

A study of the major river valley projects made by the author is both interesting and revealing and his suggestion to have an immediate legislation to create a corporation on the lines of T.V.A. for the optimum use of water, electricity and timber resources in the country deserves very careful consideration. He has also made a number of useful suggestions for improving the planning and working of the various schemes for minor irrigation, fertilizers, improved seeds and mechanical cultivation. To quote a few, the minor irrigation plan should pay more attention to the supply of water to the tanks than to the letting out of water from them and draw wells should not as a rule be connected with power pumps. The use of fertilisers should be related to individual soil needs and the seed distribution schemes should be prevented from subsequent deterioration. Mechanical cultivation may be introduced in certain dry areas with a sparse

population provided only light ploughing is done. He feels that the land policy of the Government which has created some kind of uncertainty in rural life is an impediment in the way of increased food production. He advocates greater emphasis on a 'floor' than on 'ceiling' on land holding. Referring to the most topical subject, viz., co-operative farming, he is more in favour of co-operative servicing for the individual farmer than of co-operative farming. With an original approach based on a penetrating analysis and experience, the author has made a useful contribution to the discussion of the food problem in India.

D. A. JOSHI

*India's Changing Villages: Human Factors in Community Development*, S. C. Dube, Routledge and Kegan Paul Ltd., London, 1958. Pp. xii+230.25s.

This is a study of a Community Development Project in Uttar Pradesh and deals with the human factors involved in State directed programmes of economic development and culture change in an under-developed and tradition-bound society. The main purpose of the study is to account for the acceptance or rejection of externally induced innovations.

It is being increasingly realised that backwardness of any society is due not to any defect of character of its people but to the limitations of the techniques and resources at their disposal, and demonstrated in many places that where these are supplied by external assistance the people do respond with the ability to advance. This is not to say that any kind of innovations and ideas, even the most needed ones, will be accepted by the people anyhow. The acceptance or rejection of any type of change is to a large extent determined by the nature of society and culture, namely, by the principle that the different aspects of life are linked to a whole and change in one aspect will have repercussions which affect the other aspects. Ordinarily cultural change is gradual and there is time for the inter-related parts to readjust themselves in response to change in one of the parts. Moreover, only such innovations which are compatible with the different parts of culture are accepted. In externally induced change whereby often innovations developed in different cultures are sought to be introduced by agents who are also outsiders, it is not only necessary that the usefulness of such changes should be brought home to the people but also to be acceptable they must in all their ramifications fit into the social and cultural setting of the community. Resistance to change therefore should not be taken as something inevitable but as a symptom of something wrong in the process of introducing the innovation, either the people are not convinced of its utility or it does not fit into their cultural setting.

Thus the problem faced by the planners and administrators of the Community Development Projects is not one of finding out whether change is desirable or feasible but of devising effective methods of introducing change by trying to analyse the causes of acceptance or resistance to change. Very properly the Community Development Projects and the National Extension Service Blocks have been put under the constant scrutiny of the Programme Evaluation Organization and several other projects of the type of this study have been sponsored for the same purpose. For a realistic analysis of the problems of cultural change the anthropological



approach of viewing society and culture in all their aspects would be most appropriate and Professor Dube who has already earned a name for himself as an eminent anthropologist by his publication of *Indian Village* is well qualified for the task.

The study starts with a general description of the Community Development Projects and National Extension Service Blocks, their objectives, programmes and administration. For the main purpose of the work, namely, to account for the acceptance or rejection of new ideas and techniques, the author has focussed attention on two villages of a Community Development Project in Western U.P. The study covers only the first 18 months of the operation of the Project. After summarising the originally existing socio-economic conditions in the selected Project area, the set-up of the Project administration, the targets of the development programme, the implementation of the programme and the achievements during the period under consideration he proceeds to analyse the human factors involved in the technological and social change with reference to the two villages. On the basis of the success or failure of the project activities the factors affecting the implementation of the programme are discussed under three main heads: (1) State officials as agents of change, (2) Problems of Communication and, (3) Cultural factors in Community Development.

In the State directed programme of technological and social change the state officials have had to function as innovators and agents of change. The new role of the officials called for a change in the old methods of administration. It is clear from the discussion that despite great care and forethought bestowed by the planners upon gearing the traditional administrative structure to the special needs of the development work there is still room for further reforms particularly in the area of human relations. In the switchover from "authoritarian" methods to "democratic" methods of administration, the Village Level Workers (VLWs) who are at the gaining end being at the lowest rung of the administrative ladder, are too quick in expecting a democratic atmosphere of co-operative team work, while the superior officers who are at the losing end are too slow in readjusting themselves to the new demands. This has not only led to some amount of friction between the Village Level Workers and the superior officers but also to a lowering in the eyes of the public the prestige of the Village Level Workers which is so essential if their role as innovators is to be effective. Although the planners have made adequate provision for the modification of the state directed development programmes according to the needs and wishes of the people, in practice, owing to the subordinate position of the Village Level Workers the felt needs of the people could not properly be conveyed to the higher authorities with the result that the plans and directives received from State headquarters tended to be implemented without modification. Under these circumstances, the accomplishment of the physical targets rather than their educative value upon the people has been the main objective of the officials.

Problems of communication are bound to crop up when the external agents of change who have a different outlook are trying to reorganise the traditional ways of the people by imparting knowledge of modern science and technology. If the people are to accept this knowledge willingly it must be rendered intelligible and significant to them according to their own cultural valuations and scheme of things. In this connection there are problems of adapting the media of com-

munication, as to their form and content, to the culture of the people, selecting the appropriate media of communication to suit particular programmes, discovering the existing communication networks and creating new ones, making use of the pivotal individuals who occupy different levels of leadership and so on. These and other related problems are discussed with clear insight. In their anxiety to complete the physical targets the officials have tended to get the things done somehow and by not paying sufficient attention to the problems of communication and they have to some extent failed to elicit the willing co-operation of the people.

The importance of cultural factors in community development will become evident when it is realised that these factors are usually found as linkages and so a well-established custom may very often retard the change in a related custom. The author has illustrated how the ultimate acceptance or rejection of new ideas and techniques is determined to a large extent by a variety of social and cultural factors like habits and tastes, social practices and traditions, social structure, beliefs, attitudes and values of the people. Their reluctance to extend the cultivation of vegetables would become understandable if viewed against the fact that vegetables did not form a necessary part of their everyday diet. While the value of cowdung as manure was fully realised, they could not help burning it all the same, as it could not conveniently be replaced as fuel for their water-pipes and for slow heating of milk. Because of the peculiar values of the people the additional incomes earned through adoption of improved techniques were very often spent in conspicuous consumption rather than in productive investments. By analysing situations like these the author has shown how "many programmes are rejected not because the people are traditionally minded, conservative or 'primitive', but because innovations, in all their ramifications, do not fit into the total cultural setting of the people." Viewing community life in all its aspects the author has drawn attention to certain neglected aspects which have to be adequately dealt with if the growth of the community is to be a balanced one.

The Village Level Worker has received particular attention of the author, as it should be, he being the pivot round which the development activity hinges. Two notes, one on the emerging role of the Village Level Worker in the Indian village and the other on the Village Level Worker in action are appended at the end of the book.

All in all, the author has effectively demonstrated in what ways specialists in applied social science and anthropology can help the planners and administrators in the formulation and implementation of rural development projects. He has also demarcated the possible areas of further research. However, as the author himself has emphasised, the analyses presented in this study are qualitative rather than quantitative. It is, therefore, good to bear in mind also the limitations of the findings. For instance, in most cases the extent of success or failure of an innovation is indicated only by such expressions as "enthusiastically received" and "not received enthusiastically." The dividing line between enthusiastic acceptance and non-enthusiastic acceptance is not clear. So also, while the reasons given for the acceptance or rejection of innovations are plausible, we have to rely mainly upon the authority of the author himself to believe that they are the right ones. These limitations, however, do not detract from the usefulness of the study. If the significant insights and leads provided by the analyses of the author are followed

up by empirical studies of specific field situations, they are bound to be of immense value to planners and administrators of action programmes. This study will not only be of interest to planners and administrators of development activities and to students of culture change but also serve as a corrective to the critics of the Community Development Projects and National Extension Service Blocks who, by and large, tend to lay emphasis on the failures of specific projects rather than on the causes of such failures.

VICTOR S. D'SOUZA

*Report on the Administrative Survey of the Surat District*, N. B. Desai, Indian Society of Agricultural Economics, Bombay, 1958. Pp. xxv+338. Rs. 12.

The administrative survey of Surat District has been undertaken by the Indian Society of Agricultural Economics as one of the schemes of research sponsored by the Planning Commission. The work was entrusted to Sri N. B. Desai who has prepared the exhaustive report under review.

The report is divided into three parts. The first part presents a historical review of district administration starting from the Moghal period and developing through the British period. The second part deals with the working of the various units of administration from the Collector's office to village administration. The working of the Revenue department is specially studied as it is the pivot of district administration. The third part deals with Development departments in the District and the growth of their work in free India.

The author has examined pending cases in Revenue offices of the Surat District and found 30,000 pending cases of which 12,000 were pending over 6 months including 800 cases pending for over 10 years. The Collector of the District is stated to have found the number of cases pending over 10 years as the result of the author's analysis, called for the list of such cases and asked for action to be taken to dispose of such cases. This is amazing. Such delays are unheard of in Madras and the reviewer finds it difficult to believe they are typical of Bombay. The author points out that even a year after his analysis, no steps were taken to deal with cases of delay up to ten years but only delays of over 10 years are being examined. Such a discreditable state of affairs surely requires vigorous action by the Government of Bombay. The author makes numerous detailed proposals for eliminating the delays in administration and they deserve careful study and remedial action by the Government of Bombay.

The author makes various suggestions of a general nature. He would rename the Land Revenue Department as "Department of Land Reforms." This over-emphasises one line of activity at the expense of the general need for attention to the collection of Revenue which along with the maintenance of law and order is necessary to sustain welfare and developmental activities of the State. The desirability of balancing these three aspects of Government is already generally recognized. The author stresses the need for decentralization on the one hand and stricter control over subordinates on the other. This is a matter of balance and broadly speaking, it is reasonably met under the present system.

What is lacking is not the right procedure but the right spirit in which rules are worked. It is an unfortunate fact that right through administration from the very highest to the very lowest, there is a slackening of moral fibre and the zest for doing one's job has been lowered. The need is not for improvement in the administrative system but strengthening of character. This downfall in character has become general in the life of India and prevails among members of the administration as well as among people of all classes in general. One feels as one reads this report that the author does not approach the subject of administration with a right sense of perspective and makes recommendations for improving administration, as if its shortcomings were special to itself.

The author makes a special plea for increasing the importance of the village Talati. He seems rather to overstate the case. The presence of village officers in States with ryotwari settlement of land revenue as in Bombay and Madras has strengthened the administration very considerably as compared with States like Bengal which neglected the maintenance of village administration as a result of the permanent settlement. But the importance of the Patil and Talati, high as it is, should not be exaggerated.

The author emphasises and rightly the need to develop the village panchayat, the village co-operative society and the village school as the three bases of development of villages primarily by the villagers themselves. Faith in village panchayats and village co-operative societies as well as strengthening of rural primary schools is needed if they are to progress. Along with these village institutions, the author also recommends the formation of Taluk Boards and Taluk Co-operative Banks and associations of teachers in the Taluk. There is difference of opinion in States as to these supervisory bodies being at the Taluk level or District level.

The author is not in favour of Revenue staff being in charge of National Extension Service activities. If however the administration of a District is to be integrated with two principal wings of Revenue and Development, the movement towards integrating the Revenue and other general departments of the district with the activities of National Extension Service is, the reviewer think, in the right direction.

The author is right in his final conclusion that however comprehensive the rules and regulations framed for carrying out programmes may be, their success depends on the men in charge of the execution of the programmes. The progress of administration along the right lines depends in the last resort on the moral fervour which free India can develop. India needs a moral revival even more than an administrative reconstruction.

S. V. RAMAMURTY

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