



The World's Largest Open Access Agricultural & Applied Economics Digital Library

This document is discoverable and free to researchers across the globe due to the work of AgEcon Search.

Help ensure our sustainability.

Give to AgEcon Search

AgEcon Search
<http://ageconsearch.umn.edu>
aesearch@umn.edu

Papers downloaded from AgEcon Search may be used for non-commercial purposes and personal study only. No other use, including posting to another Internet site, is permitted without permission from the copyright owner (not AgEcon Search), or as allowed under the provisions of Fair Use, U.S. Copyright Act, Title 17 U.S.C.

No endorsement of AgEcon Search or its fundraising activities by the author(s) of the following work or their employer(s) is intended or implied.

OBITUARY

Professor M.L. Dantwala

Professor M.L. Dantwala, the doyen of Agricultural Economists, who nursed both the Indian Society of Agricultural Economics and its Journal - *Indian Journal of Agricultural Economics* - from their infancy to their present stature, expired on October 8, 1998. He was 89. In his demise, the country and the Agricultural Economics profession lost an eminent teacher, researcher and thinker.

Professor Dantwala was born in Surat on September 18, 1909, in a family that had traditionally dealt in ivory or *haathidant*. He received his school education up to Matriculation in Dhulia, where his father was manager of a cotton ginning factory. He passed the Intermediate Examination from MTB Arts College in Surat in 1928. He then joined the Wilson College in Bombay in 1928 and earned his B.A. degree in 1930 from the University of Bombay, whose jurisdiction then extended from Karachi in the North-West to Dharwar in the South. He attained the first rank among the students of History and Economics and was awarded the prestigious James Taylor Prize. He joined the Bombay School of Economics and Sociology as a Dakshina Fellow in 1930 for his M.A. degree by thesis. His studies for the M.A. degree at the Bombay School of Economics and Sociology were interrupted by his participation in the freedom movement. The last chapter of his thesis was written in the Arthur Road prison in Bombay, while he was an under-trial. He was awarded the M.A. degree from the University of Bombay in 1933 with a First Class. He was sentenced to rigorous imprisonment for 2 years and 6 months but was given B class in the Nasik Road central jail, where he came into close contact with senior-most leaders of the Indian National Congress and also the young socialist intellectuals. A voracious reader, he read extensively of the socialist literature and was deeply impressed by the egalitarian ideology of Marx. His participation in the freedom movement had been inspired by Gandhiji, but he became a founder member of the Congress Socialist Party and continued his close links with Jayaprakash Narayan (J.P.) throughout the latter's lifetime.

After his release from prison, Prof. Dantwala participated in some trade union activity around Dhulia; but in 1936, Professor C.N. Vakil persuaded him to join the H.L. College of Commerce in Ahmedabad as Professor of Cotton Trade and Industry. In 1940, when Gandhiji gave a call for individual civil disobedience, Prof. Dantwala responded and resigned from the college. After his second innings in jail, he did not rejoin the college and worked as the Honorary Organising Secretary of the Gujarat Provincial Congress Committee. His attendance at the All India Congress Committee (AICC) session in Bombay in August 1942, when the Quit India movement was launched, led to his arrest and detention again in the Nasik Road prison for another spell of 20 months. After his release from prison, he joined the H.L. College of Commerce again in 1944 for a brief period. But he bid farewell to politics, when he was appointed Lecturer in Agricultural Economics at the University of Bombay in 1945. He rose to be the Director of the Department of Economics of the University of Bombay and retired from the post of Professor of Agricultural Economics in 1973 after nearly three decades of illustrious service involving teaching of about 3,000 students for the M.A. degree and guidance of 26 students for the Ph.D. degree. He had directed and conducted a number of socio-economic research surveys and had published more than 300 articles in academic journals and 15 books, of which the two recent publications are *Dilemmas of Growth: The Indian Experience* (1996) and *Social*

Change through *Voluntary Action* (1998). The latter book was released on his 89th birthday at his residence on September 18, 1998 just about three weeks before his death. What makes his death more poignant was that he expressed his anguish at the delay in the publication of his last book and he was apprehensive that he may not live to see its release.

Throughout his academic career and also after his retirement, Prof. Dantwala was frequently called upon to work on a number of Commissions/Committees, Working Groups, set up by the Government of India and State Governments, financial and research institutions either as a member or Chairman. Some of the important Committees and Working Groups which he had chaired were the Hari Labour Enquiry Committee (1947-48); Committee to Enquire into the Working of the Regulated Markets in Bombay State (1950-51), constituted by the Government of Bombay; Committee on Co-operative Marketing (1964-66); Agricultural Economics Committee, Indian Council of Agricultural Research; Panel of Economists, National Commission on Agriculture, Ministry of Agriculture; Agricultural Prices Commission (1965-66), set up by the Ministry of Food and Agriculture, Government of India; Forward Markets Review Committee (1966-67), Ministry of Commerce; Committee of Experts on Unemployment Estimates (1968-70), Planning Commission; Review Committee on Pilot Intensive Rural Employment Project (PIREP) (1974-76), Ministry of Agriculture and Irrigation; Committee to Review the Working of the Regional Rural Banks (1977-78), Reserve Bank of India; Working Group on Block Level Planning (1977-78), Planning Commission, Government of India. He had held the post of Member-Secretary of the Research Programmes Committee of the Planning Commission during 1954-55.

Prof. Dantwala was a member of several official and non-official committees, notable among them being the Sub-Committees on Agriculture and on Small-Scale and Cottage Industries set up by the Economic Programme Committee of the AICC under the Chairmanship of Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru (1947-48), Congress Agrarian Reforms Committee set up by the AICC under the Chairmanship of Dr. J.C. Kumarappa (1948), Panel on Land Reforms, Planning Commission (1955-59), Travancore-Cochin Banking Enquiry Committee (1956), Second Pay Commission, Government of India (1957-59), Foodgrains Prices Committee (1964), Foodgrains Policy Committee (1966), Ministry of Food and Agriculture, Government of India, and National Committee for the Commemoration of the 40th Anniversary of India's Independence and Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru Centenary (1987).

He was appointed to the Governing Councils of several important institutions including the National Sample Survey Organisation, Indian Council of Social Science Research, Centre for Development Studies, Jawaharlal Nehru University, Indian Institute of Management, Ahmedabad, Sardar Patel Institute of Social and Economic Research, Ahmedabad, and Institute for Social and Economic Change, Bangalore; and was Chairman of Indian School of Political Economy, Pune. He was closely associated with most of the key institutions involved in agricultural finance: He served as Chairman of Agricultural Finance Corporation Ltd., Bombay, and was on the Board of Directors of National Co-operative Development Corporation, Bank of India, Food Corporation of India, Central Board of Reserve Bank of India, National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development, Industrial Development Bank of India, Agricultural Credit Board, Reserve Bank of India. Despite his close association with the Government of India, he had retained his uncompromising loyalty to basic values and had resigned from the Central Board of Directors of the Reserve

Bank of India when emergency was declared in June 1975.

Prof. Dantwala was highly respected by academia for his scholarship: He presided over the 20th All-India Agricultural Economics Conference in 1960. He was elected Honorary Member of the Indian Society of Agricultural Economics and was Life Member of the Indian Economic Association. He presided over the Annual Conference of the Indian Economic Association in 1970 and of the Indian Society of Labour Economics in 1978.

The International Association of Agricultural Economists (IAAE) at its 19th Triennial Conference Meeting held at Malaga, Spain in September 1985 conferred on Prof. Dantwala the Honorary Life Membership of the Association in recognition of his outstanding service to IAAE and to its objectives.

Prof. Dantwala was awarded the Honorary Degree of Doctor of Agricultural Science by the Agricultural University of Wageningen, Netherlands in 1968. He was awarded Padma Bhushan by the President of India in January 1969. He was the recipient of the Financial Express Award for 1991-92 in 1994. He was Emeritus Professor of the University of Bombay. In recognition of Prof. Dantwala's academic achievements and outstanding contribution in the field of social science research, the Government of India awarded him the National Research Professorship in 1995, which he held until his death. He was also the recipient of Swami Pranavanand Award for 1995 under the University Grants Commission Awards Schemes.

Prof. Dantwala's deep understanding of the reality and functioning of the complex Indian economy is reflected in all his writings. Prof. Dantwala often wrote in an epigrammatic style with a touch of poetry. One often comes across several aphorisms such as the following: "It is not enough for the distant to be enchanting"; "Reduction in food prices is instant socialism"; "It is one thing to understand poverty, quite another to understand the poor"; "The times are such that one feels more comfortable with dreams, past and future, than with the suffocating reality".

In Prof. Dantwala's writings, a reverence for facts and figures is matched by incisive analysis. His writings generally combined both insights from field investigations and case studies (including those by his students) with the aggregate data from national censuses and sample surveys. He himself travelled extensively all over India and his political, official and academic contacts have provided him unusual opportunities to understand the complexity of our economy and society. In fact, he believed that the strength of agricultural economics research could be attributed to the fact that much of its analysis is based on field experience. One can discern a certain extent of his distrust of quantitative aggregation. He seemed to attach more importance to insights gained from competent field investigations and case studies than to national aggregates.

The corpus of his work has been captured in a collection of 22 selected articles brought out in 1996 in his volume: *Dilemmas of Growth*. These articles could be broadly categorised into six main themes: (a) values in economic growth; (b) agricultural development and policy; (c) planning for rural development; (d) agricultural price policy; (e) rural credit; and (f) agricultural labour and employment. The selected papers demonstrate Prof. Dantwala's intuitive feel for the complexities of Indian economic reality ever since the beginning of his academic career. While each paper has a historical context, the thrust and

approach retain their relevance as much now as when they were written. The volume presents a cohesive picture of Prof. Dantwala's overall thinking on broad economic, social and ethical issues.

(a) *Values in Economic Thought*

His essay on *Trusteeship: An Alternative Ideology* is of historical importance. It elucidates Gandhiji's views on ownership and management of wealth. The 'Trusteeship formula' contains, in a succinct and condensed form, the basic ingredients of Gandhiji's views on property. This formula was originally prepared by some of Gandhiji's disciples in Yerwada prison. Prof. Dantwala revised this formula and submitted it to Gandhiji. He met Gandhiji at Birla House in Bombay. Gandhiji made a few alterations in the draft and approved it. The formula is now accepted as the authentic version of Gandhiji's concept of Trusteeship. A photostat copy of Prof. Dantwala's (handwritten) draft and alterations made by Gandhiji (in his handwriting) is available. The paper bears testimony to his interaction with the Mahatma on the seminal issue of property, its ownership and use. Trusteeship may appear as a Utopian dream, but Prof. Dantwala viewed it as an ideal blending of the capitalist and socialist views on property, retaining the creativity of individual enterprise and social sharing of the output. The paper also included his strong rebuttal of the charge that Gandhiji was either unaware of or chose to ignore the exploitation involved in the accumulation of wealth.

Another short essay *Ethics and Economics of Socialism* (1978) was written many years before it was published in the volume commemorating the birth centenary of the veteran socialist, Acharya Narendra Dev. It was first presented at a meeting of the Socialist Forum in New Delhi in the presence of Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru. As Prof. Dantwala once recalled, Panditji had talked to him after the meeting and conveyed his agreement with Prof. Dantwala's views. The essay expounded the view that the establishment of a socialist society cannot become a reality until a majority of the people, particularly the elite, accepted the ethical basis of a socialist society. Merely building an economy modelled on the socialist doctrine - public ownership of productive assets - is no guarantee that it will usher in 'an enduring egalitarian society'. While the expressions like 'socialist ethics' or 'value system' are difficult to define, Prof. Dantwala considered (a) restraint of acquisitiveness, (b) limitation of wants, and (c) desire to share the gains from development as their basic components.

Prof. Dantwala's approach to eradicating poverty from India is spelt out in another essay, extracted from two lectures on *Poverty in India: Then and Now: 1870-1970* delivered by him in 1971 on the occasion of the award of the Dadabhai Naoroji Memorial Fellowship Prize for 1969. Prof. Dantwala reminded the younger generation that more than 120 years ago, Dadabhai Naoroji had attributed India's poverty to 'Un-British Rule'. However, the persistence of poverty even after 45 years of Independence exposed the weakness of India's development strategy. Presenting his assessment of the appropriate agencies for bringing about a 'basic transformation of the social and economic structure', Prof. Dantwala suggested a revival and reorientation of non-partisan constructive work through voluntary agencies with the necessary financial, administrative and technical support from the

Government, but which would not impair the autonomy of voluntary agencies. He remained sceptical about the extent to which employment on public works or other direct interventions by the Government would by themselves ameliorate poverty. The lectures also reiterated the view that the people's habits of thought and values, which the Marxists consider as superstructure, should be considered as basic to any radical social change. An emphasis on reorientation of values as a precursor to the establishment of an egalitarian society is a distinguishing feature of Prof. Dantwala's approach to socio-economic change.

(b) *Agricultural Development and Policy*

The five papers included in the volume addressed two issues: (a) the relative contributions of economic policy, technology and agrarian institutions to agricultural development; and (b) the issues of reconciling growth with social justice.

The paper on *From Stagnation to Growth* was Prof. Dantwala's Presidential Address at the Annual Conference of the Indian Economic Association in 1970. The address was prepared at a time when some polemicists such as William Paddock had predicted 'pockets of famine throughout the world' in 1980. Paddock's book *Famine 1975!* projected India as a basket case and expressed doubts whether it would merit assistance according to the triage formula. Prof. Dantwala marshalled convincing evidence to demonstrate the phenomenon of 'Green Revolution' in India but also conceded that it was a product of technological innovations such as the development of high-yielding varieties of seeds rather than economic policy. The paper illustrated Prof. Dantwala's fairness in giving credit where it was due as well as an exemplary humility about the role of economists in the process of economic growth.

There has been a recurrent allegation over the past three decades that Indian planning has suffered from an urban bias and that agriculture has been neglected since the beginning of the Second Plan. In a paper prepared for the International Conference of Agricultural Economists at Nairobi, Prof. Dantwala demonstrated that the allegations were based on a misinterpretation of the reduction in the share of agriculture in the planned outlay and a rise in the share of industry. A proper assessment of the issue required an estimate of the investment for agriculture and not only of investment in agriculture. Prof. Dantwala's balanced views on these issues differed sharply from those of economists who exaggerated and stressed only the negative aspects or implications of India's growth and achievements.

The same balanced perspective was maintained by Prof. Dantwala in an examination of the implications of the growth of Indian agriculture for equity. He highlighted the fact that the benefits of increased food production in areas with assured water supply also percolated to the entire country because it restrained the rise in prices (which hurts the poor). The decline in the country's dependence on imports of foodgrains is also an important national gain.

Prof. Dantwala had examined the same issues in greater detail in a paper relating to *Technology, Growth and Equity in Agriculture*, where he scrutinised the evidence relating to a contention of Pranab Bardhan that the 'new strategy' might have counteracted forces such as high growth of output that tend to improve the income of small farmers and wage labourers. Prof. Dantwala agreed that the large farmers pre-empted the use of underground water and the rural rich succeeded in pressing for higher administered prices of foodgrains.

However, the empirical evidence, particularly for Punjab, did not confirm the allegations of (a) the labour-displacing effect of machinery, attributable to the new strategy; (b) eviction of tenants; (c) an adverse effect of increasing dependence on purchased inputs leading small farmers with limited access to resources and credit to give up cultivation; (d) poor maintenance of old irrigation channels being attributable to the upsurge in tubewell irrigation; and (e) the decline in female participation in agricultural workforce as a result of the new strategy. The paper illustrated Prof. Dantwala's patient search for all the relevant evidence before accepting some hypotheses and excluding others.

Of course, Prof. Dantwala recognised that growth induced by technological change tended to widen inequalities. Therefore, he welcomed the special programmes to alleviate poverty and promote employment (such as the IRDP, NREP, etc.). However, these programmes have had only a limited effect because they were not really integrated with the main development plan. Prof. Dantwala's views on these issues differed sharply from the approach of those who attributed the limited success of these programmes to India's failure to alter the iniquitous socio-economic structure. While he was not against such an alteration, Prof. Dantwala had pointed out that waiting for a revolution to alter the structure could prove a trap. The direct intervention programmes should not be condemned as reformist palliatives, for, if the special programmes improved the income and the resource base of the poor, they would thereby affect and alter the socio-economic structure.

(c) Planning for Rural Development

Prof. Dantwala's interest in economics in general and in agricultural economics in particular was largely stemmed from his concern for rural development and for improving the living conditions of the poor. The three papers in this volume highlighted the distinctiveness of his approach to these issues.

Prof. Dantwala, who had chaired the Working Group on Block Level Planning, set up by the Planning Commission in 1977, was for long a votary of decentralised planning. His papers on the subject sound a strong caveat that we need to evolve effective linkage between planning from the top and planning from below to make decentralised planning a success. He saw it as a means to discover or awaken dormant resources and of identifying the obstacles to growth and its equitable spread in specific areas. Of course, Prof. Dantwala had no illusions about the difficulties in the realisation of the widely-held high hopes from decentralised planning. He recognised that in an unequal society, the 'felt needs' of the people need not be the same. Also, the vested interests can be far more coercive in a small area than in a larger area; but Prof. Dantwala held that these problems could be resolved only through a sincere effort at decentralisation.

Much of the discussion on planning in India has focused on the quantum of public investment. Prof. Dantwala, on the other hand, had stressed the need to improve the organisational and administrative aspects of both development and welfare projects to improve the efficiency of investments. Investment in rural development without organisation is the prime cause of ubiquitous cost escalation, paralleled by under-utilisation, low returns and low cost recovery.

Prof. Dantwala was equally concerned about the viability of cottage and village industries and the diversification of the rural employment structure in India. From the extensive

literature sent to him from different parts of the country, he identified some success stories, which are an outcome of an affordable upgradation of technology, improved designs, better marketing of inputs and output, with the support of a catalyst organisation led by an enlightened and dedicated person. These crafts and traditional skills are a national heritage, worthy of preservation, but they also provide employment to workers, mainly women, who would otherwise drop out of the labour force or be classified as unemployable.

(d) *Agricultural Price Policy*

Prof. Dantwala, who was the first chairman of the Agricultural Prices Commission (APC), set up by the Government of India in 1965-66, wrote extensively on various aspects of agricultural price policy. The important issues covered in these papers have been (i) the role of price policy in agricultural growth; (ii) the scope and rationale of state intervention; and (iii) determination of administered prices for different crops.

In the mid-sixties, Indian agriculture had struck a bad patch. Agricultural production was stagnant and the country had to depend on the import of large quantities of foodgrains, mostly as food aid under concessional terms. India's agricultural price policy was considered primarily responsible for the poor performance of Indian agriculture. Rejecting natural calamities and perversity of farmers as the causes of poor performance, Professor T.W. Schultz argued that the real reason lay in "the policy preference for industrialization, agriculture's contribution to its attainment being cheap food, as a source for cheap labour and public revenue". Professor Edward Mason discerned declining incentives to farm output as the main impediment to growth. He noted that during the fifties and the early sixties while the prices of inputs rose, the prices of foodgrains and some other farm outputs were held down by Government action.

These critics provoked Prof. Dantwala to write the seminal paper *Incentives and Disincentives in Indian Agriculture* (1967). He demonstrated that at no time, by any token, were foodgrains prices low, much less kept low by government policy. He noted that "around 1955-56, in terms of the new price index series, there was a severe fall in agricultural prices" and the foodgrains prices had suffered the most. But the balance between the prices of agricultural and non-agricultural commodities was soon restored. Further, all the five-year plans had aimed to ensure reasonable prices for farmers and that was why the APC was set up in January 1965.

In a recent paper on *Agricultural Policy: Prices and the Public Distribution System* (1993), Prof. Dantwala reverted to the question, whether the incentives-structure for agricultural commodities was proper or not. He did not accept the view of the World Bank and many economists that the appropriateness of domestic prices of agricultural commodities should be judged exclusively by the Nominal Protection Coefficient (NPC), i.e., the ratio of domestic prices to import/export parity prices. He contended that while international prices cannot and should not be ignored in the context of the liberal trade regime, domestic price policy should take into consideration "agro-climatic potential of different regions [for agricultural growth], the technological horizon for growth of different crops, and domestic demand and supply in the context of balance of payments constraints".

Earlier in 1985-86, the Government of India was concerned about the imbalance in the cropping pattern and wanted to adopt a long-term price policy that would help to raise the

output of certain crops. Prof. Dantwala pointed out the limited role of a policy of influencing the relative price of one crop because the production of substitutable crop would thereby be affected adversely. A minimum support price for certain commodities could help prevent an unintended change in the crop pattern by safeguarding against the fear of an excessive decline in price. Likewise, a public distribution network could be used to protect the interests of the poor consumers provided that adequate buffer stocks or the foreign exchange to import the requisite supplies are available. Higher prices cannot solve the problems of small and marginal farmers, landless agricultural labourers and the other rural poor, who tend to be net purchasers of food. The best course for the Government should be to encourage research to evolve improved technology to lower costs and/or raise yields and to strengthen the infrastructure such as irrigation, power, roads and extension services.

During his tenure as the Chairman of the APC and earlier, Prof. Dantwala often affirmed the need and scope for resolute state action to ensure that, in a situation of shortage of an essential commodity such as the foodgrains, the public distribution system fulfilled the social and economic objectives of public policy. He also supported zonal restrictions on the inter-state movement of foodgrains as essential for a rational and equitable distribution of commodities in short supply. The public distribution system and the open market operations of the Food Corporation of India are essential to protect the interests of the poor consumers as well as of the farmers. He showed some impatience with concepts of equilibrium prices and a balanced-cum-integrated price structure, which did not conform to his intimate knowledge and experience of the functioning of the commodity markets. The ground realities required the exercise of informed judgement in deciding the level of support and procurement prices, but such judgement was not affected by political pressures. Unfortunately, he noted, such pressures have been exerted in recent years to modify the concepts and methodology of cost estimates.

(e) *Rural Credit*

Prof. Dantwala's interest in the subject of rural credit had its roots in his study of the financing of production and trade in cotton for his M.A. thesis. It was sharpened by his association with the Board of Directors of the Bank of India, the State Bank of India and the Reserve Bank of India. He had also served as the Chairman of the Committee appointed by the Reserve Bank during 1977-78 to review the working of the Regional Rural Banks (RRBs). His views on various questions relating to rural credit merit serious consideration, particularly in the light of the recent major shifts in policy, about the extent to which commercial banks can contribute to the improvement in the availability of credit to agriculture and the rural non-farm sector.

Prof. Dantwala always stressed the fact that credit alone cannot make a farmer viable. Yet, lack of timely and adequate institutional credit can thwart the best developmental projects and programmes and tend to perpetuate and even widen inequalities. Credit or financial assistance was essential also for the success of the *zamindari* abolition so that the tenants could buy the land. However, he made a distinction between the credit required to rehabilitate the small and marginal farmers and the credit needed for production. He did not find the rural credit agencies to be equipped for the former task. The RRBs have become non-viable because their mandate required them to take up non-viable business.

He did not, therefore, see any merit in the recommendation of the Agricultural Credit Review Committee, appointed by the Reserve Bank of India, to merge the RRBs with the commercial banks that had sponsored them.

Prof. Dantwala candidly asserted that liberal institutional credit would help but would not make intrinsically non-viable subsistence agriculture viable. He viewed the latter task as an integral part of the problem of overall economic development. To enable the poor to gain access to credit, their assets and skills and thereby the income-earning capacity will have to be strengthened and enhanced. The credit institutions seeking to serve the rural economy need to maintain a low profile, low costs and easy accessibility. Given the current pressures for a uniform and high salary structure for the public sector that would be almost on par with that in the private sector, the perceptive diagnoses of Prof. Dantwala merit careful consideration.

(f) *Agricultural Labour and Employment*

Prof. Dantwala's contributions to the understanding of India's problems of unemployment, particularly rural unemployment, are likely to be regarded as among the most important. The *Report of the Committee of Experts on Unemployment Estimates* (1970), which he chaired, influenced both the Indian and the international thinking on the subject. In its essence, the new approach recognised the differences between the self-employed and the employees with respect to the level and structure of employment and unemployment and their constraints and preferences about their availability for work or for additional work.

The heterogeneity of labour supply was first highlighted by Prof. Dantwala in a paper written in 1953. In later years, he stressed the need to understand the anatomy of unemployment, as well as of employment (and poverty) as essential for devising appropriate effective policy action. The latter issue has been discussed in the context of relative merits of public works programmes for casual wage labour and a programme to strengthen the assets and skills of the weaker sections. He was keen to safeguard the dignity and the independence of the poor as they availed of the opportunities for supplementing their modest incomes. He was also concerned about the generally weak effort to integrate the special employment programmes with the long-term development needs of the rural infrastructure, such that they raised the productivity of the agricultural sector and improved the viability of the small and marginal farmers. He recognised that the growth of non-agricultural employment played a critical role in improving the living standards of the disadvantaged groups in rural areas.

Overall, if employment is to alleviate poverty on an enduring basis, it has to be tailored to the characteristics of those who need it the most. Also, employment generation would have an enduring effect, if, in the process, the assets and skills of those who get employment are enhanced. If policy measures do not pay adequate attention to this issue, it is not unlikely that growth in employment may accentuate inequality. The post-'Third Wave' economy is rooted in information, communication and computerisation-based high-tech. The few who have the technical and managerial skills to exploit it will take much of the incremental income, while the poor and the illiterate, who still constitute a large section of the Indian workforce, will continue to toil on a low daily wage. The employment

generated by the new technology, which, Prof. Dantwala felt, cannot be rejected outright, might percolate to one or two deciles of the workforce below the new rich, but those at the lower level would be left out. This is a new challenge for evolving an appropriate employment policy.

This rapid review of the main themes of Prof. Dantwala's writings demonstrates that his writings are stimulating and provocative even for those who might disagree with his views. Prof. Dantwala was a sensitive observer of the Indian economy and society, with an unusual intuitive understanding of the complex reality and diversity of our continental country. The dilemmas of growth faced by India over 50 years of unprecedented change and development continue to persist. Prof. Dantwala analysed these problems with an egalitarian value orientation. The dilemmas are in fact likely to become sharper in the years ahead in the wake of ongoing policy changes. His writings would continue to prove stimulating for the younger generation of economists and social scientists.