

STUDY OF VILLAGE ARTISANS,1956

1. The Study

The enquiry was undertaken in 7 out of 19 evaluation centres in the same villages in which the Bench-March Survey had been conducted earlier, with a view to collect detailed data on economic conditions of selected village artisan families in the sample villages. It was intended to cover the main/important types of artisan crafts in the sample villages aimed at collecting data on production, employment and earnings as well as on their attitudes towards the craft they were following & facilities desired by them for improving their economic conditions. The crafts covered in the enquiry were Blacksmithy, Carpentry, Weaving, Cobblery, Tanning,, Pottery, Bamboo and Cane Work, Tailoring, Masonary,.Stone, Cutting, Bell metal and Brass Work, Gold Smithy, Beedi, making, Rope and Chair making, oil processing and Dyeing.

2. Objectives

To assess the present economic conditions of the selected village artisan families as well as to know their attitudes towards the craft they were following and the facilities desired by them for improving their economic conditions.

3. Sample Size/Criteria for Selection of Sample

The sampling design adopted involved two stages(1) selection of the villages and (2) selection of the artisan households. The villages selected for the Bench-Mark Survey (BMS) were chosen for this enquiry also. The sample comprised 401 households in 34 villages.

4. Reference Period

The enquiry was conducted during the period - December 1954 to February 1~55, and the data related to the preceding one year period viz. December, 1953 to November,1954.

5. Main Findings

1. Out of the 401 households covered by the survey, 328 or 82 per cent **were engaged** in the eight crafts-carpentry, bamboo and cane work, tailoring, blacksmithy, masonry, weaving, pottery and cobblery.

2. The extent of following of ancestral occupations varied considerably- in different blocks. In Batala-Punjab, Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Chalakudy-Travancore-cochin and Rajpur-Madhya Bharat, the percentage ranged between 60 and 66 but in the remaining three blocks, the percentages were much higher, being between 87 and 98. Craftwise variations were of even greater interest. The percentage of households following tailoring as an ancestral occupation was very low (37 percent) which was in sharp contrast to very high percentage (80 to 100 percent) for other major crafts studied. Out of the 401 households included in the survey, 299 or 75% reported following artisanship as a Principal occupation.

3. over half of the artisan households covered by this survey (i.e., 260 out of 401) reported indebtedness. The incidence of indebtedness was the highest in case of Erode-Madras and Rajpur-Madhya Bharat, where 67% and 72% respectively of the artisan households were indebted. It was the lowest in Batala-Punjab, where the percentage was only 25. As between crafts, the highest percentage (63%) was found among cobblers and the lowest (34%) among tailors.

4. Money-lenders were the main source of credit. 80% of the total debt was owed to them. Among the money lenders, the non agriculturist who accounted for 60% of the total amount were much more important than the agriculturists who were responsible for only 20%. The relatives were another important source of credit. Co-operative societies and the project were almost insignificant as sources of credit.

5. Loans taken for productive purposes accounted for only one fourth of the total amount outstanding. The remaining three fourth was accounted mainly for consumption purposes like family expenses, social ceremonies, etc.

6. Artisan households own equipments like tools and implements which were needed in connection with their artisan work.

7. The majority of the artisans were engaged either in performance of services or combine with it

production of goods on their own account. The number exclusively dependent upon production of goods was very small. A total of 98 households were performing services on a customary payment basis. These constituted 35% of the service artisans and only 24 percent of all artisans households.

8. A substantial proportion (45 percent) of the house-holds producing artisan goods found their market exclusively within their own village. Out of the 401 artisan households, only 175 produced goods for sale. In this, only 4 households reported sale of goods through more than one agency.

9. The main source of earnings for these households were artisan work and cultivation. Taking into account all the 7 Blocks under study, 63% of these households had their major share of earnings (above 50%) from artisan work.

10. About 53 percent of the total households desired technical training. Of this, about 81 percent desired to have training in their own crafts.