

MADRAS AGRICULTURE

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PREFACE

A book which has an Introduction hardly needs a Preface. A Preface is intended to serve two purposes, to convey to the prospective reader a preliminary idea of the content of the book and the purpose it is designed to serve, and secondly to act as a vehicle of one's acknowledgement of help received in the preparation and publication of the book. The first function is here sought to be discharged by the Introduction I have written, and so I wish to confine the Preface to its second function.

My first duty is to record my thanks to the Vice-Chancellor and the Syndicate of the Madras University for sanctioning the publication of this book as a University Publication. The book is a product of the work I did as Lecturer in the Department of Indian Economics of the University, and its publication under University auspices comes to me as a mark of appreciation, by the University authorities, of the work I did and as a source of encouragement for future work. I must here acknowledge with gratitude the facility offered in the University for an undisturbed pursuit of academic and literary work and for the free expression of views and ideas.

I must also thank the Proprietor of the G. S. Press for the speedy execution of the work of printing and for his personal interest in the matter and Mr. M. Magimainathan, the clerk attached to the Department of Economics, for putting into typescript with care my illegibly written manuscript. I am grateful to Dr. B. Natarajan, Economic Adviser to the Government of Madras, for permitting the use of some data collected together in an unpublished paper of his on the Grow More Food Campaign in Madras, and for sending me some price quotations in advance of publication.

In preparing this book I have drawn upon many publications, which, in the nature of the case, it is impossible to individually acknowledge. Wherever it has been possible, I have given references.

University of Madras
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INTRODUCTION

The constitution of the National Planning Commission marks yet another landmark in the growth and implementation of the idea of planning in India. Since securing independence, and in fact a little earlier than that, we have had planning of a sort both at the Centre and in the Provinces. Grandiose programmes were drawn up, albeit of a sectional character, and serious attempts were made by the ministries concerned to launch on them. But the lack of co-ordination between them and the unrealistic nature of some of them gave rise to conflicts and difficulties with the result that progress was soon halted. It came to be realized soon that co-ordination was of the essence of planning and that without it economic development would be as fitful and planless as under Capitalism, and that competition between Governmental plans in a context of scarce resources would be characterized by the same irritating frustration as attends unco-ordinated individual plans.

All plans, individual or social, involve the utilization of scarce resources. It is this scarcity which makes planning both desirable and inevitable; desirable because utilization would then be with maximum benefit, and inevitable because the alternative to it is uncontrolled utilization for individual, anti-social gains. But a process of planning which refuses to recognize this scarcity as a fundamental limitation hardly deserves the name, for it is planning for certain failure, disappointment, frustration and waste of effort. The desirability of planning stands on its *capability* for bringing into being an order of society characterized by superior well-being, without however sacrificing those higher values for which men are prepared to give up material comfort or even order. But whatever may be its promise, its appeal lies in its practicability and attainability and in the sense of realism that pervades the whole. These cannot be sacrificed for the vain pleasure of castle building in the air.

While co-ordination between the different sectional plans is essential for apportioning the available resources on the basis of an accepted system of priorities, each sectional plan should primarily be conceived as an integral part of the whole and should, in the demands it makes on resources, take into full consciousness the environment in which it is to exist and grow. Planning is essentially a planning of the utilization of resources for chosen ends, and therefore involves, besides a choice of ends, the conduct of an exhaustive census of resources and as complete a mobilization of them as the circumstances would permit. The ends chosen are

not independent of the resource pattern in existence, but conditioned by it and by the willingness of the human element, within the limits of its capacity, to modify that pattern. If the human element and its will be taken as part of the objective resources, it is just those resources which directly and indirectly determine the ends to be chosen. The criterion applied to the choice of ends however does not originate in the nature of resources, but is external to it, nevertheless the choice can be only from among those multitudinous ends made possible by the resource pattern. In a sense, then, available resources, existing and prospective, give shape and form to a plan, and no plan can be realistic which is not an outgrowth of those resources.

The study of resources is thus the first step in planning and the determination of targets of production only subsidiary to it. In any particular line of production, the target may appear to be independent of the means available, and may proximately be determined by social needs. But all the targets taken together and co-ordinated cannot be higher than what the resources permit. Under planning however the targets in many lines can be higher than normal production in pre-planning days, but this is so because there is a maximum utilization of all resources and the economy rises 'from more to more'.

The resource pattern of a country is determined by the geographical, physical, material, cultural, social, political and intellectual elements, comprising in it all of nature's gifts and all that man has made, all human qualities, all of man's knowledge and his ability to secure more knowledge, all his skill and the ability to acquire more skill, the whole of the elaborate social, political and economic structure he has built and the whole of the culture and civilization developed through the ages. Though this is so, some aspects and some parts of this resource pattern have greater relevance to economic planning and a more direct bearing on it, and those parts have to be analysed in detail before a plan can be formulated. It is simple to realize that we can plan only on a knowledge of what we have by way of economic resources and what we have already been doing with them. In what manner we can combine those resources and with what effect would depend on the general environment, in which would be included man's own skill. The study of those resources therefore is as much a part of planning as the fixing of targets and the enunciation of methods for attaining them.

It is with this idea of making a study of the economic resources available that this book has been written. It covers a section of

economic activity, viz. agriculture in Madras. Essentially it is a book of data and lays claim to providing the background required for the planned development of Madras agriculture. Therein agriculture as it exists to-day is presented as vividly as possible. The analysis of data is conducted from the point of view of planning requirements and an attempt is made to discover possibilities of improvement and expansion. The physical and institutional bases of agriculture are examined in detail, and this is followed by a study of productive activity.

Being a predominantly agricultural territory, with 84 per cent of the population engaged in agricultural activity, the study of Madras agriculture should be important and interesting in itself. This is reinforced by the fact that planned development, if it is to be successful, must start there. It is being increasingly realized now that the prosperity of a large country depends more upon the development of a balanced economy, in which the primary, the secondary and the tertiary industries will all play their part than on an exclusive expansion of the manufacturing industries. The large capital formation needed for an expanding economy must come out of agricultural prosperity, and the high level of agricultural incomes must provide the markets required for the absorption of industrial products. The prime requisite is a high per capita production in agriculture which can be generated only by a planning of that industry. Only higher production will vouchsafe a higher standard of living to the producers, and any plan which has that as its immediate and ultimate aim must give the position of primacy to agriculture.

That Madras agriculture needs a thorough re-organization and a development on all fronts is established beyond dispute by the food scarcity experienced now and the low levels of gross and net incomes there. To attain self-sufficiency in the matter of cereals alone, production must increase immediately by nearly 2·2 million tons or, to put it as a percentage increase, by 29 per cent. This need, viewed against the achievements of the Grow More Food Campaign, carried on incessantly for the last eight years, would indicate the uphill task that lies ahead and the supreme necessity there is for embarking on planning without delay.

It is futile however to increase food production without at the same time providing the income level which will ensure the purchase and consumption of the food produced. The great defect of the Grow More Food Campaign is that it has been conceived in isolation, unrelated to the general development of the economy. For

an adequate consumption of food, the income level of the community should be high, and that can be ensured only by higher production everywhere. Gross income to-day in Madras agriculture, at the high level of prices prevalent now, is no higher than Rs. 441 per annum per occupied population or Rs. 36-8-0 per month. This works out to Rs. 133 per annum per rural population or Rs. 11-1-0 per month. Net income per rural population is no higher than Rs. 80 per annum. If the average is so low as this, one can easily imagine the plight of those unfortunate classes of people whose earnings or incomes are below the average and who withal have to live and toil even to maintain this low production. Mere justice to these unfortunate victims requires that planning should be undertaken urgently. But a plan to be successful must be built up on the resource pattern, and this book seeks to depict that pattern.