

# HIRED LABOUR AND WAGE RATES FOR FARM OPERATIONS IN ELEVEN SELECTED RURAL CENTRES OF MAHARASHTRA

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FOR the determination of the general wage level of a rural area it is necessary to obtain information regarding the extent of hired labour units employed on farms, the prevailing wage rates for various farm operations, the proportion of population employed in agricultural and non-agricultural sector, the cropping pattern in the area, etc. This paper makes an attempt to examine the first two components namely the extent of hired labour units and the prevailing wage rates in rural areas in eleven different districts of Maharashtra during the period 1955 to 1959. The data collected through village surveys conducted by the Agro-Economic Section of the Gokhale Institute of Politics and Economics are used for the purpose of this analysis.

During this period of four years 18 rural centres were surveyed of which 12 were from the present Maharashtra State. Data in respect of eleven out of these 12 centres are analysed excluding one for which the necessary information was incomplete due to heavy floods in the area during the survey year. Each of these centres comprises one big village with a weekly market and one or more smaller adjoining villages. Amongst these centres<sup>1</sup> four are from the former Bombay State, five from the former Madhya Pradesh and two from the former Hyderabad State. Two out of four from Bombay State, namely Pusegaon and Malthan respectively from North Satara and Poona Districts respectively are from the dry tract with a very low proportion of good soil. In this area Bajra, and Jowar during *rabi* season are the major crops grown together with potatoes during *kharif* season in the black soil patches having scanty facilities of irrigation. Kasbe Sukene from Nasik District specializes in the cultivation of onions and grapes enjoying quite good irrigation facilities together with a high proportion of black fertile soil. From East Khandesh Waghode with two adjoining villages, is a centre where a large proportion of area is devoted to cash crops namely groundnut, cotton and banana and the economy appears to be highly cash-oriented. Three centres — Dhad, Selu and Jawla — are from the Cotton tract of the former Madhya Pradesh. In Dhad the largest area was devoted

<sup>1</sup> Refer Table 1.