

OUTMIGRATION FROM A KONKAN VILLAGE TO BOMBAY

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OUTMIGRATION from the coastal district of Ratnagiri to Bombay city in search of employment is more than a century old and has developed almost into a tradition there. The paper intends to examine this phenomenon with the aid of data pertaining to two socio-economic inquiries of a single village, the first in 1954-55 and the second in 1959-60. The village was selected for study in the scheme of continuous village surveys for studying economic change in rural area and sponsored by the Ministry of Food and Agriculture.

Mithbav is a coastal village in Ratnagiri. It lies at a distance of about 200 miles to the south of Bombay. Topographically it is situated in one of the low-lying pockets created by the spurs of the Western Ghats jutting into the sea and has to be approached by a winding mountain road. The second physical characteristic of the village is that it is an end-village lying at the end of the approach road.

Within the village, land was the principal economic resource available. Only a third of the total land of the village could be used for cultivation, the rest being either uncultivable waste or permanent fallow. The land under cultivation was of a sandy type. With a damp climate owing to the nearness of sea and an annual average rainfall of about 100 inches in the monsoon months, it could grow only a single crop of paddy. About a fifth part of this land was under fruit trees like coconut and mango. The second important natural resource was the sea. It was exploited by the local fishing community for fishing with traditional techniques.

These were the only resources of the village.* Cultivation, labour in agriculture and fishing employed a little over three-fourths of the earner-population, the respective proportions being 52, 13 and 11

* The village had developed, over the years, substantial educational facilities. It had seven educational institutions with five full primary schools inclusive of one with an agricultural and another with a fishery bias, a secondary school and a primary teachers' training college. The development was induced and made possible by the tradition of outmigration to Bombay city. As employment was easier to obtain for an educated person in Bombay, the people of Mithbav wanted educational facilities in the village. The outmigrants to Bombay made the development of the educational facilities in the village possible by raising money out of their earnings in Bombay. Educational facilities in the village were therefore, both the cause and the effect of outmigration to Bombay.