

## NOTES AND MEMORANDA

### COMPARABILITY OF 1961 AND 1951 CENSUS ECONOMIC DATA — A REJOINDER

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I am grateful to Dr. Visaria for his comments on my paper, 'Comparability of Census Economic Data', which give me an opportunity of clearing up some of the points which perhaps appeared ambiguous. Economic data form the most vital part of the Indian census; they may be most profitably utilised for the analysis of economic trends in the country to the extent that they are comparable. There is an obvious change in the formal economic concepts between 1951 and 1961 but fortunately, as shown in my paper under reference, such changes are of little operational significance and the doubts expressed by Dr. Visaria arise largely on account of inadequate attention given to the census instructions issued in 1951.

As it is apparent, the unpaid family workers constitute the most disputed category. It is maintained that while the 'work' criterion of economic classification in 1961 provided for their inclusion in the category of workers, the income criterion of 1951 failed to net them for the working force. As I pointed out in my paper, the basis of classification was not the actual receipt of income but a mere recognition of the contribution to family income based on participation in work of family enterprise. Dr. Visaria is of the opinion that the amount of work contributed by an individual and its quality are bound to influence the judgement as to his claim to a share in family income and his status as a worker. He thus states, "the contribution of many persons who would, according to the 1961 criterion (some regular work of more than one hour a day throughout the greater part of the working season), be considered workers (particularly in the industrial category I comprising the cultivators) would probably be inadequate to justify regarding them as joint cultivators with a recognised share in family income and such persons would be classified as non-earning dependents according to the 1951 definitions". It may be pointed out here that the emphasis both in 1951 and 1961 was on 'regularity' or 'non-casualness', regularity of 'income' in the former case and of 'work' in the latter. 1961 Census also specified a minimum limit of work below which it would cease to give 'worker' status; in 1951 there was no such provision. In fact the category of earning dependents was provided specifically to cover those cases where income was considered to be too low. "All earning dependents are economically semi-active only. Though they contribute to the carry-