

WORKERS' CLASSIFICATION BY ACTIVITY STATUS

A Note on Its Use in Indian Census

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1. *Aims and Objects of the paper :*

The classification of workers by activity status is of paramount importance for an analysis of the trend and employment pattern of the economy, stage of economic development, level of employment and of income. The available information about the occupational composition of the working force, particularly in underdeveloped countries, is inadequate to tackle several important problems we are confronted with. Here an attempt has been made to study the workers' classification by employment status adopted in the Indian Census. Perhaps, one of the most useful criteria for classifying occupations is that of activity status of workers (employee, employer, self-employed and unpaid family worker), a classification already included in a number of national censuses.¹ Drawing suitable inferences from the available information relating to the workers' activity status has become all the more difficult because of the different senses in which concepts have been used by the same agency or different agencies from time to time.

A careful scrutiny of the various concepts used in classifying workers by activity status as adopted in the Indian Census and N.S.S. rounds on employment and labour force would reveal the inconsistencies existing between them. The U.S. Classification—(a) “wage and salary workers” subdivided into private and government workers, (b) “self-employed workers” and (c) “unpaid family workers”—is considered in this paper to be more satisfactory than the Census and N.S.S. classifications.

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† JAFFE, A. J., “Suggestions for a Supplemental Grouping of the Occupational Classification System, Reprint No. 233, New York.