

SIZE OF FARM HOLDING AND THE 'YEAR-ROUND WORKER'

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THIS paper seeks to find the upper limits to the area that can be operated* by a "year-round worker" in a specified agricultural region, given the physical characteristics of the agricultural area, the crop pattern, the techniques of cultivation, etc. The implications of big holdings on distribution of incomes in agriculture between family workers and permanent farm servants are also brought out.

The area under study is Vidarbha, in the Bombay State. It has very little irrigated land and rainfall is low. Cotton is the principal crop and jwar and groundnut are the two other main crops. Use of agricultural machinery is rare, even on big holdings. Techniques of cultivation do not vary much between small and big holdings. Average size of cultivated holding is relatively high in this region. The proportion of agricultural labourers in the total agricultural population is also larger in this region than in the neighbouring regions.¹ Inequality of land holdings is also found to be great.²

The data for this paper is drawn from the Farm Management Schedules and the Report, 1955-56, for the districts of Akola and Amaravati.³ The

* All "year-round workers" on the holding are assumed to operate the holding, while family workers alone hold the land.

¹ The Census Report, 1951, for Madhya Pradesh, draws our attention to the variations in the distribution of agricultural classes in the Natural Divisions of Madhya Pradesh. The south-west Madhya Pradesh into which the area under study falls has the highest proportion of agricultural labourers. The percentage of agricultural labourers in the total agricultural population in the south-west Madhya Pradesh region is 45.11, while in the east and north divisions the proportions are 19.70 and 24.75 respectively. The Report comments that this typical distribution agrees with the analysis about the distribution of agricultural holdings which shows that there are larger holdings in the south-west Madhya Pradesh division than elsewhere.

Vide *Census of India*, 1951, Volume VII, "Madhya Pradesh", Part I—A, Report, Nagpur, p. 127.

² The data of the All-India Rural Credit Survey show that the concentration coefficient of cultivated holdings for Akola district, which forms part of the region under study, is 0.54. Only 7 out of the 75 districts surveyed by the Committee reveal a higher concentration.

All-India Rural Credit Survey, *Report of the Committee of Direction*, Volume I, "The Survey Report", Part I, Rural Families, pp. 112-13.

³ Mathur and Khudanpur, *Farm Management Report, 1955-56*, Akola and Amaravati Districts (unpublished) and the underlying Schedules.