

## ECONOMICS OF LAND CONSOLIDATION IN INDIA : A CASE-STUDY REVIEWED\*

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THE advantages of a compact, consolidated holding as against a fragmented one are well-known and can be easily deduced. As the author himself points out, a consolidated holding is operationally more efficient, yields greater output per acre, affords opportunities for developing the land and in general, is socially useful. This research project was undertaken to test whether these conclusions were borne out by actual experience. Our interest naturally centres in the methodology by which proof is adduced.

A group of 165 households from five villages where consolidation had been effected in 1954-55 seven years before the study, was selected by the method of random sampling. The advantages which these households, which formed the Project group, enjoyed were then compared to the condition of a Control group of 153 households from five other villages where holdings were unconsolidated. A comprehensive enquiry was instituted as regards the total and per acre value of inputs and outputs of different crops, their cost of production, labour utilization and employment offered, intensity of cropping, use of irrigation, improved seeds, fertilizers, improved agricultural implements, plant protection devices and inter-culture operations; and in each point, the comparison was favourable to the consolidated group. The assets and indebtedness of cultivators in the two groups were examined and it was found that the assets of Project households had increased and their indebtedness had diminished while the condition of the Control group was exactly the reverse.

A detailed analysis of the figures relating to the above matters reveals that the author, like the proverbial Indian plaintiff, has proved his case too much. It is pointed out that cultivators in the Project

\* S. K. Agarwal, *Economics of Land Consolidation in India*, S. Chand & Co., New Delhi, 1971, pp. 159, Rs. 20.

The book was originally written as a doctoral dissertation. It was later revised, enlarged and brought up to date for publication in the present book form.