

## CONSUMER EXPENDITURE ON FUEL AND LIGHTING IN SOME RURAL AREAS

SULABHA BRAHME

THE present note is prepared with a view to bringing together the information relating to consumer expenditure on fuel and lighting in some rural areas, of the Maharashtra and the Mysore States, available through the village surveys conducted by the Agro-Economic Section of the Gokhale Institute during 1955-1958.

During the year 1955-56, the Agro-Economic Section of the Institute completed village surveys in five districts of the then Bombay State. For the purpose of the survey, a cluster of villages was selected from each of the five districts. The cluster consisted of one bigger village having population of between 2000 and 3000 persons and a few adjoining villages with a total population of about 2000 persons; the population of the cluster being in the neighbourhood of 5,000. The bigger village was so selected that it had the facilities of transport, education etc. and served as a nuclear village to the smaller adjoining villages. The villages surveyed during 1955-56 were Pusegaon (North Satara district) and Visapur; Kasbe-Sukene (Nasik district) with two adjoining villages; Murud (Osmanabad district) with two adjoining villages; Dhad (Buldhana district) with four neighbouring villages and Selu (Wardha district) with three neighbouring villages; covering in all 5 bigger villages (henceforth referred to as nuclear villages) and 12 smaller adjoining villages.

The information relating to consumer expenditure on some selected items, was collected along with the information on production, employment, etc. with the help of a General Family Schedule, which was filled in, in respect of all the families from the selected villages. Each family was visited once during the period June 1955 to May 1956 to fill in the General Family Schedule. For the items of consumer expenditure, the reference period was of one month, prior to the investigator's visit.

It was observed from the schedules that among the rural families, firewood and dung-cakes were the main items of fuel while for the purpose of lighting kerosene oil was used. Many of the families reported that they collected firewood from their farms or forest areas and other places around the village and prepared dung-cakes at their homes. As such the number of families incurring cash expenditure on the items of fuel was not considerable. The proportion of the total families reporting expenditure on fuel, and the average annual expenditure on fuel per family, are given in Table 1 for the seventeen villages. The proportion of reporting families varies greatly from village to village, depending mainly upon the availabi-