

Identification of Marginal and Small Farmers — Their Numbers and Characteristics in the State of Orissa

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The present paper using the labour disposition criterion proposed a method of estimating the level of landholding which can be used to estimate the number of marginal and small farmers in the State of Orissa. It was observed that the relative share of marginal and small farmers show a systematic tendency to vary with development. It is found that the marginal farmers are more in areas where there is more of development whereas the small farmers are more in the areas with less development, suggesting that a process of differentiation is set into motion with the process of development. However, one gets a contradictory observation of superior resource base of small and marginal farmers, compared to large and medium farmers. While "Semi-feudalism" hypothesis can explain the high resource base and the process of disintegration through lack of withholding capacity, it ignores the process of development and its capacity to create differentiation. The alternative way is to look at the problem through a development process leading to pocketwise development. On the basis of the postulate that efficiency is positively related with size in advanced pockets and inversely in backward pockets, the paper suggests that the rate at which development creates differentiation is much faster than the Semi-feudal differentiation.

One analytical description of the Indian peasantry and the model of development that follows, emphasises the classification of the peasantry on the basis of the sources of labour power utilised in the production process. Agricultural sector derives the labour from two sources, namely, family labour and hired labour. It is possible to visualise that while a section of the farmers depend on hired labour for most of their operation another depends primarily on family labour. The former section which depends on the hired