

by applying their own standards on the quality of catch arriving by the boats. They buy fish by number or volume (baskets) and sell by weight. Consequently, per rupee of consumer price, the fishermen get 59 paise for fresh fish and 56 paise for the processable varieties. We have no public policy to amend the situation.

The fish processing sector is also developing in Veraval, which appears to be sensitive to the institutionalities of finance and marketing. For example, the processors are reluctant to invest on trawlers, obviously to avoid the risks of annual fluctuations of the catch. They have consequently left the opportunity of vertical integration unutilised within the fishing economy. Nevertheless, they have gone in for larger capacity processing plants to take advantage from the variations in the quantum of landings of fish. They buy through agents and service primarily the export market.

The opening up of the export market has had an unfavourable impact on consumer satisfaction. Between 1967 and 1978, for example, per capita availability of fish in India had increased from 2.39 Kg. to 3.84 Kg. However, during the same period, the price of fish has increased by almost 315%. This can be explained, if we deduct total export from the domestic catch. The increase in net availability at domestic market, according to the authors, was almost insignificant. They also observed that the trawlers have succeeded in increasing the quantum of harvests of the non-edible varieties disproportionately. All these together mean that the public policies on the modernization of marine fishing did not take into consideration the peculiarities of the ambience governing this sector.

The book is a good example of documentation on the operational and managerial aspects

of marine fishing in the Veraval zone of Gujarat. The net-work of commodity flow has been elaborately described. The lacunae in the administration of public policies have been squarely identified. This study will appear useful to the planners, researchers and managers interested in marine fishing, provided they can tolerate an otherwise careless typographical editing done for it.

Satyesh C. Chakraborty

Faculty Member,
Regional Development Group,
IIM, Calcutta

Profile of Labour — Socio-economic Studies in Ahmedabad: Pramod Verma, Academic Book Centre, Ahmedabad, 1981, pp. 139.

The book deals with the five socio-economic studies of labour in Ahmedabad. The studies cover the following areas: needs and welfare of chawl dwellers; pattern of consumption expenditure; knowledge, attitude and practice of family planning; the problems relating to social disharmony; and an overview of the strains and stresses of development being faced by the disadvantaged labour such as slum dwellers, women workers, self-employed women and aged agricultural workers.

The first socio-economic survey was concerned with several facets of the workers' perception and 'non-work' behaviour. Firstly, it enquired into the perceptions of the working class about employers, trade unions and politics. Secondly, it investigated the actual living conditions of the working class. Thirdly, the social aspects of the workers' out-of-plant behaviour were assessed in terms of social habits, social life, and community involvement. The survey revealed that the majority of the

workers belonged to the low income group i.e., 76 per cent earned between Rs. 201 to Rs. 300 per month. The literacy standard was poor with 28 per cent having no education at all. In terms of their origin, 65 per cent had a rural background. From the attitudes of the workers toward management, trade unionism and politics, it is revealed that, they were positively inclined toward managements i.e., 65 per cent believed that the management had been quite sympathetic in their dealings with them. On the other hand, 76 per cent of them believed that the employers did not realize such social needs of the workers as community life, housing, etc. Despite their negative attitude towards employers, the workers were fairly satisfied with their jobs. They were generally interested in trade unionism, but were not politically committed to support a trade unionist. It is interesting to note that the workers seemed to differentiate between on the job and out-of-plant social life. While on the job, they seemed to be satisfied with their work and had a positive attitude toward management. In their social life on the other hand, the workers seemed to have a negative attitude towards employers, philanthropists, and the rich.

The second survey was concerned with the patterns of consumption expenditure of the industrial workers. The survey suggested that the industrial workers in Ahmedabad tend to spend more on current consumption than their income would permit them. One reason for this phenomenon is the size of the family. On an average, the family size is 5.58 adult consumption units. Another factor is that prices of essential commodities have been increasing in the recent past.

The third survey was connected with the knowledge, attitude and practice of family planning. The data on the acceptance of

family planning show that about 98 per cent of the respondents did not know of family planning before marriage. The source of knowledge was either the factory and/or the family planning agency and/or other media. About 62 per cent of the sample thought that sterilization was the best technique of family planning, while 26 per cent believed that the condom was the best, about 2 per cent believed that other techniques like the loop, the pill, and the natural methods (rhythm and coitus interruptus) were the best techniques. About 10 per cent did not think any method of family planning was the best. Only 40 per cent of the sample used contraceptives and 2 per cent used the natural methods of family planning, 40 per cent were sterilized and rest 33 per cent did not practice family planning.

The fourth study dealt with a case on the problems relating to social disharmony concerning the three-day disturbances in Ahmedabad in July 1973. This case study made a preliminary diagnosis of the causes for disturbance and suggested some possible areas for further research. The survey data clearly indicate that some religious intolerance did exist. Under exceptional circumstances, as in July 1973, this intolerance may assume bigger proportions. The basic issue, therefore, relates to the extent to which communal tension, as any other manifestation of social conflict, can reasonably be contained. It has been suggested that the traditional culture and industrial pattern has thwarted instead of facilitating the integration of minority community within the fabric of society (p. 106).

The fifth survey dealt with the broad contours of the life and living of the disadvantaged workers such as slum dwellers, women workers, self-employed women in garment making and aged agricultural workers. Dis-

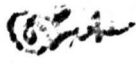
advantaged workers are those workers who do not form part of the beneficiaries of economic prosperity. In fact they remain remote from enjoying the fruits of development. This is suggested by their low education, poor housing conditions, large family size, below subsistence income and chronic indebtedness. The situation leaves enormous scope for upliftment of the weaker sections and the process has also started in varying degrees both by the government and by some private sector employers. However, whatever programmes are in progress need to be continuously monitored so that the benefits accrue to those for whom they are meant. In this respect, the author suggested that the role of trade unions has special significance. By extending their organizations towards the unorganised, trade unions can become the monitors, so to say, and ensure that a fair and larger share of economic prosperity goes to the disadvantaged (p. 132).

The author claims that these studies can be considered as 'baseline surveys' for the

purpose of planning and implementation of action plans by the government, industry, trade unions, voluntary agencies and the local authorities. It is believed, however, that the problems posed by the studies are not peculiar to Ahmedabad. Indeed, all major industrial centres in the country face similar, if not identical, stress and strains of economic development.

It would have been better for the users if the book contained an introduction and an overall conclusion. These five socio-economic studies certainly provide empirical information on labour in Ahmedabad, which will help the researchers and planners some guidelines about the real life situation of labour. But it is quite difficult to state that how far these conclusions can be generalised to understand the problems of labour in India as a whole.

K. K. Chaudhuri
Research Fellow, PMIR Group,
VI, Calcutta


STOCK T. 1982.10.10
IMC LIBRARY