

Chapter – I

THE PROBLEM

1.1 INTRODUCTION

Women and men undoubtedly have physical differences. In addition few women can forget their roles in being wives and mothers. Despite these differences the women have the right to be happy in some productive or creative work. If we give them this right we give them also the right to excel in various human undertakings [39]. The two sociologists, Talcott Parsons and Robert F. Winch held that women's emotionality with the role of being wives and mothers and their functionality in some productive and creative work were polar opposites [73, 100].

Following the sociologist Max Weber [97] whose ideal type is a purely theoretical construct that accentuates certain essential features of a phenomenon so as to render it explicable, Lynda Glennon constructed four ideal types : (i) Instrumentalism, (ii) Expressivism, (iii) Synthesism and (iv) Polarism.

The concept of instrumentalism monistically excludes the duality by saying that rationally individual and productive work is the natural human work. Expressivism, on the other hand, excludes the individual human productive and creative work and stresses that happiness lies in the emotional life.

Synthesism, as an ideal type, seeks to eliminate the private public division of roles. On the other hand Polarism, as an ideal type, keeps the notion of duality in tact but asks males and females to find their true gender essence.

Even though Lynda Glennon did not succeed to produce much needed empirical evidence in favour of the one or the other ideal type existing anywhere or

in any segment of population, she rightfully suggests that in the context of domination by science the society is moving towards the instrumental pole.

Ethically, the philosophers of the normative theory of obligation look for rules or principles for decision making in different situations for individuals, a group of individuals, the whole society of a nation or the whole of the international society. In this decision making the need of factual knowledge is predominant on modern days when there is a clear clash of apparent interests of different societies. If our knowledge of all situations of communities or groups or even individuals is perfect the scope of much debate on the ethical decisions diminishes. Therefore, it is necessary to have as much knowledge as possible about the possible role of women in productive activities so that a community may decide rightly on any question of discrimination in respect of one's rightful share of creative and productive work [38].

Those who follow utilitarian ethics following Jeremy Bentham include some thinkers who consider that a community, national or international, have a common community utility. The individuals must not be allowed unlimited freedom to be far afar from the community utility. In other words, an individual's choice must be consistent with what is best for the community in a given situation [44].

Women, as a group, being roughly half of the whole population of a community, it is ethically not tenable that the present position of women in our rural economies be determined by the thorough neglect of the group utility of women. In other words, from one aspect of the utility view it is not possible to support the domination of the utility of the community as a whole by the group utility of just another half, namely, of the males.

Economically, especially in developing countries, the award of freedom to women in their choice of productive or creative work and their increased

participation in productive activities are expected to speed up the pace of development and fill the technological gap in the total native human endowment.

With women's wholesale participation in the labour force a great deal of diversity occurs in the total labour power of the country as a whole. This occasions a higher degree of division of labour and the size of the market increases even with a non-increasing population. With every increase in income and intensity of employment, increase may occur both in demand for education and in the installation of the educational infrastructures. It might be possible that for married women shorter shifts of duties might be devised, keeping the total working hours of the day as eight.

There is uneven participation of women in different countries in the formal productive activities of national economic systems. In the erstwhile socialist countries of the Soviet type all labour power was rather explicitly regarded as nationally owned as much as tangible fixed capital. Naturally women experienced maximum amount of employment in the socialist countries.

In India we have a vast undeveloped sector where people are in absolute poverty and consequently suffer from want of skill so essential for ushering in an ever-rising level of efficient productive system. The practice of improved work culture by women will not only add to the heightening of the level of output and employment but will also provide an ongoing instrument of training children in trade and work. Alongside with this, the employment of women and consequent removal of their poverty will induce them through knowledge and discretion not to desire excessive number of children. The balanced and proportional employment of women in productive activities, therefore, accomplishes the triple objective of (a) heightening productivity, (b) opening up and improving in service training and (c) reducing fertility. In other words, in a developing economy of the Indian type, the ushering in of a state of proportional employment of women is an important means of fast development with constancy of population.

Howsoever strongly the social engineers may aim to install the balanced and proportional employment of women in productive activities, it is exceedingly hard to overcome tradition ascribed to women, the domination of male members and above all the basic weakness of womenfolk in less developed countries as a result of various forms of discrimination. To take up the last point first, it has been the experience of investigators that the poorer the economy the greater is the discrimination against the women. The persistence of discrimination makes the victim weak in respect of both physical and mental powers. Naturally, a tradition develops affirming that women folk are considered fit for some work but not fit for other types of work. It is, therefore, of first importance to study the extent to which a female member of the society can prosecute such duties as male member can and if there is a hesitation in some sphere on the part of the female member, the extent to which such hesitation might be eradicated through well-planned revision of the rules of the game should interest planners at every phase of planning. With the improvement in physical and mental powers in stages women are naturally expected to be more and more courageous to enter into territories which are so long held as exclusively male prerogatives.

1.2 THE PROBLEM

This study, in line with other studies undertaken under the present supervisor, makes a basic departure from the de facto centralized type of planning of this country that began in the fifties. Even though since the mid-seventies a system of parallel supplementary programmes has been growing side by side with the main plan, we cannot yet say that our national plan is an aggregation of the plans of our local level economies.

In the light of this failure to tap the most productive resources of the local level economies of a considerable region of the country, there is an urgent need for

the restructuring of our development planning in one respect. This restructuring will take into account of the vast potential of the feminine labour power and free choice, a choice not subjugated by the males of the households of occupations by our womenfolk.

The problem of this study, therefore, is the planning of the sex-wise distribution of occupations in our rural economies. It appears that we seek to plan for a proper sex-wise distribution of occupations in our rural economies. But to ensure proper sex-wise distribution of occupations in our rural economies we have the need of a right sort of planning of our local level rural economies. The over-all aim is here for the income and employment of both male and female population of a local level rural economy. For the purpose of our study we include two blocks of the district as our type of local level rural economy. Our target people are the males and females of this local level rural economy.

Any sex-wise restructuring of the bases of planning of our local level rural economies must if so facta take into account covert discrimination, if any, against women in respect of employment or earning as owner operator in all sorts of rural productive activities.

One of the advantages of viewing the national plan as an aggregation of all local level plans is that this system alone enables us to maximise employment of the local people, to devise organisational methods to maximise nourishment, housing facilities, sanitation and completely satisfying system of health care services to all sections of people who make up a particular local level economy. In order to make use of this advantage it is essential that we not only make use of the plenty of unused basic resources of the country but also generate new resources on the basis of collection and use of all existing technology and borrowing new technology rather than importing foreign exchange using resources from foreign countries.

In this scheme of planning it would be essential that local planners set up simultaneously a number of enterprises which are complementary and mutually supporting. The setting up simultaneously of diverse enterprises need not take place within one village or even in a well defined local level economy. This can be done, as has been pleaded by P.C. Sarkar in 1966, on the basis of inter local economies division of labour [75]. In other words, a number of local level economies may be integrated in a scheme of regional exchange. The especial problem in this study is to investigate what can be role of women in running these enterprises. In particular we may seek to know the kinds of enterprises which can be run solely by women either individually or on a cooperative basis.

We may incidentally ask if women's cooperatives in such enterprises require special kind of organisation which in turn may mould the cooperative institutions which are not reserved for women.

The use of improved implements might also facilitate employing women in work which is traditionally regarded as purely masculine. Again, as more and more women work on the fields or on workshops, they themselves make up and organise a system of security or of morality of mutual protection. And as such systems develop, an increasingly greater number of women may offer themselves for new roles.

The main purpose of this study is to examine the way in which we can plan the integrated development of the lagging local level rural economies through the maximum possible employment of female labour. If we succeed to bring women at par with men in all productive activities at the local levels and make them and the males equally well-fed, literate and energetic, the consequent expansion of skilled labour will be a sure instrument of ushering in great and continuous rise in the level of activities in the whole of the national economy.

The steps in which this main objective can be realised will depend on the empirical study of the existing operations at the level of a local level rural

economy. For this purpose we have the need of data as can be collected in a scientifically permissible method as well as the core of a theory, so that the data and the theory suggest a model of planning for both proportional and full employment.

Not only will the existing level of employment in productive activities but also time given to domestic chores be obtained. This will relate to both sexes.

The comparison of two sexes in these respects will be seen in the light of a comparison of expectancy of life of women with that of men.

It might not be possible to compare the expectancy of life between the poor and not poor, as that will necessitate so large data which is beyond the collecting capacity of a single investigator. An expectancy function prepared on the basis of a number of villages with reasonable explanatory variables is expected to throw lights on the nature of difference, if any, between men and women in respect of expectancy of life.

An opinion survey recording free option of women for work in different kinds of productive activities is essential for the planning of the kind we mention in this section.

The problem is being studied in the twelve local level rural economies of the district of Koch-Bihar (Cooch Behar). As similar lagging rural economies abound in the whole of the North Bengal Division of the state of West Bengal, our study of the problem in a number of local level rural economies will throw us required insights on the problem in our rural economies placed similarly. The actual location and the method of selection of these local rural economies will be discussed under one of the sub sections of the section on Methodology.

1.3 PREVIOUS STUDIES

To the best of our knowledge and belief, the problem in the present form has not been studied before by any investigator or agency. The problem of the study touches, however, various topics subjected to investigation by very many investigators in the developed as well as the less developed countries. The present study amounts to a fusion of a number of diverse fields of studies.

One of these fields is development planning. This field of development planning has two broad aspects. Firstly, the planners for development may address themselves to the task of preparing an aggregate plan for the whole country. Secondly, they may begin by building plans for local level economies. One of the ways of building local level plans may be to prepare a national investment plan at the top and disaggregating or breaking down such plan into a very large number of local level plans. Another way is to build up local level plans on the basis of the availability of local level resources and eventually aggregate them into a complete national economic plan.

In either case we may make use of development models built by master economists of developed countries for use being made for the development planning of the developing countries used here to mean less developed countries. At the same time with the help of such development models local level operational planning of development may be made on the basis of increased saving and investment of the local level operators.

In respect of both these aspects various studies were undertaken in the past. We name only a few of them (1) Lewis : Economic Development with Unlimited Supplies of Labour. The Manchester School, May 1954 (2) Nurkse : The Problems of Capital Formation in Underdeveloped Countries, 1953 (3) Rosenstein-Rodan, Problems of Industrialisation of Eastern and South Eastern Europe, The Economic Journal, June-September, 1943 (4) Sarkar, P.C. : The Core

of A New Model of Economic Development, The Indian Journal of Labour Economics, Silver Jubilee Conference Number, January 1984 (5) ECAFE Programming Techniques for Economic Development, Bangkok, 1960 (6) Association of Voluntary Agencies for Rural Development (AVARD) (7) Block Level Planning, Vikas Publishing House, New Delhi 1980 (8) Misra, R.P. (Ed.) : Local Level Planning and Development, Sterling Pub., New Delhi 1983.

Connected with the centralized planning and Top-Down and Down-Top planning in local level planning there is relevance of demographic optimality planning. Two sources made use of this kind of planning are (1) Sauvy, A : General Theory of Population (2) Sarkar, P.C. : Population Planning in Large Developing Countries, North Bengal University Review (Humanities & Social Sciences), June 1985 (3) United Nations : Population Divisions, Determinants and Consequences of Population Trends, New York 1953 (4) United Nations : Political and Economic Planning, World Population and Resources, Spengler, J.J. and Duncan, O.D. : Population Theory and Policy – Selected Readings, Glener (Illinois) 1956.

As for construction of life tables we were mainly guided by Barclay, G.W.: Techniques of Population Analysis, John Wiley & Sons, 1958. But we mention some of the references also. (1) United Nations (Population Branch), Age and Sex Patterns, Model Life Tables for Underdeveloped Countries, New York, 1955, (2) Wolfenden, H.H. Population Statistics and Their Compilation, Chicago, 1954, (3) Dublin, L.I., Lotka, A.J and Spiegelman, M. : Length of Life, New York 1949, (4) Spiegelman. M. : Introduction to Demography, Chicago, 1955, (5) Cox, P. : Demography, Cambridge, England 1950, (6) Stolnitz, G.J. : Life Tables from Limited Data, A Demographic Approach, Princeton 1956, (7) Mortara, G. : Methods for using Census Statistics for the Calculation of Life Tables and Other Demographic Measures, United Nations Population Studies No. 7, New York 1949.

1.4 METHODOLOGY

1.4A A TEST OF HYPOTHESES

Modern scientific investigation begins with a tentative hypothesis. Experiments are made and data are examined to verify if they tally with the tentative hypothesis. If they do not tally the tentative hypothesis is rejected. The hypothesis against which the tentative hypothesis was taken may be supported by the data.

In Economics we are not free to make experiments. In lieu of experiments we collect data scientifically. Usually on the basis of a cross-section analysis of the data we may find if the hypothesis we begin with or the hypothesis we want to test is tenable. If the hypothesis does not stand the scrutiny on the basis of the data the hypothesis is rejected. Another hypothesis that receives adequate support from the data is accepted.

In this dissertation where our task is the planning of sex-wise distribution of occupations in our rural economies we are naturally disposed to test a number of hypotheses. All these relate to discrimination against women.

The first of these hypotheses is that compared to men women suffer from discrimination in respect of nourishment and health care in poorer families or in poorer societies. These poorer societies may often be represented by some of our existing rural economies. More especially if some of the rural economies have marked class differences then the first hypothesis means that in poorer families' women are more subject to discrimination than men in respect of nutrition and health care. Life tables constructed might show that in poorer villages like those which have been surveyed the expectation of life at every village is relatively lower for women than for men. In this way the first hypothesis, when tested by facts, may be found tenable. If, on the other hand, the data show the contrary result, namely, men and women exhibit no difference in the expectation of life or

that women exhibit relatively higher expectation of life at every age, the first hypothesis is rejected. In European communities which were free from absolute poverty of the Indian kind women enjoyed higher expectation of life at every age.

The second hypothesis is that in male-dominated society women, compared to men, suffer relatively from less opportunities for paid work. The data collected through field work will support or reject the hypothesis.

The third hypothesis is that even in the poorer rural economies in relatively richer families' women find relatively better opportunities for paid work than women in poorer families.

Here also data collected would confirm or reject the hypothesis.

The fourth hypothesis is that as men enjoy, compared to women, relatively more paid work, so also in respect of domestic chores men bear the brunt of such chores. Here also data collected may confirm or reject the hypothesis. If this hypothesis is rejected it might illustrate the absolute hollowness of women's position in poorer societies.

The fifth hypothesis is that women left to themselves are not prone to accept any paid work even if allowance is made for scope being given to women to work in shifts of four hours of work. The testing of this hypothesis is most vital. Because if the collected data reject this hypothesis decisively we might have most important fundamentals for the planning of the sex-wise distribution of occupations in our rural economies.

1.4. B CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

The data collected through field work will be analysed on the basis of a well-designed conceptual framework. The first-step of ensuring a rational use of scientific conceptual system is the preparation of a required set of household

schedules. In other words a household schedule is divided into separate parts. Each of these parts may be treated as a separate schedule. A complete household schedule may be viewed as a set of household schedules. However we view the same thing the fact remains that a whole household schedule has several parts. In one part we have the space for entries of identification of members of the household, their age, sex, occupations, details of domestic dwellings, net cultivable lands, homestead lands etc. In the second part we have details of as much demographic particulars as are necessary for the construction life tables. The third part consists of the spaces for entries on the accounts of agricultural productive activity. The productivity of animal husbandry is the subject for entries in the fourth part of the schedule. In the fifth part of the household schedule one finds the spaces for the accounts of non-agricultural productive activities of the household. The details of the wage earnings of the members of the household find themselves in the sixth part of the schedule. The seventh part of the household schedule is reserved for the recording of the necessary particulars of the service holdings and professions of the members.

The study of the expectancy of life at various ages for men, women and men and women together is conceptually the beginning point of our investigation into possible discrimination against women in poorer societies. A comparison of the expectancy of life at different ages of men and women separately in one village and for all villages as a whole might be sufficiently revealing.

But we have taken another tool. We build simple regression functions. The dependent variable is expectation of life at birth. They are three in number. The three separate regressors are (1) number of families having per capita annual income below Rs. 3600, (2) number of families where every adult woman had 2 years of schooling, (3) distance from subdivisional hospital. With these simple regression functions it is possible to test whether these regressors have equal influence for both men and women. If they have not the same influence it is

possible that the lower expectation of life at birth is a result of real discrimination against women.

Following other pioneer workers in the field of work discrimination against women we build up tables on male female ratio in paid work or paid occupations in different productive activities. This system of concepts is helpful in understanding if there is disparity in respect of employment of men and women. Moreover, the system also demonstrates how great this disparity may now exist.

A conceptual system which has not been used by preceding workers is the male female ratio on the domestic chores. On the basis of a classification of domestic chores of various kinds data are collected for both men and women. The domestic chores are done daily. Some chores are done weekly. A third kind of chores are done occasionally. The hours given by the women and men are added sex-wise for each of the kinds and then male female ratio is found for each of the three different kinds. For the whole of chores throughout the year men and women hours are added separately and thus male female ratio in the total domestic chores is sought to be determined. This concept is of paramount importance because the brunt of the domestic chores is borne by women while at the same time the latter are denied their rightful share of paid work or employment. There is great need for scrapping the status quo to ensure more proportional distribution of occupations among men and women in newer enterprises through legal restructuring.

Since the study is centered on the restructuring of the sex-wise distribution of occupations an important element of the conceptual framework is a system of finding some sort of casual relation between inputs and outputs. This relationship is sought to be found in two ways initially. The first method is the construction of crude tables showing outputs and inputs per acre against three farm size groups and for the totality of all farm size groups. Here for the item of labour we have broken down the item into male and female labour. Multiple Regression production functions are also fitted since they may throw lights on the kind of

inputs which may cause additional output and hence additional employment. The planning for sex-wise sharing of the additional employment may require this type of new avenues for employment.

Another form of relationship of inputs and outputs will be demonstrated by the macro-mathematical model we build. This model is basically Leontief type and will focus among other things absorption of output of an activity by another activity. The demand of the output of an activity is generated by another activity. So this macro-mathematical model pinpoints the need of simultaneous setting up of new enterprises which for our purpose will be avenues for new employment for women folk.

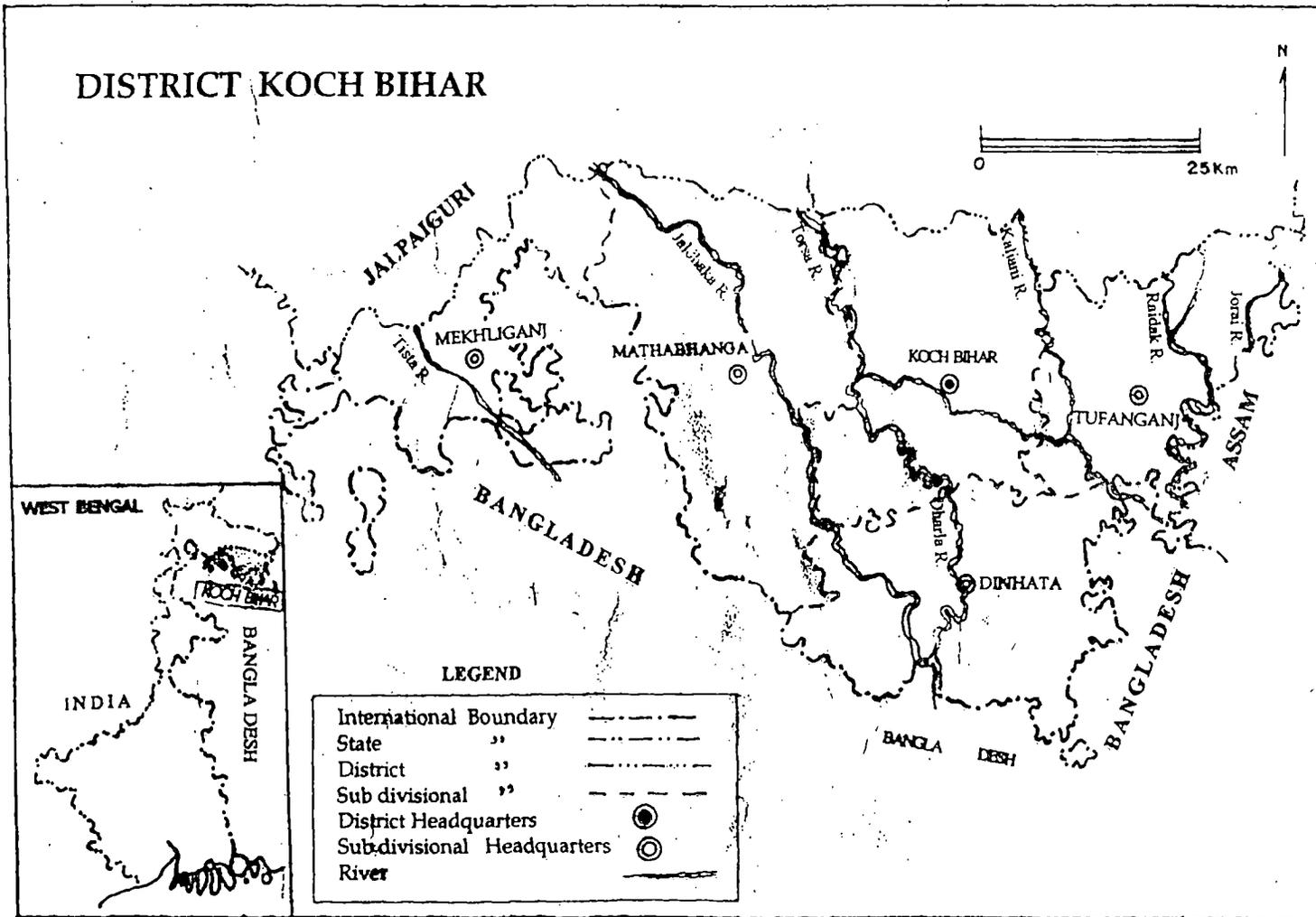
The determination of the choice of work of married, widowed and unmarried women is an innovative part of the conceptual framework. Both married and unmarried women are asked if they are willing to accept paid work. Married women are asked in addition if they accept work in smaller shifts of 4 hours and work in total for eight hours a day. Elaborate questionnaire is prepared to ask a large number of questions. Some girls (unmarried women) were even willing to plough and would be glad to operate tillers. This system of determining the choice of women has played a crucial part in this study. The study makes use of the new, almost unknown, facts about the enthusiasm of our womenfolk for vigorous participation in almost all varieties of activities.

The results of the study of choice easily point to the vast potentials of designing very large number of new activities and planning their size, products and hence expansion of consumption basket of all in the rural economies.

1.4 C DATA FRAME

We need data to understand the operation of the local level rural economies. The understanding so obtained will assist us in planning the sex-wise distribution

DISTRICT KOCH BIHAR

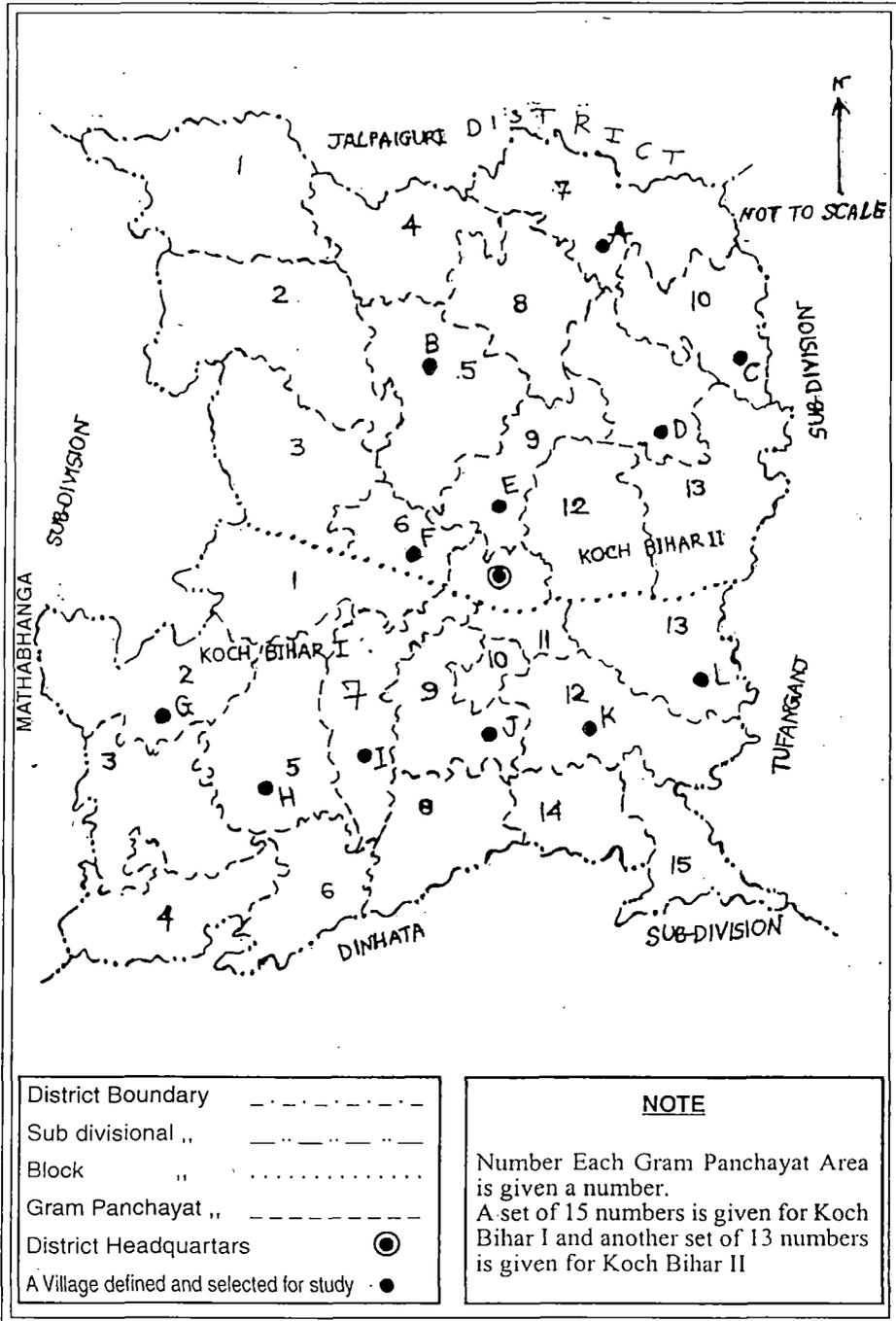


Based on Census Map

Map No. 1

KOCH BIHAR

SUB-DIVISION GRAM PANCHAYAT AREAS



Based on Census Map

Map No. 2

of occupations in our rural economies. A basic question to begin with is how big this data set has to be. Two considerations naturally come to view. In the first place too small a data frame is not convenient for bringing into account the diversity among individual operators. In the second place, the data frame, at the same time has to be restricted to suit the time limitation of an investigator.

Yet what has been, in this respect, uppermost in mind is that the data frame should be sufficiently big so as to cover enough number of household enterprises exhibiting as much natural variations as are possible in such household enterprises. As a result of these considerations twelve villages are surveyed in two blocks of the district of Koch-Bihar to build up a full data frame for the purpose of this study.

These two blocks has been selected rather purposively. The main reason for purposive selection is that although natural factors bearing on the household activities are not vastly diverse, the economic factors bearing on these activities would be divergent as the district town located in one of blocks and near the boundary of the other.

The only natural factor which varies among the villages of these two blocks is the level of irrigation. One of the other natural factors, namely, rainfall is uniformly high in both these blocks. Heat in winter is also uniformly low. The topography is also uniformly monotonous. The agricultural working classes who live on lands not very far from the landed farmers have their own tiny ponds that shelter all varieties of harmful bacteria. These tiny ponds are equally prevalent in most villages of both blocks and pose as uniform threat to public health.

Unfortunately, the level of irrigation is very low in these areas. Nevertheless, we made a distinction among the villages in each of these two blocks into two classes: (1) the villages where the level of irrigation is very low and (2) the villages where the level of irrigation is not very low. In each block we selected

six villages. Three of these villages are selected from gram panchayats where the level of irrigation is very low and the other three are selected from gram panchayats where the level of irrigation is not very low.

We must define our village as it is not identical with any village or mauza of a gram panchayat. First, we select an arbitrary point in a settlement within the area of a gram panchayat. Next, around this arbitrary point we draw a circle in such a way that fifty households fall in that circle. This cluster of fifty households makes up a village for our purpose.

1.5 AN OVERVIEW

The second chapter is reserved for the analysis of male female ratio in employment. In the third chapter we analyse the same ratio in respect of domestic chores. The fourth chapter focuses on the gender discrimination in respect of expectation of life. We continue this study in the fifth chapter by analysis of life expectation function on the basis of simple regression functions, examining if regressors act for men and women differently.

The sixth chapter compares the current employment position of men and women with the position obtained through the tabulation of the results of the survey of choice of work by a large number of women including unmarried women, married women and widows.

The production functions are analysed in the seventh and eighth chapters. In the seventh the data are analysed on the basis of arithmetic tables. In the eighth the relationship is studied on the basis of multiple and simple regression production functions. They along with designing of new activities will point to the directions in which the existing enterprises can be expanded and new activities added to offer scope for more female employment.

The ninth chapter will deal with the Leontief type macro-mathematical models. This chapter might stress the need of setting up simultaneously of the mutually supporting new activities.

The tenth chapter will include recommendations for the more proportional share of women in our rural occupations to complete our exercise on the planning of the sex-wise distribution of occupations in our rural economies. This chapter will, therefore, have three sections, namely, summary, recommendations and conclusion.