
1. RURAL DEVELOPMENT

Peter Gutkind (1) maintains that a "back to the land" movement does not hold any real answers to the problems, employment and otherwise, of the less developed countries. However, this is a minority view because it is more widely felt that the problem of employment in general, and of youth employment in particular, must to a large extent be solved in the rural areas as it is here that the great majority of the population of the less developed countries well and try to make a living for themselves. It should be remembered, though, that not all the rural population are engaged in agriculture and that non-agricultural rural occupations are important and must also be considered.

The Problem

The first main problem is that of inducing rural youth to stay in their own or other rural areas rather than migrating to the towns. More specifically, if a young person does decide to become a farmer there is the problem of ensuring that he does not become one of the 'working poor' - not actually unemployed in the sense that they are not engaged in any economic activity but rather exerting their energy for a return which leaves them below or near a poverty or subsistence level. It is thought that the way to combat both these problems is through the training of "the modernising young farmer" (2) who will be able to increase his agricultural productivity so that farming becomes an economically viable and productive occupation and a more attractive alternative to the job opportunities which the urban areas have to offer. Although there is a great deal of debate about whether aspirations generated in school and elsewhere promote rural/urban migration of the young, the fact is that the prospects in the rural areas are very poor and that urban migration is a logical response to this fact. "The unwillingness of young people to enter these sectors (rural and manual labour) is often perfectly logical, and long-term solutions to this problem may well be found in economics rather than education." (3) That is, the problem of rural-urban migration is not a separate and distinct problem per se but is rather the outcome of other problems which result in poor employment opportunities

in rural areas. Once these have been tackled the rural/urban migration problem itself will diminish considerably.

Areas for Research

Effect of training

The question of the best way to train potential modernising young farmers is considered in greater detail elsewhere in this report, but here one can point out the need for research as to the effectiveness of different modes of training - varying in such characteristics as the location of the training (within one's own community or in single-purpose training centres, etc.); the length of the course; the particular course content, etc..

Follow up

Specifically, it could be discovered whether more is to be gained from the inclusion of some subjects not traditionally thought of as being related to farming, such as basic principles of management or book-keeping or marketing, than from exclusive concentration upon 'pure' farming subjects. Evaluation of the different training methods should be carried out some time after completion of the course so that one can also determine the extent to which principles learned during training are applied later in actual farming practice. Where it seems that lessons are not being applied efforts could be made to discover whether this is due to faults in the training or unconsidered constraints in the real, as opposed to the training, context of farming. Having identified these constraints, perhaps lack of working capital or lack of access to required agricultural inputs, etc., steps could be taken to devise ways of overcoming them. Of particular relevance to rural youth would be studies which aimed to identify the problems facing the young trainee when he comes to set up in farming for himself for the first time. What are the

Constraints on trainees

constraints upon him: apathy or hostility from elders or untrained contemporaries; lack of capital; access to land? If the efforts of different young farmers could be studied it should be possible to observe the facilitating effects of the removal of these constraints, for example through the provision of low interest establishment loans, credit facilities, help in marketing arrangements, etc.. If, as is quite likely, young farmers enjoying the benefits of these measures cannot be found then it might be possible to finance pilot schemes of a few chosen young farmers to observe the effects from there.

*Productivity
of trainees*

Studies of the way in which young farmers might use initial loan capital and other services might suggest to governments other ways in which they could assist; or it might provide useful guidelines for predicting how successful a certain farmer might turn out to be and therefore point towards criteria which might be used to decide who could or could not qualify for an initial loan or working capital. Research could help to show the effects of land tenure systems or the social context upon the productivity of the young farmer. Is the tenure system preventing new farmers from obtaining workable pieces of land, is the system related to other social or legal practices? Is productivity of the land greater when it is divided up between several farmers rather than worked as one concern? Is the young farmer likely to be more successful and/or remain in farming if he returns to his own community as an individual, or if he starts up in a settlement scheme with other young farmers? Or is the answer a compromise, semi-formal settlement schemes for young farmers within their home communities? Do young farmers have better social/economic/moral claims to settle previously unused or underutilised land than other groups either from the surrounding locality or from areas of particularly high population density? Will the returns from a settlement of young farmers be greater than from settlements, formal or otherwise, of these other groups? The answer to these questions could be found from studies of the different groups.

*Effects of
land tenure
system*

*Leadership
patterns*

The role of the modernising young farmer is seen to include elements of aiding others, and especially of leadership in farming matters in the community. It would be instructive to discover whether the extent to which this lead is followed is dependent upon certain outlooks and characteristics of the population being taught and led. Could these attitudes be modified in a positive direction by measures such as the spread of functional adult literary programmes? Further research might also be able to discover the best accepted and most useful role for the young farmer in the rural community.

*Follow-up
training*

As well as programmes of research to evaluate the effect of initial training, the benefits of further follow-up training could be examined. When is the best time for these follow-up courses, how soon after initial training, how long should they be for, what subjects should they concentrate upon, should they be on-the-farm or in special centres? The content of the training programmes themselves could also be examined in the light of criticisms to the effect that research into the production of staple food crops is often neglected in comparison to cash or export crops. (4) Being able to produce basic food more efficiently will free labour time and land for the production of other cash crops.

*Local
conditions*

Little is also presently known about the relationship between labour intensiveness, employment and output for different crops. Further knowledge about these factors could well have an effect upon what is taught in training programmes, which crops are recommended for use in which situations, etc.. As has been pointed out (5), the need is for crops with higher labour requirements per hectare and with a seasonal labour requirement which does not clash with that of other crops grown, and which will provide a continuing and high financial return to the farmer. Knowledge as to which crops fulfil these conditions in different areas could be gained either from local field observations or, more likely, specially constructed and monitored experiments, and then used by the nearby young farmer training programmes.

*Information
dissemination*

There is a need also for research, and for training establishments to keep up to date with the findings of such research and to pass on information to trainee farmers, into the possibilities of farm mechanization, and the use of new kinds of machinery suited to the conditions of the less developed countries in factor availability considerations. For the same reasons, that every effort should be made to upgrade the information available to the young farmer through training programmes, heed should be paid to the call for greater attention to see research/propagation/multiplication/distribution and to fertiliser production/distribution/

advice/application. On a more local level valuable information could be gained from ecological surveys determining input and technique change responses and how these would affect actual peasant economic levels and social patterns. (6) A criterion for the evaluation of mechanized farming aid which should probably be given greater attention is its appeal to younger farmers. The gap between agriculture and the prestigious modern sector will seem less if the farmer is not relying solely upon traditional hand tools but can also use more modern mechanized means and has the necessary mechanical knowledge to care for them properly and carry out simple repairs.

Target group

Of course it is not being argued that all new information should only be made available to young trainee farmers, but rather that they are the obvious first-target group in that they are easier to reach because of their training involvements, which also provide them with material and moral support when they come to trying out new methods. They are also more likely than other, older, farmers to have a progressive and co-operative outlook and, especially if organised into some kind of settlement scheme, can help to play an important part in leading and teaching the local farming community by means of their example.

Keeping up to date

It should be discovered whether, and if so, to what extent, the young farmer keeps in touch with new developments in agricultural knowledge and techniques. If he is up to date in his information, what communications systems/methods are used and how could they be better developed - and fed with more complete and recent information?

Rural Development

Rural infrastructure

Buildings and other facilities provided by public works programmes - roads, health centres, etc. - will all improve the social and economic infrastructure of rural areas and thus their productivity and attractiveness for the young farmer. Part of the attraction of towns for the young is the social life they offer, both in terms of entertainment, etc. and increased social interaction with other young people. Better social infrastructure in the rural areas will help to

redress the balance between the rural and urban areas in this respect. Some of the public works programmes could be concerned with building facilities for occasional and more regular entertainment, and better roads and other communications will greatly increase the ease with which young people from different villages can congregate together. Opportunities to meet a number of different young people is also provided by the training programmes themselves and can be maintained after training if they continue to live together as, for example, in co-operatives, settlements or some other such arrangement. Such services as rural health programmes will also open up the need for a whole new cohort of trained para-professional workers such as the rural medical auxiliary - again an expansion in the employment opportunities for rural youth. Road construction will ease transport and marketing constraints which depress production and incentives for agricultural (and non-agricultural small-scale rural 'industrial') improvements. Research studies could help to indicate the best roads or market centres to develop in terms of their being of prime strategic value in a situation of scarce resources.

Non-agricultural employment Non-agricultural rural employment also has potential and in fact is vital in the overall development of the rural areas. Most non-agricultural rural occupations will be undertaken by self-employed individuals and small productive self-supporting groups and this should be taken account of when planning training schemes which will hopefully lead to increased productivity; when deciding which subjects will be taught and how. For example Callaway points out (7) that in a study of small businesses in Ibadan most proprietors had only vague knowledge of book-keeping and accounting. These could therefore be profitably introduced into training schemes.

The use of young unemployed rural secondary school leavers to assist small-scale businessmen in rural areas is an experimental project which has been successfully tried out in Kenya. The aim was to provide an individual extension service providing on-the-spot advice, as a valuable form

of assistance and training for rural small businessmen in record keeping, stock, cost or credit control, merchandising, pricing policy etc.. Selected school leaver recruits were trained for only two months, with the emphasis upon guided experience actually in one or more small-scale shops, blending gradually into actual consultancy work. Results were promising, for both the small businessmen and for the school-leaver consultants who all managed to find permanent employment without any difficulty once the experiment ended.

*Orientation
of training*

As with agricultural training, training for other rural occupations will be further considered later. Here one may just point out the usefulness of exploring the potentialities of national apprenticeship schemes, with government backing, which have the advantage of ensuring that the trainees are learning skills which are needed and maximising the chances of their finding a job when they are qualified. Because of the small-scale nature of rural occupations apprenticeships will usually be with a single master and benefits are to be gained from training and upgrading the skills of the masters, which will of course in turn be passed on to the apprentices. As the rural infrastructure develops - e.g. better roads and communications - a need will arise for skills which were previously only to be found in the towns, for example motor mechanics, and studies could be made of the best of spreading these skills to the rural areas. Could skilled urban mechanics be brought to the rural areas to teach their skills or will the apprentices have to train in the towns, and if so, is there any way of ensuring that, once trained, they will return to the country? More skill-imparting training centres will need to be established in rural areas and local studies could indicate where these could best be situated. As with agricultural training there should be follow-up programmes, both to evaluate and compare initial modes of training and to continue training by means of periodic short-term courses.

*Strengthening
small scale
Enterprise*

Although individual enterprises will most likely be of very small scale it may well be to their advantage to group together, either physically or administratively, for marketing etc.. Again,

studies could be undertaken to help point out the best ways in which this can be done. If these studies indicate the viability of rural industry and craft centres, further research should be carried out to see how governments would best support and back these, with the possibility of regional or national co-ordination of buying and selling.

Appropriate Technology

As the Commonwealth Youth Ministers' Meeting (Lusaka, 1973) suggested, there is a lot of scope for examining ways in which employment for youth can be generated by further development of both intermediate processing of primary products and the establishment of appropriate secondary industries based on primary industries. The determination of appropriate industries is most important as not all industries will be equally suitable or effective. Albert Waterston (8) cites the case of the attempt to revive the traditional textile industry in India under the first Five Year Plan, which turned out not to be economically feasible. Small-scale, labour-using light industries which he thinks are appropriate, and which should be further investigated, include the processing of agricultural commodities produced in the area and the manufacture of agricultural imports, for example fertilizer mixing, cattle, pig and poultry feed mills. Other possibilities are consumer goods and the production of building materials for capital construction and infrastructure projects, although again the viability of these in any particular situation would have to be researched.

Assessing Alternatives

Choice of Technology

Research should also be undertaken with an eye to the development of where more appropriate technologies, e.g. work-intensive, would be appropriate, and the ways in which they can be more widely introduced and accepted. Where research institutes for simple tool improvement exist, as in the case of T.A.M.T.U. in Tanzania, ways to co-ordinate and act with small-industry programmes should be tried out. Again it would be beneficial to determine how the government can best finance and aid such projects. The stages in building up a significant intermediate consumption-goods production have been identified for Tanzania, but apply in general to

Choice of Products

other countries too (9). Firstly, there is a need to identify appropriate goods in terms of local (or national) needs. Secondly, the need to evaluate the feasibility of small-scale manufacturing in the production of these goods. Thirdly, a need to work out a commercial channel system probably linked to national and regional trading companies, to provide purchasing and selling facilities. Fourthly, the need for an educational and promotional campaign for the new products, and lastly, although the actual production units themselves will be local and decentralised, there will be a need for central co-ordination of technical data and advice, initial technical and management training and assistance, and for initial finance. The setting up of new bodies may be necessary to provide this.

All this would create more employment opportunities in rural areas. The young could particularly benefit from this as the older rural population are presumably settled in agricultural production (even if only upon a seasonal basis) or in other traditional activities. Therefore, it is mainly likely to be the young who are available to work full time in new rural industries- who will have more positive attitudes towards such work and who will be more eligible for training in the necessary productive and management skills. If very small-scale operations are favoured young industrial workers will need the same help, i.e. initial capital, working loans, etc., as was recommended for young farmers, and again there is the same need and scope for feasibility and viability studies here.

*Importance of
Communications*

However, much will depend upon good communications - from research bodies, as to the goods which are best suited for small-scale production, and from the productive units themselves, as to what kinds of jobs are available, and which skills will be most marketable. Employment exchanges, vocational guidance and counselling services, etc. are largely to be found in the urban areas, and even there they operate with less than 100 per cent effectiveness. With the development of more, albeit small-scale, industry in the rural areas, the possibility of having some kind of similar or, if possible, better, service in the rural areas should be examined, learning from the shortcomings of the urban services.

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