

INTRODUCTION

This issue is the first in a series of “research digests” planned for 1974 to convey something of the nature and results of research carried out at IDS. Each of the four IDS Problem Area Groups – rural development; international relationships; planning, administration and government; human resources – will present one such digest of its research.

The current issue covers the work of the rural development group. Contributors were asked to write a short (2,000 to 4,000 word) paper on some aspect of their research, paying particular attention to policy and research implications. Because they were not asked to provide a comprehensive summary of their work, their papers give no more than a suggestion of the full range of interests and methodologies represented. In addition, one should note that time and space has prevented the inclusion of reports on the work of others involved in IDS rural research – Leonard Joy, Mick Moore, Geof Wood, Clive Bell and David Lehmann, for example. Moreover, since the intention is to summarise the results of past research, no mention is made of some of the major research projects which are now underway but are not yet in the concluding stages:¹

The Village Studies Programme, and the several rural research studies focussing on the Kosi region of India, have, in recent years, been the two major concentrations of IDS rural development research. Michael Lipton, Biplab Dasgupta, Sue Schofield and Claire Lambert cover aspects of the Village Studies Programme. Stephen Biggs, Gerry Rodgers and Martin Hoskins write about their studies in the Kosi district of Bihar, India. Rosemary Williams’ paper is based on data which she, too, gathered in Kosi.

¹ Further details of the current programmes and priorities of IDS rural development research will be found in the Institute’s Seventh Annual Report. Briefly, some of the major current projects are: Village Studies Programme (M. Lipton, Director); Crop Storage Economics in a South Indian Village (M. Lipton, Dir.); The Mechanisation of Agriculture in South Asia (C. Bell); Kosi Project (L. Joy, Dir.); Food and Nutrition Planning (L. Joy and P. Payne); Land Tenure and Reform (R. Wade); A Cross-Cultural Study of Population Growth and Rural Income Distribution (S. Epstein, Dir.).

Robert Chambers provides a brief account of his varied research interests over the past five years and distills some of the principle conclusions.

Elizabeth Hopkins examines the reasons why an agricultural extension scheme in Senegal has not lived up to planners' expectations, and goes on from the study of this particular case to raise questions not only about the planning and evaluation of extension schemes in general but also about the suitability of present methods of organizing schemes financed by EEC aid.

Finally, Robert Wade discusses the impact on rural social organization of a region's location in relation to industrializing centres, and suggests how, at least in the Italian case, the kind of social organization which has evolved in the periphery tends to maintain its peripheral position.

R.W.