

Research Opportunities on the Village Studies Programme (VSP)

The Institute of Development Studies will welcome applications from research workers in the social sciences to analyse material collected by VSP and identified by its members as suitable for hypothesis formulation and testing. Researchers can be appointed for three months to three years, at any level from Ph.D. to Visiting Fellow. *Ph.D. students* are registered, subject to satisfying the normal entrance conditions, at Sussex University; otherwise well-qualified applicants, interested in pursuing approved research based on VSP materials, would have strong claims on an IDS graduate studentship (i.e. an award, considerably above normal SSRC levels, conditional upon providing research services at IDS for about 50 days per year). Appointments to *Research Officerships*, and *Visiting Fellowships* are made through IDS selection procedures. Financial support is available, but priority for this is given to applicants from less-developed countries.

Research on VSP materials can commence now, but will be greatly eased by the completion of the indexed and punch-carded bibliography. Vol. 1 (India) will be ready for use by mid-1974, and Vol. 2 (other LDCs) by November 1974.

Several projects on which VSP material would support original research have been identified. The following list is not, of course, complete or exclusive.

A. *Rural Credit*: In some villages, loans are monopolised and dear; in others, plentiful. In some, their use is production-oriented; but not in others. How can such difference be explained? Where does the co-operative challenge succeed? (Complements work in progress by C. Harvey at IDS).

B. *Interpersonal Distribution of rights in land*: Are there cross-cultural, not purely historical, determinants (demographic, agronomic or other) of inter-village variations in the proportion of land or usufruct enjoyed by the worse-off?

C. *'Individualisation' of land rights*: To what extent is population pressure, directly and via changes in lineage, customs and extended-family patterns, leading in Africa to the gradual individualisation of *de facto* access to land? We have nearly all the French studies, so VSP has special advantages for this enquiry. (Complements work in progress by Harold Brookfield and Alan Ward. Both this and proposal 'B' complement IDS Rural

Development Group work on land tenure and reform: see D. Lehmann (ed.), *Agrarian Reform and Agrarian Reformism*, Faber, 1974.)

D. *Poverty Groups*: We have ample data on *tribals in India*. To what extent is their poverty 'just like any other poverty'; and to what extent is it due to their history and/or to prejudice against/exploitation of them? (This study would require a field visit).

E. A study on the *role of women* could well be supported by some of the work already done (by M.P. Moore and S. Schofield).

F. There is ample material on *family structure and size*; how are inter-village differences linked to patterns of socio-economic stratification?

G. *Farm size and the volume and structure of inputs and outputs* (including cropping patterns). Village data could support a new type of attack on the old discussion of what farm size does to farm efficiency. The relation between efficiency and farm size almost certainly depends on the distribution of resources within a village. It is generally agreed that the big farm's advantages are pecuniary, its disadvantages — once a technology is standardised in an area with high labour/capital ratio — technological. Does more equal land distribution — e.g. via access to credit — spread pecuniary advantages in production? This ties up with work in progress (Krishnamurty) on cropping patterns: do villages specialising in different crops generate different relations between (a) average social cost of production and (b) size of farm or scale of output?

H. Location: How does village size and settlement-pattern (nuclear, scattered, etc.) relate to output size and structure, and to land distribution? This should probably be based on African data, as these appear in studies with good mapping work.

I. *Seasonality*: Work on nutrition and labour-utilisation suggests that VSP could be *one* source for a major cross-section study of causes and effects of seasonal variations in farm activity.

M.L.