

A STUDY OF SOCIAL VALUES IN RELATION TO FARMING*

S. N. SINGH, A. R. KHAN, S. MULAY, and
M. R. LOKHANDE,**

Introduction

Social values play a very important role in the life of a community. Of late, behaviour scientists have conducted a number of empirical studies on values and on how these influence individual choices. Many of these studies have also highlighted the role of values in determining the adoption or otherwise of new ideas and practices. Among these, the acceptance of or preference for farming as an occupation, has been described as being due to various reasons probably related to the individual's system of value orientation. An outcome of this finding is that an innovation or a profession can be thought of as being perceived by the individual in a special way depending on his frames of reference.

The present investigation is an attempt, to study the types of dominant social values obtaining among the owner farmers of Delhi territory and to find out how far these have been responsible in determining the choice of farming as an occupation.

Objectives of the study

In view of the importance stated above, the present study was undertaken :

- (1) To identify social values in relation to farming.
- (2) To measure their distribution and intensity.
- (3) To establish the hierarchical patterns of these values.

Definitions of social value

The term, value, has varied and shifting connotations in various disciplines.

SOCIAL VALUES IN RELATION TO FARMING

113

Economic Value—The economic value can be defined as that characteristic which places high importance upon choosing those alternatives which will result in higher economic or margin of profit.

Leisure Value—The value towards leisure satisfies the desire for having adequate free time from work.

According to Lionberger (1960) an individual may be regarded as important forces which can be understood and circumstances. They may also be regarded as goal objects to which people orient themselves for confidence in the acceptance of new important organising themes in the life of individuals.

Thomas, (1957) defined social values as, "objects inanimate or animate, artificial, or non-artificial to which one's own family and do not normally for the group (collectively or individually) can make a change as a group."

(1960) emphasized the role of value and predictable criteria in decision thought in the development of capital, with as little risk as possible in selecting dominant values of a people play a role in determining their productive enterprise.

Williams (1954) has regarded "sovereignty" as, any aspect of a situation or object that is invested with a particular interest as being 'good' 'bad', 'desirable' or 'undesirable'.

Value thus is a concept which the selection of a particular mode of from a repertoire of possible Values are considered as criteria by which are chosen. Clusters of values around a central concerns become the value-system orientation.

Values are of different types

The following definition of difference will clarify the scope of these concepts

Ramsey *et al.* (1959) think that the value orientation towards traditionalism is an "adoption of precedence" as the criterion in decision making and is the antithesis of social change. The criterion of judgment used by the traditional-oriented farmer is whether a practice has been used in the past rather than whether it has some merits of its own.

Bose (1962) using an instrument developed and validated following Likert technique on a sample of 80 farmers, observed that traditionalism was negatively associated with adoption. Hoffer and Strangland (1958) confirmed these findings that those farmers who were conservative in their outlook failed to adopt new practices. Hobbs (1960) in a study of 350 commercial farmers in Iowa found the coefficient of correlation between belief in science and practice adoption to be significantly positive at one per cent level.

Bose (1962) also found that those who were more scientific in outlook adopted a significantly larger number of recommended practices. The investigations of Ramsey *et al.* (1959) confirm this finding.

Methodology

The Venue

The field investigation was carried out in the Community Development Block, Kanha-wala with its headquarters at Nanglot in the Union Territory of Delhi. This area is predominantly a rural one consisting of 56 villages covering an area of 68,600 acres and with a population of about 68,000. This Block is attached to the Indian Agricultural Research Institute, New Delhi and serves as a sort of field laboratory.

Selection of sample

The entire Block was stratified into five zones with 12 to 13 contiguous villages having approximately 2500 households in each zone. The criteria for the division of the zones were the homogeneity of these areas delineated as to their soil conditions, irrigation facilities or lack of them, and the types of crop grown. From each group one village was selected at random. All the families in each of the selected villages were stratified into five groups on the

*Contribution from the Division of Agricultural Extension, I.A.R.I., New Delhi.

**S. N. Singh, Rural Sociologist now in U.S.A., A. R. Khan Head of the Division of Agri. Extension, Mulay, Rural Sociologist and M. R. Lokhande, Research Assistant.

basis of land ownership. 175 cultivating owner-farmers distributed equally over four categories of land holding sizes in the nine selected villages, were interviewed.

Procedure

The purpose of the study required an inventory consisting of statements indicating the reasons for choosing farming as an occupation. The statements were designed to cover the socio-psychological values relevant for existing

farm culture.

A pilot study was conducted to each value in the table is the frequency with many statements regarding socio-psych values towards farming as possible top of the column was preferred to that randomly selected sample of 10 judges consisting of specialists in personnel who graded them in importance. Eight statements being the most important values and in this project.

Statements

1. (In this enterprise) you invest less and get more.
2. (In this enterprise) you get more free time.
3. (In this enterprise) you get opportunity to try out innovations.
4. (In this enterprise) you can live with your family.
5. (In this enterprise) there is less risk.
6. (In this enterprise) there is freedom to do work.
7. This enterprise has been handed down from generation to generation.
8. (In this enterprise) one gets an opportunity to do hard work.

The method of paired comparison technique was used to find out the preferences of the socio-psychological values. This method made it possible to compare each statement with every other in the list. Since there were eight statements in all, 28 pairs were necessary as per the formula $\frac{n(n-1)}{2} = \frac{8(8-1)}{2} = 28$ where n = Total number of statements.

As the sample farmers were mostly illiterate, every one of the eight statements was written on a card. Two statements of a pair were

The 'F' Matrix for 8 statements 175 individuals

Table 1

Statements	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1. —	168	157	159	75	162	138	172
2. —	18	167	171	103	170	117	111
3. —	16	64	111	23	113	88	88
4. —	100	72	152	6	79	169	169
5. —	13	5	62	6	90	85	90
6. —	17	3	64	6	85	85	90
7. —	17	6	68	9	62	74	74
8. —	17	6	68	9	62	74	74

Socio-psychological values

	Security	Economics	Scientificism	Freedom	Traditionalism
Leisure	S_1 0.349	S_1 0.658	S_1 1.671	S_1 1.863	S_1 1.893
Scientificism					
Familism					
Security					
Freedom					
Traditionalism					
Hard work	S_2 1.957				

SCALE VALUES

Scale values are arranged in sequence low to high. The scale values of the statements on a least to most favourable psychological continuum, an internal consistency was applied. This check involves determining how well the observed or empirical proportions agree with those to be expected in our derived scale values. The absolute internal consistency is satisfactory as indicated by the low average discrepancy between theoretical proportions and the observed proportions. The test confirms the validity of statements as relating to a psychological continuum.

Findings

Findings of the data indicating frequencies with which one statement is over another are shown in Table 1.

Discussion

ie scale indicates the preference of sub among eight social values towards farming elves. Judged in terms of a preferential ch, hard work, familism, traditionalism freedom occupy the highest rungs in that economics, security and leisure occupy mediate value.

important value towards farming is a revealing fact. The farmer tends to put a premium on hard work because primitive farming as carried out in India does mean painstaking work and anyone specially with low landholding and a subsistence economy cannot afford to take things easy. Year after year, season after season, not only does the farmer have to work hard, he has also by sheer physical effort to offset the effects of the vagaries of the weather and the scarcity of irrigational facilities. One can say that hundreds of years of traditional

farming with its attendant hazards have impressed on the farmer that cultivation and hard work cannot be divorced from each other. Due to this particular frame of reference, he still tends to feel that leisure has no place in farming in India and that any programme that emphasizes leisure cannot have taken all the occupational hazards of Indian farming into consideration, with the result that the average farmer here tends to equate leisure with idleness.

2. Familism

The gregariousness of the Indian farmer has been stressed by sociologists, anthropologists and others who have had a chance to observe his mode of life and philosophy. Some writers have even gone to the extent of describing urban gregariousness as a congregation of numbers whereas rural gregariousness is a communion of personalities. In the rural areas there is a great deal to share—disappointments, hopelessness of the future, the present struggle against a hostile environment, and things of this kind. Although the Indian farmer congregates at meeting places in the villages, it is not there that he unburdens himself of his difficulties. He meets other farmers and also to spend those interminable evenings when he has no farming operations on hand.

But it is to the family he turns for advice and encouragement in the day to day conduct of affairs. Evidence has been forthcoming that despite the patriarchal model of the farmyard families, the women have a definite say in the important decisions that are to be made in the home. And children, especially the educated ones, have been known to be able to influence decisions one way or another. Psychoanalytically oriented anthropologists have pointed out that the warmth of the family circle has helped the Indian farmer to weather the hope- less nature of the problems he faces without breaking down altogether. Dr. Spencer Hatch (1947) has pointed out that poverty and fear of extinction are the driving forces behind all sorts of co-operative efforts. Judged in this context and in the light of what has been said before, the excessive familial attachment of the farmer may be far from being entirely dis- interested.

3. Traditionalism

It is an historical fact that cultures handed down from father to son without records of any kind except the memorial ones, tend to be tenacious. This can be explained perhaps by invoking learning theory. In the absence of visual symbols which can adequately convey the salient points of a culture, the learning population has to adopt the stratagem of over- learning to prevent forgetting. The Indian farmer is ingrained in his traditionalism on account of his overlearning of the cultural mores and norms. Another aspect of it is that such a farmer with his lack of literacy and overlearning of cultural stereotypes tends to develop an attitude of reliance on anything which has been historically handed down. Looked at in this light, traditionalism is not an irrational attitude because it is the accep- tance of proven norms and practices as against the innovation which has not had the benefit of being tested over scores or hundreds of years. Primitive farming thus has become more than a profession; it is a way of life, a proven philosophy.

4. Freedom

All observers, whatever their calling or discipline, are agreed perhaps on this point that the farmer's profession, by its very nature, makes for freedom of choice as also of action. The farmer therefore cherishes this value as

being one of the top four among others. Perhaps those farmers who explain the various frustrations that to farming as a way of life rather than vocation, are emphasizing this aspect. They describe Freedom as one of the security values towards farming in general, not far fetched to say that the love of air, gregariousness, traditionalism, all tend to go together as they are related values. This expectation is amply proved by the findings in this

5. Scienticism

Scienticism with an intermediate position rather an ambiguous position in the values. The fact that it enjoys a high value on security would indicate that farmers are beginning to feel a low value on security the benefits of scientific farming as regards his peace of mind. This power to improve their lot. This mean that the farmer has a good picture of scientific farming, but only that in contact with the IARI extension work cannot but relegate the value Leisure created certain types of awareness. last position. The Hard Work as he the scale again it will be seen that it does not allow the co-existence of occupies a positive dimension as opposed. It has already been mentioned that last three values dealt with below.

6. Economics

The low ranking of economics premium on leisure, it would mean either be interpreted under two aspects, application on the field or the search with, the traditional farmer does not have a planned economy in the sense always weighs the outputs against in terms of money. If the land of him with enough crops to fulfil his he is not much interested in how he can earn. And it is also seen that he has no clear concept of econom-

of the monetary value involved. A view of the interpretations presented may sell his grain so that he may buy it is likely that many of the innovations of life, it is essentially a barter cause he does not usually accumulate improve his security and economic position as a result of his transactions. He but as systems which would barter away commodities.

Secondly, the low ranking of economics in the farmer's frames of reference, be seen as a defence mechanism. Many of values but would give to the farmer thriving on the fruit of his labour while adding to them the essential ones and the traders wax rich. And thereby and economics, the introduction of the farmer can do to improve his these circumstances, it is but natu-

better farming practices has a greater chance of success.

Summary

The results of many research projects both in India and abroad have pin-pointed the importance of sociological factors as determinants of change-behaviour. The present study was undertaken to determine the hierarchy of socio-psychological values adopted by the farmers in Delhi territory. The sample (N=175) was drawn by the stratified random sampling techniques from nine villages of Kanhawala Block. The paired comparison technique was used to study the preferences, among eight social values. By appropriate statistical techniques these preferences were converted into scale values arranged in order of their dimensions. The final hierarchy which emerged as a result of this study apportions importance to these values in the following order, the first one denoting the most preferred value :—

1. Hard work
2. Familism
3. Traditionalism
4. Freedom
5. Scienticism
6. Economics
7. Security
8. Leisure

The low ranking of the value economics has been interpreted in terms of the losing battle the farmer wages against environmental forces and also in terms of his being a passive observer of other people getting rich on his labour. This attitude is seen as a defence mechanism to overcome his frustration. The high values given to hard work, familism, traditionalism and freedom have to be interpreted within the frames of reference which the farmer has found to be ideally suited to contain all these values and to reconcile his lot with hazards of farming in India.

It has therefore been suggested that drives towards adoption of improved farm practices stand a chance of being successful only in so far as these programmes are able to incorporate the traditional values which the farmer likes to cling on to. Programmes which emphasize this aspect and seek to introduce values of economics and security as adjuncts stand a

better chance of being accepted with alacrity. The importance given to scienticism is seen as a growing awareness among the farmers of

Kanjhawala Block of the advance might accrue by the adoption of practices as advocated by the I.A.

References

1. Bose, S. P. 1962 Peasant values in innovation in India
Sociology, 67:552-560.
2. Charles, R. Hoffer and Dale Strangland. 1958 Farmers' Attitudes and Values in Relation of Approved Practices in Co
Rural Sociology, 23:112-20.
3. Chattopadhyaya, S. 1963 A study of some psychological correlates of Innovations in farming. Ph.D. th
New Delhi.
4. Duncan, J. A. Kreitlow, B.W. 1954 Selected cultural characteristics and a Educational Programmes and practice
Rural Sociology., 19: 349-357.
5. Fliegel, F.C. 1956 A multiple correlation analysis of factors with adoption of farm practices. R
21:284-292.
6. Hobbs, D.J. 1960 Factors Related to the use of Agriculture of Iowa Farms. M.S. Thesis, Ames Univ.
7. Lionberger, H.F. 1960 Adoption of New Idea and Practices, State Univ. Press.
8. Ramsey, C. E., Polson, R. A. and Spencer, G.E. 1959 Values and the adoption of practices R
logy., 24-35-47.
9. Spencer Hatch, D. 1947 Extension Experience in India, Farmers of Columbia University Press pp. 61-78.
10. Thomas, Dawes Eliot 1957 Dictionary of Sociology and Related Sciences Field, Adams & Co. Ames, Iowa.
11. Weber, Max 1960 The Religion of India (Glencoe III: Fr
12. Wilkening, E.A. 1953 Adoption of improved farm practices family factors. Madison : Wiscon. Res. Bull. 183.
13. Williams, R.M. 1954 American Society New York: Alfred A.