

BOOK REVIEW

K. Putta Swamaiah :

Micro-Plan for Full Employment

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The problem of unemployment is closely connected with that of poverty and the development efforts aimed at removal of poverty have to cover the problems of unemployment and low productivity also. In the planning strategy expounded by Prof. Mahalanobis at the time of the second five year plan, the employment potential appeared as a parameter in the planning model. However, this was at the macro level. The experience of thirty years of planning has revealed the limitations and the ineffectiveness of the macro approach in dealing with the problem of unemployment as well as mass poverty. The need for direct attack on these problems has become clear and for this purpose microplanning is the obvious answer. Dr. Puttaswamaiah has carried out this exercise for the Chiknayakanhalli taluk of Tumkur district of Karnataka state.

The approach adopted is initially to survey the extent of unemployment, then, assess the resources endowments and potentialities of the taluk and on the basis of these to suggest operationally simple, economically viable self-reliant and self-replicating programmes for employment. The survey covered all village in the taluk and in each village, 10 per cent of the households were selected by simple random sampling. The sample size was thus quite large, 2900 households from 208 villages in the taluk and its urban areas. For these households information on number of workers, occupation, agricultural resources, etc., was collected by a team of 86 field workers (primary school teachers). Details of concepts and definitions adopted are given in the first—Introductory—chapter.

The information collected has been utilised to review the resources and employment situation and to draw up programmes for full employment. After describing the economic background of the taluk in chapter II the review based on the survey of selected households is given in chapter III. The chapter presents a wealth of factual information. For example, we learn from table 15 that 37.26 per cent of persons in the sample households are unemployed.

The position of the weaker sections, described as target groups, namely, small and marginal farmers and scheduled castes and tribes has been described in great detail. The man power position, and the magnitude of the problem of unemployment in the taluk has been assessed in chapter IV. Chapter V gives the plan for full employment. This is presented in a tabular form on pp. 182 and 183. This gives for IX sectors, viz. (i) Infrastructure development (ii) Land utilisation, (iii) Irrigation, (iv) Agriculture, (v) Horticulture, (vi) Sericulture, (vii) Forestry, (viii) Animal Husbandry and (ix) Industries (small scale and cottage), the investment required and employment generated. The outcome of the exercise is the conclusion that by investing about Rs. 3299.25 lakhs, it is possible to achieve full employment in the taluk by the end of 1985. It is also observed that, the success of the programme solely depends on the effective implementations of the targets set forth. The whole analysis represents a lot of painstaking work and attention to detail and Rs. 33 crores may not be too big a price to pay for the employment opportunities created. Yet one may not readily and wholly accept the conclusion reached. One question crucial to the success of the programme is whether the output of commodities and services generated by the programme will be marketable and market-worthy in the sense of being acceptable to the user/consumer. Otherwise it will be building roads leading to no where as burdening the government-permanently with subsidies to keep the programmes going. Some of the employment generation programmes taken up in the past have been criticised on these counts. However this might apply only to some of the programmes proposed and the approach adopted for employment planning seems to be realistic and rational. Since the programme is area specific it has necessarily to be implemented by the Government of Karnataka. We may congratulate the author on the careful and arduous work undertaken by him and hope that the state government will give the plan a fair trial. If it succeeds in the area chosen for study it could be replicated in other areas and contribute positively to the solution of the twin problems of rural unemployment and poverty, in other parts of the country also.