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NATIONAL COMMISSION ON LABOUR

**PAPERS FOR THE CONFERENCE
ON
LABOUR STATISTICS
(SUPPLEMENT)**

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Papers for the Conference
on Labour Statistics.
(Supplement)

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National Commission on Labour

Government of India

Commission's Questionnaire relating to Labour Research and Information.

Conference on Labour Statistics

Note by Dr. B. Ramamurti

General Observations

1.1. Most of these questions have been raised in some form or other and discussed during the last three decades. There is therefore not much point in reviewing ab-initio the position and formulating a self-contained set of recommendations. The procedure may be as follows:

1.2. Brief reference to the work of the committees, organisations or Institutes set up to consider or deal with the topics, followed by discussion on:

(a) What were the recommendations made?

(b) What action has been taken to implement them and what results?

(c) What further recommendations are needed in the light of the experience gained, and the changing needs of the times?

The final recommendations should be action-oriented and have as a starting point what has already been done.

1.3. The observations above apply to the questions on statistics which were considered at length by the Committee on improvement of labour statistics in 1958 with the implementation of whose recommendations the Labour Bureau and the C.S.O. are principally concerned. Questions on Labour Research must have been considered by the Committee on Social Research, and must have been engaging the attention of the National Institute of Labour Research. The Representatives concerned (who, I presume, would have been invited for this Conference), might be requested to initiate discussion on the questions as indicated above.

1.4. There is not much point in recommending further study groups or creating any new agencies unless it is absolutely necessary.

2. The questions can be considered under the following Groups:

A. 212)
213)

B. 214

C. 215)
216)

D. 217

E. 218

F. 219 to 224

G. 225 to 230

A. Questions 212 and 213

Present position not satisfactory

The consensus seems to be that the position regarding labour statistics, the forms prescribed, the quality of the returns, and the final data processed therefrom is still not satisfactory. Maharashtra*(State Statistics Bureau) feels however that the deficiencies are exaggerated. The Committee on Labour Statistics set up in 1958 must have examined the problems in detail. The Conference can therefore briefly review what recommendations have been made. The Labour Bureau could review precisely what action has been taken, with what results, and what further steps are to be taken.

2. Multiplicity of Forms

There is still a multiplicity of forms, duplication of requests and avoidable workload of respondents. Is further review and revision of the several forms for submitting returns necessary? The need for such a review has been stressed by a number of States, Andhra Pradesh, Assam, Gujarat, Haryana, Orissa and Uttar Pradesh.

3. In this connection Gujarat suggests one Register and correspondingly one form each consisting of two parts:

- (a) General information common to all implementing authorities.
- (b) Special information required by specific authorities.

This may be discussed. The review done by the 1958 Committee should be kept in mind.

3. Need for statistics relating to workers in Small Industries and in the Distribution Sector.

While considerable attention has been given to the Statistics relating to factory labour, very little attention has been given, and little progress made, in regard to labour in the unorganised (below-factory) sector and in the Distribution sector. This has been pointed out by a number of States e.g. Assam, Maharashtra. This situation had remained so, for over three decades. This is true not merely in regard to statistics relating to them but as well to their working and living conditions. The Conference might discuss what concrete steps should be taken in this regard.

4. Major gaps in Labour Statistics

There are certain major gaps like the Index Numbers of Wage Rates, and Earnings, with the required frequency monthly or quarterly, needed for watching the economy. These gaps were noticed even two decades back and have now been stressed by the Department of Economic Affairs, an important consumer of such statistics. The position should be reviewed and some action-oriented recommendations made. The Conference might consider any other major gaps, which need to be filled up, also those series where frequency should be increased from annual to quarterly or monthly.

* Reference to States really refer to the State Statistical Bureaus(S.S.Bs.) therein.

5. Is the Implementation of Collection of Statistics Act 1953 the answer?

5.1. The consensus seems to be 'NO'. At any rate, not that alone. The following issues raised may be discussed.

.A.

5.2 Labour Department needs certain statistics collected as bye-products for the administration of their own legislations and should continue to collect them.

5.3. Their cooperation and assistance is essential in securing timely submission of accurate returns.

5.4. Should they only collect these statistics and the State Statistics Bureau be asked to scrutinise and compile? If not, should there be a statistical unit with trained men in the Labour Department? Should this unit be a wing of the State Statistics Bureau under the administrative control of the Labour Department?

5.5. There is clear need to scrutinise returns from primary units by trained men, and to send back faulty returns for necessary corrections. This needs adequate trained staff for filling up forms and for scrutinising them.

5.6. What steps should be taken so that the training programme initiated by the Labour Bureau at the top level generates quickly training programmes right down to staff in the primary units filling up the returns?

5.7. Any other measures e.g. more deterrent penalty for non-submission of returns.

.B.

5.8. Only those labour statistics not needed by the Labour Department for its administrative needs should be collected under the Statistics Act. It will not be feasible for one single Authority the N.S.S. to collect all the labour statistics. It may be necessary to delegate some of the powers to the S.S.Bs. and or the Labour Departments in the States.

5.9. There is some reference to creation of central Agencies at the national and or State levels. Is any other agency needed besides the existing agencies at these levels?

-B-

Question 214

6. All-India Working Class Consumer Index

6.1. There is general agreement that the New Index prepared by the Labour Bureau with 1960 as base will reflect better the price trends of the working classes in the urban areas. While the new Index would be a better working tool, it cannot be considered as the ideal one. There is also agreement with the Labour Bureau's comments about the general principles to be followed in the choice of the centres and weightage according to consumption expenditure rather than employment.

6.2. But as pointed out by certain States, e.g. Assam and Gujarat, as the consumption pattern is changing, it is necessary to conduct Family Budget Enquiries very 5 or at least 10 years and on the basis of the results revise the Index. The new series to be issued by Labour Bureau will have weights based on the Family Budget Enquiries during 1958-59. Significant changes have taken place in the consumption pattern since then. The Labour Bureau has proposals to have the next round of family budget enquiries around 1968-69. The Indices with 1970 as base should be brought out with the least time lag, as recommended by the Expert Committee on Consumer Price Index Numbers, simultaneously discontinuing the existing series. The various suggestions towards inclusion of new industrial areas and securing more representativeness should be kept in mind in the choice of centres.

6.3. Regional Index: The Labour Bureau has questioned the appropriateness of the Regional Index. This has been refuted by most of the State Governments. It is one thing to state that the concept of Regional Index is not meaningful and another that in the light of the available data and resources in sight, it may be possible to compile a Regional Indices. When we have an All India Index which has a meaning, the same applies to regional index too. Many of the States have pointed out that such a regional index for the entire State and for homogeneous sub-regions within are needed. This is not to minimise the importance of centre indices for wage adjustments.

6.4. The question to be discussed is, how best such a need could be met. The Conference may consider whether in addition to the centres which the Central Government may select for its All India Index, the State Governments may be permitted to have additional centres according to their needs, for construction of additional city index numbers and regional index numbers. The Labour Bureau can give the necessary guidance and assistance in regard to methodological aspects.

-C-

7. Questions 215 and 216

7.1. Almost all the State Governments agree that the data at present collected on work stoppages due to strikes and lockouts could be considered adequate; but in order to ensure timely submission of returns and their accuracy, they should be collected statutorily under the Collection of Statistics Act. The Labour Bureau has already drafted the Rules. This is a welcome step and should be implemented as early as possible. Madhya Pradesh, however, feels that more detailed information of work stoppages are needed for accurate assessment of the causes of industrial disputes, and they have this appended detailed proforma to their reply.

7.2. Many of the State Governments feel the need for collecting data in respect of work stoppages for reasons other than industrial disputes, e.g. power-cuts, breakdown in machinery, lack of raw-materials, fall in demand, etc. Such data cannot be collected under the existing rules regarding the Collection of Statistics Act. The Conference would like to discuss the steps to be taken for collecting them, including statutory provisions needed.

8. Question 217

8.1. The Labour Bureau and many of the States have not replied to this question. The only detailed reply is from the Institute of Social Service, Ranchi. The main points emerging

for consideration are:

8.2. Statistics, information and studies on the social and sociological aspects are of considerable importance. Besides collection of social statistics studies on workers' aptitude to work, reaction to work situation, problems of displacement of personnel, particularly in tribal and backward areas due to new factories, enterprises, are important.

8.3. While efforts should be made to develop a system of social statistics by collection of data through sample surveys and as by-products of administration, the sociological aspects are best dealt with through case studies in specific topics by specialist organisations.

8.4. It will be useful to have the observations of the Committee on Social Research and other Institutions concerned with sociological studies.

8.5. The National Sample Survey which is collecting data on the social aspects should be requested to process and publish them regularly.

9. Question 218

9.1. There should be a discussion on the definition of the Rural Labour Household. The N.S.S. has adopted a definition on the basis of the major source of income and the Labour Bureau, a definition on the existence of wage paid manual employment in the household. The Labour Bureau's definition is considered rather sweeping by Andhra and Uttar Pradesh has suggested the adoption of the Labour Bureau. Definition of rural labour household and an analysis of such households by percentage distribution of income from wage paid employment to total income.

9.2. While the N.S.S. has been collecting data on employment and unemployment and under-employment, it will be necessary to know and then discuss what has been published so far, and how far the sample size is adequate at a national level

(a) for estimating the position during the period of reference;

(b) year-to-year change;

and similarly for regional or State levels, and what further steps are to be taken.

9.3. The Labour Bureau has referred to certain intensive type studies in the rural areas. It will be useful to know from them the scope and objectives of these studies, and the progress so far made which can then be followed up by discussion. Are these pilot studies or intensive case studies of a diagnostic type.

9.4. The Labour Bureau has suggested that consumption surveys need not be repeated year after year, and that surveys made at five-yearly intervals would suffice. This can also be discussed.

9.5. The subject of rural labour, and in particular the agricultural labour, has been discussed in detail at the All India Seminar in agricultural labour organised by the Ministry of Labour in 1965, on the basis of comprehensive

documents. Emphasis was also laid on the operational programme. Their recommendations should be kept in mind.

10. Question 210 to 224

10.1. They all relate to labour research and can be considered together. The Labour Bureau has given detailed replies, and only some of, the S.S.Bs have replied (presumably because the questions don't relate directly to Statistics.) They agree in the main with the Labour Bureau comments. The representatives of the National Labour Research Institute can well initiate discussion. The main points are:

- (a) The present position regarding labour research is not satisfactory and adequate for policy purpose.
- (b) There are many gaps especially in regard to sociological aspects, which are becoming more and more important.
- (c) The quality of research requires improvement.
- (d) There is little coordination between the several agencies engaged in research.

As regards the steps to be taken:

- (e) There should be greater collaboration between the Government Departments and the Universities and Research Institutes.
- (f) Objective research is best done in academic institutions.
- (g) Such institutions should also provide opportunities for training research workers in Government, Employers' and Workers' Organisations.
- (h) The subjects for research should not be academic but related to the practical problems faced in the country. The Institutions should be given access to statistics and other information available in Government departments. The Government, Employer and Workers' agencies should give them the necessary cooperation.
- (i) Government should remit to them specific projects of importance to them and provide the necessary financial grants for such projects and for training of research personnel, fellowships, etc.
- (j) The Secretary of the Committee on Social Research or some other representatives should also be requested to participate in the discussion.

11. Question 225 to 230

These questions relate only to publicity and not to statistics or research. Presumably, therefore, the Labour Bureau and most of the States have not given comments. Only one or two States have replied. This group of questions may be given brief consideration at the end.

7

Comments on the Labour Bureau's paper
by the Statistical Officer, Bureau of
Economics & Statistics, Delhi Administration,
Delhi.

Q.No.212

Utility of Labour Statistics lies in their regular and timely availability at smaller intervals than at present for immediate analysis of the maladies which need prompt attention. The collection of Labour Statistics under the Collection of Statistics Act 1953 will be an enormous task for Director, National Sample Survey, who is the only Statistics Authority to collect different types of labour statistics through the National Sample Survey. Moreover, the authority implementing various labour legislations require statistics for the enforcement and assessment of the working of the Acts. Under the circumstances the better course would be to authorise various implementing authorities to collect required statistics under the Collection of Statistics Act and to the Director, National Sample Survey to collect statistics on other aspects of industries. There should be a central agency at the State level to coordinate the statistical activities of the authorities implementing the Acts within the framework of the Collection of Statistics Act and publish consolidated statistics at the State level. Similarly, there should be a central agency at central level to advise and guide State agencies and publish consolidated at the Central level. /data

PUNJAB

Comments on the Labour Bureau's Paper
by the Economic and Statistical Adviser,
Government of Punjab.

Q. No. 212:- Labour Statistics are evolved due to the implementation of various Acts and even if these statistics are collected under one single Act, namely, 'collection of Statistics, Act, 1953' the quality, coverage, frequency of collection, non response of primary units and time lag may not materially improve as it is not the statutory powers, which already exist, matter, but the field staff responsible for their collection. The improvements can, however, be effected if the field staff of the office of Labour Commissioner is properly trained in the collection of data. A scheme for strengthening the statistical section of the Labour Commissioner's office, Punjab, has been proposed in the 4th Plan for bringing out the improvements in the quality and reliability of labour statistics. Similarly such proposals might have been made in other States.

Q. No. 213: Until and unless the registers are maintained properly and the filled-in returns sent regularly as provided under various Acts, reliability of statistics supplied cannot be ensured. In this process some duplication is unavoidable and sometimes it is essential to cross-check the data. We do not subscribe to the view of the Labour Bureau that the collection of all types of labour statistics may be entrusted to the Bureaus of Economics and Statistics and other State authorities may be left for the implementation of the provisions of various Acts. As already mentioned above, these statistics are a by-product of Labour Legislation and can be better collected by the Statistical cells created in the offices of the Labour Commissioners. As such they should continue to collect and maintain the labour statistics. Moreover, the State Statistical Bureau collect data for long-range planning or for inter-departmental use and purely departmental statistics are collected by the Statistical Cells of various departments.

Q. No. 214: In the new series of All India Index, with base 1960 = 100, compiled on the basis of index numbers of 50 centres and to be published by the Labour Bureau, there is only one centre i.e. Amritsar from the State of Punjab. For purposes of wage adjustments in industries of the all India nature the new series of the indices will be quite appropriate but from the State point of view, it may not be representative. It is, therefore, suggested that State-wise regional indices should be prepared, which will be a better indicator of price fluctuations. Such indices can be prepared on the basis of working class consumer price index numbers of different centres being prepared and published by the State Statistical Bureau regularly. Since the working class centres, the indices of which are being issued, are scattered throughout the State, a regional index base-d on them will be quite representative.

Q. No. 216: The Statistics relating to closures due to reasons other than industrial disputes may be collected, as policies can be framed on their basis to remove the bottlenecks which lead to closures of units. This work, for the present, can be assigned to the Statistical Cells in the offices of the Labour Commissioners because these Cells may be able to collect the statistics with the help of Labour Officers, who implement other labour Acts.

Q. No. 218: Statistical data (employment, unemployment, consumption, expenditure, etc) collected by N.S.S. in respect of rural population upto 20th round may not give reliable State-wise

estimates because of sample size being small. In case the size of the sample of rural labour households is increased, it will help in framing an operational programme on the above aspects.

As regards the definition of rural labour adopted by N.S.S., a labour household is one whose income from wage paid manual labour contributed more to its income in 365 days preceding the day of the survey than both paid non-manual employment and self-employment taken individually. According to this definition, 147 rural labour households were covered in the 18th round which appear to be very small size to give a representative State-wise estimate. Since the scope of the definition is narrow for obtaining reliable estimates, the sample size can be increased.

According to the proposed definition by the Labour Bureau, 'A household will be treated as a rural labour household, if, at least, one of its members reports wage paid manual labour as one of his activities during the last 12 months preceding the date of enquiry.'

The above definition seems to be broad as it will include the following categories of labour:-

- i) Landless labourers who are attached with the landlord.
- ii) Landless labourers who are personally independent but work exclusively for others.
- iii) Petty farmers with small land holding who devote most of their time for doing work for others.
- iv) Farmers who have economic holdings but have one or more of their sons and dependants working for other big landholders.

Apart from the above indicated three categories, even the cultivators with the economic holding (category iv) will join the ranks of rural labour households. From above it appears that the number of households will be an inflated figure and will not represent the purely rural labour household. In case the definition of N.S.S is adopted, the sample size has to be increased to obtain representative State-wise estimates of rural labour households. If it is not feasible to increase the sample size, the definition given by the Labour Bureau may be reviewed and appropriately revised.

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X. LABOUR RESEARCH AND INFORMATION

Q.212. Most of labour statistics are a bye-product of labour legislation. They suffer, therefore, inter alia, from the limitations arising out of lack of uniformity in the concepts, coverage and frequency of collection. The time-lag in their publication, non-response from primary units, inaccuracy of returns, changes in industrial classification are further difficulties in making labour statistics more useful. What steps should be taken to remedy the situation? Is the implementation of the Collection of Statistics Act, 1963 the answer?

It is true that most of labour statistics which are by-product of labour legislation suffer from certain inaccuracies arising from lack of uniformity in the concepts, non-response from primary units and lack of verification of the various returns received under statutory provisions of law. The number of units not sending returns is quite large, with the result that information resulting from the returns received cannot be regarded as very accurate. There is also considerable time lag in compilation and publication of the statistics. The units which are required to supply information do not have trained staff in understanding the various concepts on which the returns are sent. The resultant information, therefore, is usually not very satisfactory and accurate. Besides this, the staff provided in the office of the Labour Commissioner and other regional offices is also insufficient and ill-trained to carry on the work of the compilation and verification of statistics in a proper and correct manner. The main requirement, therefore, is to give sufficient training to the staff to send statistics at the unit level and also the staff at the compilation level. It is also necessary that the returns under various Acts should be simple and concepts should be easily understandable.

The effective implementation of Collection of Statistics Act, 1953 will certainly help in better compilation of labour statistics. Rules should be framed under the Act for making it obligatory to send returns on various items e.g. strikes, lockouts, work-stoppages, wages, etc. It would also be necessary to take firm legal steps against such employers, who do not send returns in time or send inaccurate returns.

Q.213. There is a feeling that the practice of entrusting the administration of labour laws to different officials, the statutory requirements of maintenance of different registers and sending of different filled-in returns under these Acts, result in a good deal of unproductive work and unnecessary duplication. If this feeling has a basis, what steps should be taken to improve the situation?

It is true that there is much unproductive work in collection of labour statistics, which can be avoided. Returns are required under various Acts, resulting in almost the same information. This can be avoided. Sometimes the same type of information is required by various officers due to which employers feel irritated in sending the same type of information to various agencies. It is, therefore, necessary to avoid duplication in getting returns from the primary units and also the number of such returns under various Acts can be reduced by having uniform returns under various laws. For example, returns under Payment of Wages Act, Minimum Wages Act, Motor Transport workers Act, Shops and Commercial Establishments Act etc. can be made uniform. For this purpose, amendment in Rules framed under the various Acts shall be necessary.

If close scrutiny of various returns required to be sent under various labour laws is undertaken, it would be possible to prepare common returns, which can supply information necessary for watching the proper implementation of the various Acts.

Q.214. Does the all-India Consumer Price Index Number currently compiled reflect adequately price changes affecting urban working class? Should consumer price index numbers be compiled for every region of the country for the purpose of wage fixation? What principles should be followed in compiling the 'all-India' and regional indices?

All India Consumer Price Index Number currently compiled on base 1960 adequately reflects price changes affecting urban working class. Since consumption pattern of a given population changes after a lapse of certain time, it is necessary to compile consumer price index numbers on a new base, after a period of every ten years. It is also necessary to compile consumer price index numbers for every region. In Rajasthan, consumer price index numbers are compiled only for Ajmer and Jaipur. For the purpose of wage fixation, these indices are not enough, as the consumption pattern and the price changes affecting the working class vary from place to place. It is, therefore, suggested that consumer price index numbers should be compiled at least for 5 to 6 centres in each State, covering all the important industrial towns and a State series may be prepared on the basis of these indices on the lines on which an All India Consumer Price Index Numbers are prepared, as a weighted average of working class consumer price indices of various centres. In compiling an all-India or regional indices, a weight should be assigned to each place in proportion of the working population of the place to the total working population and a weighted average is then taken out. It is also necessary that various indices in the State are compiled on the same base. If this work is started soon, we can have a State-wise series and a new all-India series of consumer price index numbers on a common base in the year 1970.

Q.215. Data presently collected and compiled in respect of work-stoppages (strikes and lockouts) mostly consist of: (a) number of work-stoppages, (b) number of workers involved, (c) number of man-days lost, (d) total wages lost in rupees, and (e) total production lost in rupees. Are they adequate for measuring industrial unrest in the country? If not, what other aspects of industrial unrest require quantification?

The data at present collected in respect of work stoppages is not sufficient for measuring industrial unrest in the country. Data should also be collected regarding the reasons for work-stoppages and also about the legality or illegality of strikes, and lockouts. Information regarding the work-stoppages, which are caused due to industrial disputes and others which are due to reasons other than industrial disputes should also be compiled. It will give an indication how far the strikes were due to the industrial causes and also due to political causes, which cannot be included under industrial unrest.

Q.216. At present statistical data are collected only in respect of work-stoppages arising out of industrial disputes. Is it necessary to collect similar information on work-stoppages due to reasons other than industrial disputes?

As pointed out in reply to Q.215, it is necessary to collect information on work-stoppages due to reasons other than industrial disputes. For example, work-stoppages may occur due to power failure, non-supply of raw material, sympathetic strikes and political strikes like call for a

'bundh', given by a political party.

Q.217. The current emphasis in the collection of labour statistics is on data which will help in understanding the economic aspects of workers' life. Social and sociological aspects have been comparatively neglected. What are your suggestions for filling up the gap? For better comprehension of labour problems which particular aspect of these statistics would you emphasise?

It is true that the data which is collected at present does not help in understanding the social and sociological aspects of workers' life, for example, very little data is available regarding indebtedness, evil of drinking prevalent among the workers, expenditure made by them on social and religious ceremonies, etc. Data on important social and sociological aspects should be collected on uniform basis throughout the country.

Q.218. Statistical data (employment, unemployment, consumption expenditure, etc.) are being collected in respect of rural population annually by the National Sample Survey. Would it be feasible to make these data available separately for rural labour for each State/region? What other statistics would be required for framing an operational programme?

Statistical data in respect of rural population collected by National Sample Survey should be made available to the States.

Q.219. Are the present arrangements for research and studies in the field of labour adequate to meet the requirements of policy-making in labour and economic matters?

There are wide gaps in the information on labour matters which present difficulty in laying down proper labour policies. Present arrangements for research and studies in the field of labour are not adequate. There is very limited number of trained staff or Research Officers available. State Governments have not got adequate funds to organise research studies. The Regional Labour Institutes established by the Government of India might help in this direction. But it is necessary that such Research Institutes should be established for each State or in the alternative, the Government of India may assist the States by giving suitable grants in aid to them, in carrying on Research studies in the field of Labour. This will help both the State Governments and the Government of India in regular supply of information required for policy making in the field of labour and on economic matters.

Q.220. What are your suggestions for improving the quality of labour/research?

For improving the quality of labour research, it is necessary to appoint Research Officers in each State. Fellowships should also be granted in each State, in collaboration with the Universities to conduct research studies in each State from time to time. Grant-in-aid may also be given to Trade Unions or Employers' Associations, who are interested to conduct labour research on proper lines. The quality of labour research will, however, depend upon the personnel conducting the research and the guidance they receive from the Research Directors. The training of Personnel for this purpose is essential.

Q.221. What is the present state of labour research undertaken by employers'/workers' organisations?

In this State, no employer or workers organisation is conducting any labour research or even thinking on these lines.

Q.222. How should the trade unions be encouraged to strengthen their research activities?

Trade unions should be encouraged to strengthen research activities. But it all depends upon their capabilities to handle the research projects and their financial strength. Except a very few trade unions in India, there are hardly any trade unions, which can take up this work. In this State, it does not seem possible at all, atleast in the coming near future.

Q.223. How should labour research be promoted to in universities and research organisations?

Labour Research can be promoted in Universities and Research Organisations, by organising seminars and discussions on labour problems, by grant of fellowships to deserving persons for research on labour problem and by entrusting specific projects to the Universities by the State Government and the Labour Department.

Q.224. Are the present arrangements for associating the research personnel outside Government for a deeper analysis of data available with Central and State Governments adequate? What steps should be taken to strengthen this association? Should co-ordination of research work done by different agencies be achieved?

The existing arrangements for associating research personnel outside Government for deeper analysis of data are quite inadequate. Only the Universities take up some work of analysing data available with the State Government. The University of Rajasthan conducts a Diploma Course in Labour Laws and the students are required to submit a dissertation on labour subject for the purpose of passing the examination. They are given opportunity to study a specific subject and the data available with the State Government can be made use of by them in their work. The studies, however, are not very deep, as they are carried on by the students only for passing their examinations. It is necessary to associate research personnel outside Government more and more for a deeper study of labour problems. It is also necessary that there should be proper co-ordination in the research work done by various agencies. For example, Universities should challenge their research projects on labour matters through the Labour Department of the States. If the State Government wants to start a project, they should consult the Universities. In every State, a Research Programme committee consisting of top level persons from the University, State Government, workers' and employers' organisations should be appointed, to co-ordinate and plan research work.

Q.225. What is the extent to which the existing information on labour matters is being put to use? Who are the main users? Give a critical assessment of the utility of the existing information.

The existing information on labour matters is primarily used in formulating labour policy of the Government, enforcement of various enactments and to know the extent and effectiveness of the enforcement of the various labour laws. Statistics also give some idea of climate of industrial unrest or peace in the State. Since most of the data is not complete or satisfactory,

these are not fully utilised by the State Governments. Many a time, ad hoc surveys are conducted and information supplied to the State Government, to enable them to take decisions on a particular policy matter.

COMMENTS OF THE LABOUR COMMISSIONER,
UTTAR PRADESH, ON REPLIES TO THE QUESTIONS
RELATING TO LABOUR RESEARCH AND STATISTICS,
FORWARDED BY THE LABOUR BUREAU, SIMLA

Q.No.212: Most of labour statistics are a bye-product of labour legislation. They suffer, therefore, inter alia, from the limitations arising out of lack of uniformity in the concepts, coverage and frequency of collection. The time-lag in their publication, non-response from primary units, inaccuracy of returns, changes in industrial classification are further difficulties in making labour statistics more useful. What steps should be taken to remedy the situation? Is the implementation of the Collection of Statistics Act, 1953, the answer?

Ans: Labour statistics is evolved due to the implementation of various Acts and Rules framed thereunder. The statistics presently collected and compiled can broadly be classified into two categories:-

- 1- Statistics collected and computed by the State Govt. at the instance of the Labour Bureau, Simla.
- 2- Statistics collected by the State Government on their own accord for academic and administrative use.

The limitations arising out of the lack of uniformity, concept, coverage and frequency of collection does not hold good in respect of the first category as Labour Bureau, Simla, has been issuing necessary instructions in this regard and for which they have started a training programme for those who are responsible for collection of these statistics.

Even if these statistics are collected under one single Act, namely, "Collection of Statistics Act, 1953," the quality, coverage, frequency of collection, non-response from primary units and time lag may not materially improve as it is not the statutory power, which already exists under different Acts, but the field staff responsible for its collection. It is, therefore, necessary that for improving the quality of labour statistics, a programme for strengthening of the field staff and its training is necessary. It is with this view in end that this department has opened

statistical cells in the Regional offices of the Department. However, still much more is desired in this direction: as the collection of Labour Statistics is presently done through Labour Inspectors, who are already burdened with the implementation of various Acts. As strengthening of field agency for the collection of statistics requires sufficient resources, the Central Government should provide funds for this basic work. It is only then that the quality of labour statistics can sufficiently be improved.

The authorities implementing various Labour Acts require statistics for enforcement and assessment of the working of the Acts, and therefore it would be better to authorise various implementing authorities to collect the required statistics under the "Collection of Statistics Act, 1953".

Q.No. 213: There is a feeling that the practice of entrusting the administration of labour laws to different officials, the statutory requirements of maintenance of different registers and sending of different filled-in returns under these Acts, result in a good deal of unproductive work and unnecessary duplication. If this feeling has a basis, what steps should be taken to improve the situation?

Ans: Until and unless the registers are maintained properly and filled-in returns sent regularly, as provided under various Acts, reliability of the statistics cannot be ensured. In this process some duplication will be there but it would be helpful in the cross-checking of the data. We differ with the suggestions of the Labour Bureau that the collection of all types of labour statistics may be entrusted to the Bureau of Economics and Statistics of the State Governments and other authorities prescribed under various Acts may be left for the implementation of the provisions of various Acts. The reasons being that the various authorities prescribed under the Labour legislations would be requiring the basic statistics for programming enforcement and preparation of Annual Report, etc. If the collection of these statistics is transferred to the Statistical Bureau in the State, this is likely to create

duplication in work and the statistics may also not be available in time. It is, therefore, necessary that all such type of statistics be collected by the Statistical cells of the office of the Labour Commissioner.

The Government of Uttar Pradesh also examined this aspect with a view to collect all types of statistics under Directorate of Economics and Statistics, but were finally of the view that statistics of administrative nature should continue to be collected and maintained by the Labour Commissioner.

Q.No.214: Does the All-India Consumer Price Index Number currently compiled reflect adequately price changes affecting urban working class? Should Consumer Price Index Numbers be compiled for every region of the country for the purposes of wage-fixation? What principles should be followed in compiling the "All India" and regional indices?

Ans: We agree with the views of Labour Bureau that the All-India Consumer Price Index Number (Base 1960=100), based on 50 centres will be more realistic and useful and would reflect more correctly the price changes affecting the working class people.

We do not, however, subscribe to the views of the Labour Bureau that the Regional indices are not meaningful. On the other hand, the compilation of the Regional/Zonal Index would solve many difficult problems as the price fluctuation at different places within a State is not uniform. It is improper to apply the Consumers' Price Index Number of one Industrial Centre to the urban workers of other centres or for all the workers in the State. The State of Uttar Pradesh has 3 centres, viz., Kanpur, Varanasi and Saharanpur in the new series, compiled by the Labour Bureau. If the Regional index based on these three indices be worked out on the recognised principles, it would be more representative than the All-India index for purposes of adjustment in the dearness allowance of the workers in the State.

We agree with the Labour Bureau that in the compilation of consumer price index number, the principle of allocating the weights amongst the centres on the basis of consumption expenditure of working class people is more rational and realistic than the principle of basing the same on factory employment.

Q.No.215: Data presently collected and compiled in respect of work-stoppages (strikes and lockouts) mostly consist of: (a) number of work stoppages, (b) number of workers involved, (c) number of mandays lost, (d) total wages lost in rupees, and (e) total production lost in rupees. Are they adequate for measuring industrial unrest in the country? If not, what other aspects of industrial unrest require quantification?

Ans: The data presently collected for measuring industrial unrest is generally adequate. Recently, the statistics relating to 'Gherao' is also being collected at the instance of Labour Bureau.

The statistics in respect of strikes, etc. is collected on voluntary basis. However, if the Labour Commissioner is also given powers to collect this data statutorily under the Collection of Statistics Act, 1953, it should strengthen his hands.

Q.No. 216: At present statistical data are collected only in respect of work stoppages arising out of industrial disputes. Is it necessary to collect similar information on work stoppages due to reasons other than industrial disputes?

Ans: The data in respect of work stoppages due to reasons other than industrial disputes is collected in this State and furnished to the Labour Bureau in monthly Labour News. Such work stoppages are sometimes caused due to non-availability of raw material, differences among the partners, lack of funds, etc. and these details can usefully be utilised to remove the bottlenecks which lead to closure of units.

Q.No.217: The current emphasis in the collection of labour statistics is on data which will help in understanding the economic aspects of

workers' life. Social and sociological aspects have been comparatively neglected. What are your suggestions for filling up the gap? For better comprehension on labour problems which particular aspect of these statistics would you emphasise?

Ans: Both the economic aspects and social and sociological aspects of workers' life should be studied. At present the emphasis is on the economic aspects. However, at regular intervals of time, the social and sociological aspects of workers' life should also be studied. If ad hoc sample surveys are initiated at regional levels at suitable intervals, it would throw necessary statistics on the social and sociological aspects of the workers' life, as this aspect is inter-related with the economic aspect and which also influences the living condition and economic position of a labour to a great extent.

Q.No.218: Statistical data (Employment, unemployment, consumption expenditure, etc.) are being collected in respect of rural population annually by the National Sample Survey. Would it be feasible to make these data available separately for rural labour for each State/region? What other statistics would be required for framing an operational programme?

Ans: To make the data on employment, un-employment, consumption expenditure, etc. which is presently being collected by the National Sample Survey, for rural population annually, feasible for each State, it is necessary that the sample size be so taken that the estimates are available separately for each State. Naturally, this will require strengthening of the field agency, but this can be solved if the State agency of the Economics and Statistics Directorate is also utilised for the collection of the data.

Q.No.219: Are the present arrangements for research and studies in the field of labour adequate to meet the requirements of policy making in labour and economic matters?

Ans: We subscribe to the views of the Labour Bureau in this regard. A detailed reply in this connection has

previously been sent to the National Commission, in which the position as existing in the L.C.'s office has been indicated.

Q.No.220: What are your suggestions for improving the quality of labour research?

Ans: We agree with the views of the Labour Bureau. The suggestions of this office for improving the quality of Labour Research have already been sent to the National Commission in reply to the questionnaire issued by it.

Q.No.221: What is the present state of labour research undertaken by employers'/workers' organisations?

Ans: Very little or almost nothing has been done by the employers' and workers' organisations for research in the labour field. Some years back an institute named Sri Ram Institute of Industrial Relations was set up at Delhi which is conducting good research in the field of labour.

Q.No.222: How should be the trade unions be encouraged to strengthen their research activities?

Ans: To expect the trade unions to conduct research in the field of labour is not possible because of the fact that the office bearers are generally not educated or technically equipped. Besides, the trade unions are short of funds. For encouraging research by the trade unions, it would be necessary to provide them funds.

Q.No.223: How should labour research be promoted in universities and research organisations?

Ans: Recently, the Government of India has set up two or three Labour Research Institutes in Universities, one of which is located in the University of Lucknow in this State. This organisation is conducting research in the field of labour. Similar institutes may be opened on regional basis.

Q.No.224: Are the present arrangements for associating the research personnel outside Government for a deeper analysis of data available with Central and State Governments adequate? What steps should be taken to strengthen this association?

Should coordination of research work done by different agencies be achieved?

Ans: We subscribe to the views of the Labour Bureau in this regard. As regards this State, there is presently no regular arrangement for associating research personnel outside Government for the purposes of making deeper analysis of data. The necessity of such association has hardly arisen because of the fact that the research work and the data collected is mostly of administrative nature and not of academic type.

REPORT

to

MINISTRY OF LABOUR, EMPLOYMENT AND REHABILITATION
GOVERNMENT OF INDIA

ON THE

LABOUR BUREAU

Prepared by
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I N T R O D U C T I O N

The Government of India has long had an interest in the problems of labour. More recently, in 1946, it created the Labour Bureau for the purpose of:-

- a) collection, compilation and publication of labour statistics;
- b) maintenance of consumer price indexes for the working class and for agricultural workers;
- c) keeping up-to-date the factual data relating to working conditions of industrial workers collected by the Labour Investigation Committee;
- d) conducting research into specific problems with a view to furnishing data required for the formulation of labour policies; and
- e) publication of the monthly Indian Labour Journal, the Indian Labour Year Book and pamphlets and brochures on various aspects of labour legislations.

The present appraisal was undertaken at the request of the Government of India in order to assess the Labour Bureau's organization and functions and recommend improvements in the conduct of work in certain specialized areas. Dudley E. Young, Deputy Assistant Commissioner, Bureau of Labour Statistics, United States Department of Labour was made available October 1, 1967 for a period of four months, under the technical assistance programme of the U.S. Agency for International Development, to conduct this study.

In view of the limited time allotted to this review and the complexity of the field of work involved there may be, in fact no doubt are, inaccuracies of detail in this report. Where they occur they should be understood as inadequacies of comprehension or description on the part of the author and not of his informants who have been uniformly helpful and cooperative. I feel that, despite such inadequacies, the basic frame-work of description and recommendations is sound. It must be recognized that my approach is the outgrowth of my experience in the Bureau of Labour Statistics in the United States. I believe that I have made sufficient allowance for the differing conditions in India but I may not have done so since my experience in India is limited to this assignment. Conclusions and recommendations should be evaluated with this possibility in mind.

It is of substantial interest that a review of the Labour Bureau's work was issued in 1960 as the report of a "Committee on Improvement of Labour Statistics" which had been appointed by the Ministry of Labour and Employment. The report, annotated to indicate major actions taken to implement the Committee's recommendations, is included as Appendix to this appraisal.

I thank Shri P.C. Mathew, Secretary of Labour and Employment, for the excellent cooperation and many courtesies extended by members of his staff. Dr. S.T. Merani, Joint Secretary of the Labour and Employment Ministry, was of the utmost help in setting up the framework within which the work was undertaken. Special recognition is accorded to Shri K.K. Bhatia, Director of the Labour Bureau for his sympathetic encouragement and frank evaluations of the Labour Bureau's activities.

The consultant is most grateful to the Chief of the Labour Advisory Division of the U.S. Agency for International Development, Mr. Thomas L. O'Connor and his staff for the invaluable support they have provided throughout this assignment.

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It is of substantial interest that a review of the Labour Bureau's work was started in 1960 as the result of a "Committee on Improvement of Labour Statistics" which had been appointed by the Ministry of Labour and Employment. The report, submitted to indicate major areas to be implemented the Committee's recommendations, is included as Appendix I to this appraisal.

two groups are "urban industrial workers" and "rural labour". Each of these groups has further sharp distinctions within itself. These are frequently associated with geographic locations but are not necessarily caused by differences in climate or other purely geographic factors.

2. Prices of consumer goods have risen sharply during the last several years.
3. There is considerable, if not complete, acceptance of the principle that the purchasing power of wages should be maintained through the payment of a "dearness allowance" in addition to the basic wage and, in a large proportion of cases, the dearness allowance is escalated by changes in the Consumer Price Index.

A logical consequence of these factors is that consumer price indexes are prepared separately for industrial workers and for agricultural labourers, that there is great emphasis on the need for a separate index for each geographic area in which there is a concentration of workers, and that substantial difficulties of securing general public acceptance are encountered when it becomes necessary to update the weighting pattern of the indexes to reflect newer consumption patterns.

A different group of factors take effect in the case of those data secured through reports made by employers under legislative acts such as the Factories Act, 1948.

1. "The main provisions of the Act relate to: health, safety and welfare; hours of work; employment of young persons and women; annual leave with wages; occupational diseases; powers of inspectors; and penalties for offences". (The Indian Labour Yearbook, 1965).
2. Administration of the Act is carried out by the State Governments.
3. Enforcement and inspections are carried out by State Governments.

It is obvious that the main objective of this legislation is to secure certain safeguards and benefits to workers in covered factories, those employing ten or more workers where power is used and twenty or more workers where power is not used.

Reports under this Act are the responsible source for data on employment by industry. Since, however, these reports are a by-product of the Act rather than a principal objective their compilation by the

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various States seems, in some instances, to be regarded as more of a nuisance than an opportunity to submit sound statistics. There are also of course incentives to the reporting plants to submit biased reports or to avoid reporting entirely. It is one of the more unfortunate aspects of human nature that statistics based on the requirements of an enforcement program are frequently found to be biased.

Most damaging of all from the standpoint of the need for current statistics, the reports from the states are frequently seriously delayed. They are due by August 25 of the year following the year to which they refer but the majority of reports have not been received by that time. In fact by the beginning of November 1967 reports for fourteen States for 1966 had not been received.

Once reports have been submitted by the States they are reviewed for internal consistency and any discrepancies are referred back to the State concerned for resolution. The referral and resolution process is conducted by mail.

The Labour Bureau has no effective sanctions through the exercise of which it can effectively urge quicker action upon the States. The end result is that the most recent published statistics for factory employment by industry relate to 1965. These are provisional data published in Indian Labour Statistics. Final detailed data are available for 1964 but published only through 1962.

The Annual Survey of Industries conducted by the National Sample Survey Directorate, Central Statistical Organization might be an alternative system for collecting data on employment by industry without being dependent on the States and thus, presumably, being able to publish data with a lesser time lag than the fifteen months after the year to which the data relate which is typical of the data collected under the Factories Act. Part II of this survey collects data on employment, labour turnover, absenteeism, manhours worked, earnings, salaries, wages, bonus and contribution by employers to social security benefits.

The Annual Survey of Industries, as it has been conducted, does have certain shortcomings since the collection of Part II of the questionnaire has been limited to a census of large establishments, those registered under the Factories Act, 1948, which employ fifty or more workers and use power, and hundred or more workers without power. The first part of the form also asks a block of questions about employment, pay and hours and this is collected from a sample of small establishments as well as from the large. Technically, therefore, it should be feasible to construct employment, hours and earnings measures from this survey.

Unfortunately, it too has some problems of timing. Part II was first collected for 1961 and it has been collected annually since. The returns for 1961 and 1962 were not tabulated. The Labour Bureau has tabulated the 1963 returns and has punched machine cards on the returns for 1964. With present staffing and machine tabulation facilities the tabulation of the 1964 results will be completed by July 1969.

The Central Statistical Organization has published reports covering the 1963 results but it also appears to be having problems in keeping the publication of results abreast of the collection program.

Some of the problems common to many of the surveys undertaken by the Labour Bureau are illustrated by the discussion of the consumer price indexes and employment indexes given above. The different surveys undertaken by the Bureau and their present status are presented in the tables in Appendix 'A'.

P R O B L E M S

The problems which the Labour Bureau encounters in its work may be classified into several groupings:

- (a) problems of work content;
- (b) problems of operations;
- (c) problems of survey design;
- (d) problems of cooperation with other agencies;
- (e) problems of collection of data; and,
- (f) problems of management.

It will, of course, be obvious that the same problem can be approached from differing points of view and that, in this sense, the categories listed are not mutually exclusive. From one approach all the classifications are 'problems of administration' from another they can be construed as 'problems of operations'. Nevertheless the major headings seem useful as a way of looking at the situation though it is to be understood that other groupings might be equally useful.

Problems of Work Content

These problems can be divided into those of the type and quantity of analysis of survey and research results which should be undertaken and those concerning the subject matter of statistical surveys. The present practice of the Labour Bureau with regard to analysis is to make it almost entirely descriptive with relatively few references to the possible relation of the phenomena observed to other events such as changes in laws under which the activity is being conducted, initiation of government programs designed to affect the activity and similar factors. A question has been raised as to whether it would not be desirable for the Labour Bureau to prepare its analysis so that they emphasize the relation of its findings to government policy and evaluate the probable effect of alternative policies if they are being considered. This is, no doubt, an appealing proposal at the top administrative level since it is recognised that the Labour Bureau would naturally know the complexities of its own statistics better than other authorities and since those persons responsible for broad program and political decisions have little time and frequently little aptitude for analysing the maze of statistics which may bear on the issue at hand. While I realize the strength of these arguments I do not feel advocacy for particular government programs is a desirable part of the analytical work of the Labour Bureau for the following reasons:

1. a principal virtue of economic statistics is their general acceptance, a recognition that the situation is as it is described;
2. political activity based on this recognition may take many forms ranging from the acceptance of the situation as satisfactory to various proposals for modifying it.

If the Labour Bureau supports a particular proposal the fact that it does so is likely to bring into question its factual description and hence it may not be able to achieve or maintain the first step, general acceptance of the descriptive statistics, which should form the common basis for the various proposals. Though this description is idealised the principles involved appear to be valid. At the same time the original argument for the need for analysis is directly oriented to policy needs remains. It is possible that this need could best be satisfied by the development of evaluation based on appraisal of the effects of alternative proposals with carefully stated assumptions.

The Labour Bureau should also do more analysis relating its survey results to general economic conditions, to longer term economic trends and to the results of related surveys. This is a particularly difficult assignment because of the diversities in the economy already alluded to, the brief span of even the best statistical time series, and the lack of comparability of various statistical measures of similar phenomena.

The second problem of work content concerns the subject matter covered by the various surveys undertaken by the Labour Bureau. The most impressive characteristic of these surveys is their diversity. The topics covered in the major surveys and studies all seem germane to the problems of industrial and rural labour. No particular question concerning the subject matter scope of the Labour Bureau surveys has been raised with me. Perhaps the most important comment here should be a cautionary one. The Labour Bureau should make every effort to be sure that each of its surveys is meeting a practical need of the government, labour organisations or business. Surveys should not be undertaken solely to increase knowledge about the situation but for more specific objectives such as a guide to economic conditions, a measure of progress, a description of a situation (such as poor housing) about which it is likely that a real effort at improvement will be initiated through use of statistics. /the

Problems of Operation

An almost universal criticism of the Labour Bureau's work is of the extreme delay between the initiation of the survey and the publication of results. A glance at the tabulation of the Bureau's various programs will indicate the magnitude of this time span for various surveys. It is indeed impressive. As a first observation it is worth noting that where as is usually the case, the collection of data is done by another agency a substantial proportion of the time involved is occupied in collection of the data. At the other end of the line it is noticeable that the printing of reports is frequently a lengthy process. As far as the process of editing schedules as tabulating them, either on data processing equipment or by the use of clerks, it can be seen that in cases such as the 1958-59 family living surveys, where this work was done by another agency, the results were not available in a short time.

Last, but possibly not least important, a review of technicians plans for tabulations should be made with a view to determining what material could be eliminated. It is obvious that the extensive machine time taken for tabulating these surveys is a function of the complexity of the surveys themselves. Each schedule requires the punching of a substantial number of cards and the successive tabulation of these cards is time consuming. If the essential information could be reduced to that entered on one or two cards per schedule the problem would be greatly simplified.

Problems of Survey Design

The establishment of a correct survey design is the crucial point in the success of a survey from the point of view of administration, technical requirements and operations. The decisions made when a survey design is adopted are not simply those resulting from the application of technical knowledge about sample design, estimating procedures, schedule drafting, and related matters. They are, most importantly, the decisions which juxtapose resources on the one hand and the work-load projected on the basis of the sample design, volume of data, complexity of editing and tabulating plans on the other.

Obviously different projects cannot be considered independently when the workload flows through some point such as machine tabulation which must make provision for simultaneous or overlapping activities to meet the needs of several different survey designs.

Of course the impact of modifying survey designs has differing effects on workload depending on what changes are made in the design. For example the crucial factor in the collection operation is usually the number of cases and geographic dispersion of the sample. As these are increased costs increase sharply. Adding additional questions to be asked of the sample members is relatively inexpensive since a visit has to be made in any case. Unless the additional questions increase the length of the interview quite substantially the additional cost of collection is marginal. At the tabulating, estimating and analytical stages of the survey operation this relationship is almost reversed. This is particularly so if tabulating is being done by machine equipment. The workload factor in these operations is usually not the number of schedules but their complexity. A schedule with many items of information on it requires more complex editing procedures, more complex machine programmes, more complex estimating methods - frequently different techniques for different types of data and presents a more difficult analytical job because of the need to explore the interrelation between many items of data. A larger number of simple schedules increases the machine running time in direct proportion to their number but will actually simplify the jobs of machine programming, editing of schedules, estimating and analysis.

In view, therefore, of the types of difficulties encountered by the Labour Bureau the greatest emphasis should be placed on keeping the length and complexity of enquiries to an absolute minimum. Other factors leading to a similar conclusion regarding the desirability of simple collection documents are discussed below.

Sample design and estimating methods are also a crucial part of every survey. The procedure followed in establishing the sampling and estimating procedure seen to assure that they are technically valid. (The procedure is that the sample design and estimating method developed

by the Labour Bureau for each survey is reviewed and approved by a technical committee convened under the auspices of the Central Statistical Organization.) These comments, therefore, will be addressed to some broader considerations of survey management with regard to sampling and estimating techniques.

The final determinant of sample size is the accuracy, in terms of variance or sampling error required, of the estimates. This accuracy should be a function of the primary use to which the results will be put.

It is, therefore, a major responsibility of management to specify the accuracy required of each survey and be satisfied that sample design and estimating methods are not carried to an elaboration not required by the purposes of the survey even where the elaboration is desirable from a technical standards viewpoint.

Problem of Cooperation with other Agencies

The Labour Bureau, as has been mentioned above, is dependent on the various State Departments of Labour and Factory Inspectorates for the regularly recurring statistics on number of factories, shops and commercial establishments, employment, annual earnings, rates of minimum wages, trade union membership, industrial injuries, and industrial disputes. Data reported to the States by individual organizations or businesses are summarized by the States and the summaries forwarded to the Labour Bureau. In addition states are responsible for compilation of price indexes for 11 of the 27 centers for which indexes are prepared for the Interim Series of All India Average Consumer Price Index Numbers for Working Class (1949 = 100).

State agencies report that their resources are inadequate to meet Labour Bureau requests, that deadlines for submission of reports are unrealistic, that reporting firms are frequently delinquent and their reports inaccurate, and that survey concepts and definitions are changed without sufficient advance notice or consultation.

It is obvious that close and effective cooperation between the Labour Bureau and the various States is essential to the production of satisfactory statistics. Unfortunately such a relationship does not exist in all cases. The problem is that a few inadequate or late returns have a very disproportionate effect since the nature of the systems is such that adequate returns must be received from every state in order to compile accurate nationwide statistics.

The Labour Bureau, fully cognizant of the problem, has taken various steps to remedy it. A training and liaison program has been instituted through which two representatives of each state are brought to Simla for two weeks each year on a rotational basis for a training conference with the multiple objectives of explaining the needs of the Labour Bureau for the data in question, the various editing techniques which should be employed in reviewing reports before their submission, the essentiality of timely reporting, and the exploration of mutual problems. These sessions have been held for three years in succession and Labour Bureau staff feel that they are beginning to have an impact on the quality of reporting.

Problems of Collection of Data

A number of problems involved have been discussed above. Basic, however, is the fact that records in establishments are diverse in form and, in small establishments, practically non-existent. There is, in addition, no general public tolerance of

the mail survey. As a result practically all surveys are conducted through visits by an interviewer. This is an expensive process. One consequence, as noted earlier, is substantial pressure to increase the volume of data collected - "So you're making a survey, let's save money and get this other information at the same time". - This approach is dangerous to the accuracy of the data since the tolerance of the person interviewed goes down rapidly as the interview lengthens, his answers are likely to be less accurate at the end than the beginning of a long interview.

Another factor in the collection of data for a number of different surveys conducted by or for the Labour Bureau is the avoidance of seasonal variations through the collection of data at annual intervals retroactively for a whole year either for each month or for selected months or other periods. Data are then presented as annual averages.

This process has the shortcoming of intentionally obscuring the seasonal movement in such things as earnings and employment which may be quite important to the welfare of the workers concerned.

The statistics reported currently on a month-by-month or quarter-by-quarter basis would also be much more valuable as measures of changing economic conditions than are annual averages which measure longterm movements. Of course for such a change in collection to be effective it would be necessary that the statistics be tabulated and issued as promptly as the consumer price indexes now are.

The problem of distortion of interpretation caused by seasonal movements of the data could be obviated in two ways; (1) by making over-the-year comparisons with the same month in the previous year and (2) as historical time series are built up, by the more sophisticated statistical techniques of adjustment for seasonal variation.

The practice of securing data retroactively for a year or more has a further drawback in that it frequently involves the process of recall on the part of the respondent. Even in cases where written records are consulted for each month in question the difficulty of abstracting information may be substantial.

The Labour Bureau is at present planning to initiate a mail survey to collect data on earnings. I would urge that every effort be made to ensure the success of this survey and that the experience gained from the attempt, even if discouraging, be applied to subsequent efforts to design mail surveys. There are some cautionary comments which are worth making in this regard:

1. a mail survey must be easy for the respondent to answer;
2. the questions contained in it must be brief, but clear;
3. the questionnaire from itself should contain definitions of all terms used in words which the respondent can understand and reply to;
4. the possible impact of language difficulties should be carefully provided for;

- 5. the number of questions asked should be limited to the fewest possible;
- 6. all questions should be phrased so that they are answerable in specific numerical terms rather than in narrative or statements of opinion.

The design of the survey should allow for a followup by personal visit to a subsample of those units not responding to mail solicitation. (This is to determine whether the characteristics of the nonrespondents vary in any important respects from those of the respondents.) The design of the survey should also allow for a followup by personal visit to those respondents whose schedules appear to be so inconsistent internally or with past experience of similar data reported by the same firm as to be unusable. (The probability of future cooperation in mail surveys from such firms may be enhanced by describing to the management staff, as an incident to the visit, the reason for making a mail survey in terms of governmental economy. This may have some impact, particularly on larger firms.)

Mail surveys on a sample basis to secure simple, quantitative, and repetitive statistics for the construction of time series are the ultimate solution to matching resources and objectives and, at the same time, escaping from the limitations imposed on administrative statistics by their need to comply precisely with legislative definitions suitable for the purposes of the program involved but not for the measurement of economic trends.

In view of the importance of the mail survey to the long term development of labour statistics and, more broadly, of general purpose statistics obtained through business establishments it would be highly desirable if technical assistance in the design and maintenance of such a system could be obtained. There is no doubt that, as has been mentioned above, there will be many discouragements in the institution of a mail survey. The participation of a technician skilled in their establishment and operation in the first full cycle of operations could be decisive in suggesting solutions to emerging problems and avoiding possible premature abandonment of the enterprise.

Contd.....13.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Concentrate work on family budgets and consumer price indexes. A similar concentration of responsibility by subject matter should be made in other fields of work thus taking full advantage of the virtues of specialization at the professional level.
2. Cut length and complexity of questionnaires by requiring that every question be essential to the central purpose of the survey.
3. Improve quality and timing of data from State through:
Continuing to conduct training courses for State staff and respondents.
4. Simplify publication program and improve analytical presentation:
 - a. Tables presenting summary data for different areas or industries make interarea and/or interindustry comparison easier. Such comparisons are frequently more meaningful and significant for many purposes than detailed descriptions of individual areas or industries.
 - b. Analytical and descriptive material based on the types of tables described above is also more useful.
 - c. The printing process itself is simpler because the number of reports can be reduced.
 - d. Under present procedures each industry and/or area report contains a fairly detailed technical description of the survey. This description is practically identical for all of the report about a particular survey. The duplication could be eliminated in either of two ways:
 - i. Publish a single report for each survey following the argument presented in (a, b, c) above and omit the detailed area or industry reports which are extremely time consuming; or
 - ii. Publish all technical description survey design, sampling, estimating methods, copy of questionnaire used - as a separate technical monograph. This will serve to eliminate a large amount of duplication now appearing in different reports on the same survey.
 - e. Issue brief reports on all surveys without waiting for preparation of final reports. Two alternative approaches are through:
 - i. Articles in the Indian Labour Journal; or
 - ii. Mimeographed statements, including summary statistical tables, which are distributed to the press and major users of the data.
 - f. Explore the possibility of having reports printed by the "offset" rather than the "letter press" process (In our own experience the "offset" process is much faster since it obviates the need for setting type and correcting proof.)

- g. Establish a single point for routine editorial review of all reports within the Labour Bureau to insure a uniform standard of writing and presentation.
 - h. The Labour Bureau should be supplied with appropriate equipment so that it can reproduce and issue its reports promptly.
5. Every effort should be made to initiate the collection of data by mail. Once a mail survey proves successful it will be found to be more economical and faster than personal visits.
6. Make detailed assessment of workload in relation to resources for work now in progress and then:
- a. Assign priorities.
 - b. Set lower priority on old data which has not been processed.
 - c. If necessary drop completely some years of annual surveys in order to catch up and start processing most recent year of data immediately.
 - d. Explore possibility of turning data for intervening years over to some interested research group outside government for compilation and analysis.
7. Relationship of analysis to policy:

The Labour Bureau should have the capacity to prepare statements of the probable effect of possibly alternative courses of action contemplated by the Government. These statements could then serve as part of the matter considered by the Government in deciding what course to pursue. This is a difficult but much needed type of activity. The type of statements contemplated would not, of course, discuss the possible political consequences of particular actions. They would, however, describe their economic and social consequences for workers and employers. Such papers should be based on the data available from surveys already undertaken and from general knowledge of labour conditions rather than themselves being the occasion for additional surveys.

If, for example, the Government were to contemplate issuing an order which changed the level of working hours after which the payment of overtime would be required the Labour Bureau should be able to prepare a paper for the Ministry assessing the probable effect of the proposal on labour costs, number of workers affected, effect on average earnings, differences in impact by State and industry and other major considerations.

- i. Articles in the Indian Labour Journal;
- ii. Miscellaneous statements, including statistical tables, which are distributed to the press and major users of the data.
- iii. Explore the possibility of having reports printed by the "Office" rather than the "Labour Bureau" (in our own experience the "Office" process is much faster and more efficient in handling the printing and distribution work).

A P P E N D I X A

The two tables in this appendix present the characteristics of the major surveys conducted by the Labour Bureau and the time factors associated with them.

TABLE I

MAJOR SURVEYS CONDUCTED BY THE LABOUR BUREAU AND THEIR CHARACTERISTICS

Name of Survey	Frequency	Industry	Class of Workers	Geo graphic	Data Collected	Type of Survey				Data Collected by		Data Tabulated
						Census	Sample	Household	Establishment	N. S.	States	Labour Bureau
Survey of Labour Conditions	Ad hoc	Factories Mines Plantations	Employment- All work- ers-Other items - Workers covered under Factories Mines/ Plant/ Acts	All India	Employment by men, women, children, Absenteeism (1) Labor turnover, (1) length of services, employment status, recruitment, train- ing, composition of earnings (1) fines, working conditions, leave, welfare and other facilities, social security, works and other co- mmittes, trade unionism, collec- tive agreements and labour cost.	X			X		X	X
Annual Survey of Industries	Annual	Mfg. & select- ed non- mfg.	All employ- ees	All India	Employment and mandays worked for all categories of workers, by age and sex for direct workers. Absenteeism and labour turnover for regular workers employed directly; earnings of different categories of workers and labour cost.	X ⁽²⁾		X		X ⁽³⁾		X

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TABLE I (Contd.)

MAJOR SURVEYS CONDUCTED BY THE LABOUR BUREAU AND THEIR CHARACTERISTICS

Name of Survey	Frequency	Industry	Class of Workers	Geographic	Data Collected	Type of Survey				Data Collected by		Data Tabulated by
						Census	Sample	Household	Establishment	N. S. S. tes	Labour Bureau	Labour Bureau
(4)												
Intensive type studies of Rural Labour in India	One Time		Rural Labour both "agricultural and "other"	21 regions in All India and 3 villages in each region	Schedule I For each village; general economic background, land use, cropping pattern, method of cultivation, industries, arts and crafts, live-stock, cooperative movement, education. Schedule II. for sample households, demographic data on members, economic background, land use, cropping pattern, industries or crafts, cooperative movement with which associated, housing conditions. Schedule III. For sample house-holds; detailed data on activity and labour time disposition. Migration record.	X	X				X	X

TABLE I (Contd.)

MAJOR SURVEYS CONDUCTED BY THE LABOUR BUREAU AND THEIR CHARACTERISTICS

Name of Survey	Frequency	Industry	Class of Workers	Geo-graphic	Data Collected	Type of Survey				Data Collected by		Data Tabulated by	
						Central	Sample	Household	Establishment	N. S.	Stat. S.	Labour Bureau	Labour Bureau
Rural Labour Enquiry	(5) Ad-hoc		Rural Labour	All India	Income and expenditure (1963-64) work time disposition, indebtedness and earnings (1964-65); both years have data on household composition and size, land possessed etc.		X	X		X		X	
Factory Statistics	(6) Annual	Mfg. under Factories Act	Workers as defined under Factories Act.	All India	Employment, no of working factories, hours of work, leave and holidays, industrial injuries, health and welfare, inspections.	X			X	X		X	
Industrial Relations Statistics	(7) Monthly	All Sectors	Workers	All India	Work stoppages - cause, duration, number of workers normally employed, maximum number of workers affected, man-days lost, wages lost, value of production lost method of termination.	X			X	X			X

MAJOR SURVEYS CONDUCTED BY THE LABOUR BUREAU AND THEIR CHARACTERISTICS

Name of Survey	Frequency	Industry	Class of Workers	Geo-graphic	Data Collected	Type of Survey				Data Collected by			Data Tabulated by	
						Census	Sample	Household	Establishment	N. S. S.	Stations	Labour Bureau	Labour Bureau	Other
Trade Union Statistics	Annual	All Sectors	Members of Registered Trade Unions	All India	Number of unions, membership, finances	X			X		X		X	
Contract Labour Surveys	(8) Annual	Industries in which a contract labour is important	All non-supervisory, clerical workers	All India	Employment, wages and earnings, working conditions, leave and holidays, housing welfare, accidents, maternity benefits and industrial relations.		X		X		X		X	
Consumer Price Index for Industrial Workers (Interim)	(9)	Monthly manufacturing.	Workers as defined in Factories Act, 1934	(10) All India	1. Retail prices of selected items 2. Fair price statements; proportion of commodities supplied through ration shops vs. open market 3. House rents		X		X		X		X	
							X	X			X	X		X

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MAJOR SURVEYS CONDUCTED BY THE LABOUR BUREAU AND THEIR CHARACTERISTICS

Name of Survey	Frequency	Industry	Class of Workers	Geo-graphic	Data Collected	Type of Survey				Data Collected by			Data Tabulated by	
						Cen-sus	Sam-ple	House-hold	Estab-lish-ment	N. S. S. tes	Sta-tes	Labour Bureau	Labour Bureau	Others
Consumer Price Index for Industrial Workers (New)	(9)	Mfg. Plan-tation, Mining	Manual Workers under Factories, Mines and Plantations Labour Acts	(11) All India	1. Retail prices of selected items	X			X			(12) X	X	
	2. Fair price statements; proportion of commodities supplied through ration shops vs. open market.				X			X		X				
	3. House rents and off take schedule showing proportion of essential commodities from open market, fair price shops, ration shops and cooperative stores.				X	X		X			X			
Consumer Price Index for Agricultural Labour	Mon-thly	Agri.	Agricul-tural Labourers	All India All States	Retail prices of selected items and services	X			X	X			X	
Consumer Price Index for Tea Plantation in Tripura	(13) Mon-thly	Agri.	Tea Plan-tation Workers	Tri-pura	Retail prices of selected items and services	X			X			(12) X	X	

MAJOR SURVEYS CONDUCTED BY THE LABOUR BUREAU AND THEIR CHARACTERISTICS

Name of Survey	Frequency	Class of Industry	Geo. graphic	Data Collected	Type of Survey				Data Collected by			Data Tabulated by	
					Census	Sample	Household	Establishment	N. S. S.	Stat. S.	Labour Bureau	Labour Bureau	Other
(14) Consumer Price Index for Industrial Workers in Goa	Monthly	Mfg., Mines, Industrial Workers	Goa	Retail prices of selected items		X		X			(12) X	X	
(14) Consumer Price Index for Industrial Workers in Himachal Pradesh	Monthly	Mfg., Mines, Industrial Workers	Himachal Pradesh	1. Retail prices of selected items 2. House rent and off-take survey	X			X			(12) X	X	
(15) Consumer Price Index for Industrial Workers in 5 Selected centres	Monthly	Mfg., Mines, Manual Workers	5 Industrial centres	1. Retail prices of selected items 2. House rent and off-take survey	X			X		X	(16) X	X	
(17) Family Living Survey, 1958-59 and 1968-69 (Proposed)	Decennial	Mfg., Mines, Manual Workers	50 Industrial centres	Schedule "A" family characteristics income, expenditures Schedule "B" level of living, sickness, education, employment, service conditions, housing, debt.	X		X			X			X

MAJOR SURVEYS CONDUCTED BY THE LABOUR BUREAU AND THEIR CHARACTERISTICS

Name of Survey.	Fre- que- ncy	Industry	Class of Workers	Geo- graphic	Data Collected	Type of Survey				Data Collected by		Data Tabulated by	
						Cen- sus	Sam- ple	House- hold	Estab- lish- ment	N. S. Sta- S. tes	Labour Bureau	Labour Bureau	Other
Family living survey at 5 Selected Centres 1965-66	Ad- hoc	Mfg.Mines	Manual Workers	5 new Industrial centres	Family budgets, level of living and conditions of work, house rent and other conditions of housing, off-take of essential commodities		X	X				X	X
Himachal Pradesh Family Budget, Enquiry 1964-65	Ad- hoc	Mfg.Mines Plantati- ons, Motor Transport	Indus- trial Workers	Himachal Pradesh	Family income and expenditures, demo- graphic characteristics, debt.		X	X				X	X
Family Budget Enquiry in Goa 1966	Ad- hoc	Mfg. Mines Ports	Indus- trial Workers	Goa	Family budget		X	X			(18) X		X
Occupational Wage Survey	Qui- nnial	44 Indus- tries	Workers All included under Factories/ Mines/Plan- tations Acts. except part- time workers, clerical or supervisory, and protective services workers.	All India	Occupational wage rates by men, women and children and by time and piece rates, occupational earnings by components overtime earnings and incentive bonus.		X		X			X	(19) X

TABLE I (Contd.)

MAJOR SURVEYS CONDUCTED BY THE LABOUR BUREAU AND THEIR CHARACTERISTICS

Name of Survey	Frequency	Industry	Class of Workers	Geo-graphic	Data Collected	Type of Survey				Data Collected by			
						Cen- sus	Sam- ple	House- hold	Estab- lish- ment	N. S. Sta- tes	Labour Bureau	Labour Bureau	Data (Tabulated by) other
Indices of wage rates (Proposed)	Ann- ual	12 Mfg. Ind- ustries	Workers in- cluded under Facto- ries/Mines/ Plantations Acts. except part-time Work- ers, clerical or supervisory, and protective services workers.	All India	Occupational wage rates		X		X		X	X	
Wages and earnings of Factory Workers	Ann- ual	All Mfg.	Workers cover- ed under Factories Act 1948 and paid less than Rs.400 per month	All India	Number of units covered, X number of days worked, average daily employment, total wage bill by compo- nents				X		X		X
Minimum Wages	Ann- ual & Quar- terly	Covered by Minimum Wages Act 1948	Persons employ- ed in scheduled employment under Minimum Wages Act.	(20) All India	Rates of minimum wages X in scheduled employ- ments and related information.				X		(21) X		X

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TABLE I (Contd.)

MAJOR SURVEYS CONDUCTED BY THE LABOUR BUREAU AND THEIR CHARACTERISTICS

Name of Survey	Frequency	Industry	Class of Workers	Geo-graphic	Data Collected	Type of Survey				Data Collected by			Data Tabulated
						Cen-sus	Sam-ple	House-hold	Estab-lish-ment	N. S. Sta-tes	Labour Bureau	Labour Bureau	Other
(22) Producti- vity In- dices	Ann- ual	40 Indust- ries	Workers as defi- ned in Factori- es Act and su- pervisory or managerial staff	All India and by area of concen- tration	Productive capital, employment, emoluments, quantity & value of inputs and outputs, selling price of products, average earnings of workers fixed investment per worker	X			X	(23) X		(23) X	

Footnotes:

- (1) These items were not covered in the 4th Round of the Survey (1965-66) relating to 19 industries.
- (2) For all plants registered under the Factories Act which employ 50 or more workers and use power or 100 or more workers not using power and all electrical undertakings.
- (3) Data are collected in two parts by National Statistical Survey. Part I for the Industrial Statistics Wing of the Central Statistical Organization and Part II for the Labour Bureau.
- (4) Survey is being undertaken for first time. Schedules I & II will be collected once, schedule III will be collected monthly (number of months unspecified).
- (5) It is not proposed to repeat this during the Fourth Plan period. It is related to the Agricultural Labour Enquiries conducted in 1950-51 and 1956-57.
- (6) All establishment employing 10 or more workers where power is used and employing 20 or more workers where power is not used as also those under Sec. 85 of Factories Act.
- (7) All including 10 or more workers.

Footnotes (Contd.):

- (8) None undertaken between 1964 and September 1967 owing to pressure of other work.
- (9) Retail prices collected weekly and averaged, house rent collected every six months. Publication of index monthly.
- (10) Series compiled for 16 centres by Labour Bureau and for 11 centres by States.
- (11) Fifty selected centres of industrial importance.
- (12) Collection is done by agents paid a fixed monthly amount. The agents are usually state government employees. Six Labour Bureau staff members have been posted throughout the country and directly, supervise the collection.
- (13) Retail prices collected weekly and averaged. Publication of index monthly.
- (14) Retail prices collected fortnightly and averaged. Publication of index monthly.
- (15) Retail prices collected weekly and averaged, house rent collected every six months. Index not yet published. Monthly publication planned.
- (16) N.S.S. (National Sample Survey, Central Statistical Organization) has not yet assumed full responsibility. It is collecting data for 2 centres and Labour Bureau for 3 on a temporary basis. House-rent surveys will be made for only 3 centres.
- (17) Schedule "A" for 1958-59 survey was tabulated by the Indian Statistical Institute. For the proposed 1968-69 survey all tabulation will be by the Labour Bureau.
- (18) Services of local investigators were supplied to Labour Bureau of Goa Administration as Bureau's staff faced difficulty of local language.
- (19) Tabulation will be prepared by the Computer Centre in New Delhi for the Second Occupational Wage Survey conducted 1963-65.
- (20) Except Jammu & Kashmir.
- (21) Data collected by States and Central Government (Chief Labour Commissioner, Central)
- (22) The description pertains to Part I of the Annual Survey of Industries. The data, published by C.S.O., are used by the Labour Bureau to construct productivity and related indexes.
- (23) Collected and processed by the Industrial Statistics Wing, C.S.O.

TABLE 2

TYPICAL TIME FACTORS FOR THE PRODUCTION OF DATA FROM MAJOR SURVEYS
CONDUCTED BY THE LABOUR BUREAU & REFERENCE DATE OF RECENT PUBLISHED

Name of Survey	Provisional (preliminary) data				Final data			
	Time from end of reference period to date when sufficient returns to prepare estimates (months)	Time required for tabulation of provisional data (months)	Time required for printing provisional data (months)	Reference date of most recent data published (as of Nov. 20, 1967)	Time from end of reference period of all returns are available (months)	Time required for preparation of final report (months)	Time required for printing final report (months)	Reference date of most recent data published (as of Nov. 20, 1967)
Survey of Labour Conditions	No provisional estimates				15	24-36	12 - 18	June 1962
Annual Survey of Industries	No. provisional estimates				30	18 ⁽¹⁾	None prepared	None published
Intensive Type Studies of Rural Labour in India	No provisional estimates planned				No experience			
Rural Labour Enquiry	No provisional estimates				23 ⁽²⁾	Unknown ⁽³⁾	Unknown	1956-57
Factory Statistics	12	3	2	1965	17	8	12 - 24	1961

- (8) None undertaken between 1964 and September 1967 owing to pressure of other work.
- (9) Retail prices collected weekly and averaged, house rent collected every six months. Publication of index monthly.
- (10) Series compiled for 16 centres by Labour Bureau and for 11 centres by States.
- (11) Fifty selected centres of industrial importance.
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	Time from end of reference period to date when sufficient returns to prepare estimates (months)	Time required for tabulation of provisional data (months)	Time required for printing provisional data (months)	Reference date of most recent data published (as of Nov. 20, 1967)	Time from end of reference period of data when all returns are available (months)	Time required for preparation of final report (months)	Time required for printing final report (months)	Reference date of most recent data published (as of Nov. 20, 1967)
Survey of Labour Conditions	No provisional estimates				15	24-36	12 - 18	June 1962
Annual Survey of Industries	No. provisional estimates				30	18 ⁽¹⁾	None prepared	None published
Intensive Type Studies of Rural Labour in India	No provisional estimates planned					No experience		
Rural Labour Enquiry	No provisional estimates				23 ⁽²⁾	Unknown ⁽³⁾	Unknown	1956-57
Factory Statistics	12	3	2	1965	17	8	12 - 24	1961

TABLE 2.(Contd.)

TYPICAL TIME FACTORS FOR THE PRODUCTION OF DATA FROM MAJOR SURVEYS
CONDUCTED BY THE LABOUR BUREAU & REFERENCE DATE OF RECENT PUBLISHED

Name of Survey	Provisional (Preliminary) data				Final data			
	Time from end of reference period to date when sufficient returns to prepare estimates (months)	Time required for tabulation of provisional data (months)	Time required for printing provisional data (months)	Reference date of most recent data published (as of Nov. 20, 1967)	Time from end of reference period to date when all returns are available (months)	Time required for preparation of final report (months)	Time required for printing final report (months)	Reference date of most recent data published (as of Nov. 20, 1967)
Industrial Relations Statistics	2	1	2	Aug. 66	7	11	2	1965
Trade Union Statistics	21	3	3	1964-65	30	9	6 - 10	1962 - 63
Contract Labour Surveys	No provisional estimates				4-5	3	1½	1963 - 64
Consumer Price Index for Industrial Workers (Interim)	-	-	-	-	¼ (weekly returns) 1/3 (monthly returns)	1¼	1½	August 1967
Consumer Price Index for Industrial Workers (new)	-	-	-	-	¼ (weekly returns) 1/3 (monthly returns)	1½	3	July 1967.

TABLE 2 (Contd.)

TYPICAL TIME FACTORS FOR THE PRODUCTION OF DATA FROM MAJOR SURVEYS
CONDUCTED BY THE LABOUR BUREAU & REFERENCE DATE OF RECENT PUBLISHED

Name of Survey	Provisional (Preliminary) data				Final data			
	Time from end of reference period to date when sufficient returns to prepare estimates (months)	Time required for tabulation of provisional data (months)	Time required for printing provisional data (months)	Reference date of most recent data published (as of Nov. 20, 1967)	Time from end of reference period to date when all returns are available (months)	Time required for pre-paration of final report (months)	Time required for printing final report (months)	Reference date of most recent data published (as of Nov. 20, 1967)
Consumer Price Index for Agri. Labour	3/4	1/2	1	Aug. 1967.	2-3/4	1/2	1 1/4	July 1967.
Consumer price Index for Tea Plantation workers in Tripura.	1	1/2	1 1/4	July 1967	3	1/2	1 1/4	May 1967
Consumer Price Index for Industrial Workers in Goa				Not available (4)				
Consumer Price Index for Industrial Workers in Himachal Pradesh				Not available (4)				
Consumer Price Index for Industrial Workers in 5 Selected Centres				Not available (4)				

TYPICAL TIME FACTORS FOR THE PRODUCTION OF DATA FROM MAJOR SURVEYS
 CONDUCTED BY THE LABOUR BUREAU & REFERENCE DATE OF RECENT PUBLISHED

TABLE 2 (Contd.)

Name of Survey	Provisional (Preliminary) data			Final data				
	Time from end of reference period to date when sufficient returns to prepare estimates (months)	Time required for tabulation of provisional data (months)	Time required for printing provisional data (months)	Reference data of most recent date published (as of Nov. 20, 1967)	Time from end of reference period to date when all returns are available (months)	Time required for preparation of final report (months)	Time required for printing final report (months)	Reference date of most recent data published (as of Nov. 20, 1967)
Family Living survey 1958-59 & 1968-69 (proposed) (5)		No provisional estimates			-	75 (6)	- (7)	1958 - 59
Family Living Survey at 5 Selected Centers, 1965-66.		Not available (8)						
Himachal Pradesh Family Budget Enquiry, 1964-65		Not available (8)						
Family Budget Enquiry in Goa, 1966		No provisional estimates			2	24 (9)	6 (9)	- (9)
Occupational Wage Survey		No provisional estimates			1	40	12	1958 - 59
Indices of Wage Rates (Proposed)		Not available (8)						

TABLE 2 (Contd.)

TYPICAL TIME FACTORS FOR THE PRODUCTION OF DATA FROM MAJOR SURVEYS
CONDUCTED BY THE LABOUR BUREAU & REFERENCE DATE OF RECENT PUBLISHED

Name of Survey	Provisional (Preliminary) data				Final data			
	Time from end of reference period to date when sufficient returns to prepare estimates (months)	Time required for tabulation of provisional data (months)	Time required for printing provisional data (months)	Reference data of most recent date published (as of Nov. 20, 1967)	Time from end of reference period to date when all returns are available (months)	Time required for preparation of final report (months)	Time required for printing final report (months)	Reference date of most recent data published (as of Nov. 20, 1967)
Wages and Earnings of Factory Workers	14	1	2	1965	23	1	2	1963
Minimum Wages Annual Quarterly	5	No provisional data		Sept. 1966	25	2	6	1963
		1	2		8	1	2	Dec. 1966
Productivity Indices		No provisional estimates			48	21	(10)	1961

- (Footnotes):
- 1) This figure is an estimate. Data for 1963 were the first to be processed and estimates for them have not been completed.
 - 2) Applies to schedules for 1964-65 which are being processed by Labour Bureau. Time unknown for 1963-64 data which are being processed by Indian Statistical Institute. ISI has promised to supply all tabulations for 1963-64 data by March 1968.
 - 3) Expected to take 12 months after receipt of final tables.

Contd...

Footnotes (Contd.)

- being
- 4) Data for these surveys is not yet tabulated on a current basis and no firm schedule of current operations has been projected. It is planned to start publication of the Goa index in April 1968.
 - 5) No firm time schedule has been established for the proposed survey. It is expected that weights for revising the Consumer Price Index will be prepared for all centres by December 1970 and that preliminary drafting of reports for publication will be completed by 1972.
 - 6) Final tabulations were received from Indian Statistical Institute 46 months after completion of the field survey. Preparation of reports for each of the 50 centres took 29 months at the Labour Bureau.
 - 7) Only 33 of 50 reports have been printed so far.
 - 8) These surveys are being conducted for the first time. No past experience on time required to prepare data.
 - 9) These dates are estimated. It is planned to have weights available for index computation 14 months after the reference date of the survey.
 - 10) Estimate of 12 months if printed as a separate publication but 1 or 2 months if published in installments in the Indian Labour Journal.

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A P P E N D I X 'B'

This appendix contains the "Report of the Committee on Improvement of Labour Statistics." This government Committee met during 1958 and 1959 with the purpose of considering the problems connected with the collection of labour statistics. The report is relevant today as an indication of the long standing nature of some of the problems encountered and as a point from which to measure progress that has been achieved in recent years.

Comments have been added to relevant paragraphs of the report to indicate action taken by the Labour Bureau in the intervening years in its efforts to carry out suggested improvements.

REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON IMPROVEMENT OF LABOUR STATISTICS

Introduction

At the senior officers' meeting held on the 2nd July, 1958, it was mentioned that considerable difficulty was being experienced in obtaining statistical and other relevant data relating to labour from state governments. It appeared that the latter had in their possession useful data but that they required additional staff for furnishing them to the Centre. The Labour Minister agreed that this was an important matter and that he could take it up with the State Labour Ministers. He, however, desired that in the Labour Ministry itself it might be examined as to what could reasonably be expected of State Governments. It was decided that a Committee consisting of the Joint Secretary as Chairman, the Director, Labour Bureau, the Chief Labour Commissioner, the Chief Advisor of Factories, the Labour and Employment Advisor, the Deputy Secretary (C) and any other officer suggested by the Secretary as members should be appointed to go into this question and to survey the arrangements in the Labour Ministry regarding the collection of 'Labour Information and Intelligence.' The Joint Director, Central Statistical Organization, was later on co-opted as a member of the Committee. This Committee was to examine the sources from which relevant data and information were to be collected and the manner in which they were to be processed. The Committee held four meetings on 20.9.1958, 27.11.1958, 3.6.1959 and 19.9.1959 and considered in detail the various problems connected with the collection of statistic from various sources. The following report gives the conclusions of the Committee on the extent of coverage, the causes of delays avoidance of duplication, the defects in statistical returns and the possibility of the quality of the data as well as the methods and machinery for collection:

/discarding
superfluous
information
and also
suggestions
for improve-
ment of

1. Material that is being collected at present and will be required in future

1.1 The various statistics collected by the Bureau, the sources from which they are obtained, the periodicity of the returns, and the nature and scope of the statistic furnished in the returns are given in Appendix A. Most of these items of information will continue to be required in future. The possibilities of avoiding duplication and of discontinuing some of the defective or redundant returns are examined in Section IV of this report.

1.2 The nature and scope of the statistics collected as given in Appendix A will, however, undergo some changes due to certain additional information that is being called for. The additional information called for is indicated below:

- (1) Annual returns and report under the Indian Trade Unions Act.1926.

State governments have been requested to furnish information separately for (1) unions in the private sector, (2) in the Central sphere of the public sector, and (3) unions in the State Sphere of the public sector in the annual returns. The industrial classification, according to which the returns are to be furnished, has been considerably enlarged. Figures of the estimates membership of unions not submitting returns have also been called for. The scope of the annual report on the working of the Act has been enlarged to some extent.

Comment: This has been done except for the figures of the estimated membership of unions not submitting returns.

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(ii) Annual reports under the Minimum Wages Act

Certain additional items of information have been introduced in the report showing the economic results of minimum wages fixation.

Comment: This has been done.

(iii) Monthly returns and quarterly reports on industrial disputes

In the monthly returns, additional columns have been introduced for collecting information regarding breaches of the Code of Discipline, the stages at which the work-stoppages occurred (i.e. whether before seeking conciliation, etc.) and the question whether the work stoppages were due to non-implementation of labour enactments, awards, etc. State Government and other authorities will soon be asked to submit this additional information for which the approval of the Ministry has recently been accorded. In the proforma for quarterly reports on Industrial Disputes submitted by State Governments, certain additional details have been introduced regarding industrial disputes resulting in work-stoppages due to non-acceptance of unfavourable awards and those occurring during the pendency of court proceedings, etc. Information on these additional items will be called for after approval by the Ministry.

Comment: The additional columns have been added to the monthly returns for Industrial Disputes. The quarterly return has been discontinued.

2. Present Experience - Extent of Delay, Defect, etc.

2.1 As regards the extent of delay in furnishing returns to the Bureau by the authorities concerned, the position (for 1957 and 1958) is indicated in Appendix B. It will be seen that hardly any material is received by the prescribed dates. The delay in the receipt of consolidated annual returns in the Bureau from State Governments is, in most cases, of more than 3 months. In some cases the delay is of several months and occasionally of even a year or more. In this respect there is not much difference between large States having numerous units and small States having a smaller number units. On the other hand, some of the bigger States manage to submit returns more promptly than the smaller States, thus exemplifying the common belief that the busier the persons, the prompter he is.

2.2 There are limitations in the use of statistics collected under statutory provisions owing to the restricting nature of the definition given in the enactments. For example, the statistics of factory employment which are collected under the Factories Act, 1948, relate only to those factories which come under the definition of 'factory' as given in the Act, apart from some specially notified factories. As such, the statistics of factory employment and other details as collected under the Factories Act do not indicate the correct position regarding the factory-type of employment. Most of the statistics collected under the statutory provisions suffer from limitations of non-response. For instance, only 50 per cent of the registered trade unions furnish annual returns as prescribed under the Indian Trade Unions Act, 1926. The figures of trade union membership and other information obtained from these returns, therefore, give a very incomplete picture. The quality of the returns furnished is also sometimes not very satisfactory. This is, to a great extent, due to inaccurate returns furnished by primary units. During consolidation at the State level also certain defects arise; for example, consolidation in a form other than that prescribed by the Labour Bureau, wrong totals, lack of mutual consistency between various statements, etc.

3. Causes of Delay and Defects

3.1 The main causes of delays are as follows:

(a) The time schedules for submission of consolidated returns with the present staff and other resources with the authorities are sometimes unrealistic.

(b) The returns, as supplied by primary units, are often incomplete or incorrect and have to be sent back for correction or completion. This results in delay in the compilation of statistics.

(c) Information is often sent long after the prescribed dates by individual units.

(d) Changes in definitions and concepts and connected problems relating to the prescribed returns may contribute to delays in the submission of returns. For instance, when coverage was raised from Rs.200 to Rs.400 per month the problem arose as to how to secure statistics in regard to the new coverage. If continuity under the old coverage is desired, it would lead to the collection of more statistics and preparation of more returns, and this would naturally result in delay in the compilation and collection of statistics required to be submitted.

3.2 The reason for the large number of defects in returns appears to be lack of adequate number of trained staff both in primary units and at State levels.

4. Remedies Suggested

4.1 Time Schedules : Suggestions have from time to time, been received that more realistic time schedules should be fixed for the submission of particular returns. For instance, the Delhi State Government have suggested the following changes in the time schedule:

<u>Returns</u>	<u>Time-Schedule Suggested</u>	<u>Time- Schedule Existing at Present</u>
1. Half yearly returns under the Factories Act (2nd half of the year)	15th April	30th March
2. Annual returns under the Factories Act.	15th May	30th April
3. Annual returns under the Payment of Wages Act.	31st May	30th April
4. Annual returns on 'List of Facotires'	15th June	31st May

The process of scrutiny and refixation of appropriate target dates for the submission of returns should be continuous one. Enquiries into cases of abnormal delays or of delay in the submission of any particular return on the part of State Governments, which are otherwise prompt in the submission of returns, may reveal whether there are any defects in the fixation of target dates for the submission of particular returns. If a short postponement is likely to lead to substantially better results, the case for such postponement is obvious. We also feel that any long postponement of target dates will install a sense of complacency and slackness, and defeat the very purpose of laying any time schedule. In order to

Contd....

/Labour Bureau
has prescribed

time limits for receipt of information, reduce the time lag in the publication of all-India information, compilation, preparation of the manuscript, printing, etc. A copy of this time schedule is at Appendix C. While the details of this schedule are open to adjustment from time to time, it is very necessary that every effort should be made by all concerned to adhere, as closely as possible, to the dates prescribed. If the information from any State is greatly delayed, it would obviously not be proper for the Labour Bureau to hold up publication of the statistics concerned. Where necessary, the gap will have to be filled up in the best possible manner. It is necessary that statistics should be published without any undue delay.

Comment: Dates for the submission of returns have been extended. Reports are not submitted in compliance with the new dates except in a very few cases.

4.2 Simplification : The simplification of returns should also be a continuous process. The Chief Inspector of Factories, Bombay has suggested that a combine form annual return under the Factories Act, should be prescribed - if need be by amending the Act - so that the coverage of workers under each Act would be the same. It may not always be possible to have the same coverage under various enactments because of the different objects served by them, but this is a matter which requires careful study. The possibility of a common coverage, where such is feasible, might not have been kept in view at the time of the enactment of these laws. If such uniformity were possible, there would be great advantages in analysing and interpreting data. The Committee would suggest that this aspect of the matter should be specifically studied in the Labour Ministry. In principle, it is a step in the right direction to provide that as far as possible, coverage under a number of allied enactments is identical so that the returns prescribed under them might be consolidated. There should be statutory provision to enable this to be done by appropriate action. The appropriate authority should apply its mind to this problem from time to time.

/the Payment of Wages Act, and the Bombay Maternity Benefit Act,

Comment: No statutory action has been taken to permit the simplification of returns in the manner recommended.

4.3 Avoidance of Duplication : The Committee feels that duplication of effort in statistical collection should be avoided to the extent possible. A case in instance concerns the collection of statistics (Labour) Rules and the Earnings Index Scheme. It is noted in this connection that efforts have been made without success for the last twelve years or more to collect statistics relating to certain aspects of labour, such as employment earnings, hours of work, absenteeism, etc. under the Industrial Statistics Act, 1942, and subsequently under the Collection of Statistics Act, 1953. The difficulty appears to be that while statistics were intended to be collected under these schemes on a quarterly basis from all factories governed by the Factories Act, all plantations growing tea, coffee and rubber, etc. neither the Labour Bureau at the Centre nor the Statistics Authorities at the State level had the necessary resources and equipment. The States on whose co-operation the Centre depended in this matter, were unable to carry out their responsibilities.

The earnings index scheme was evolved in these circumstances as a stopgap and was attempted to be operated on a sample of factories direct by the Labour Bureau. Even this does not appear to have succeeded, the main stumbling block being the absence of a statutory authority. The Central Statistical Organisation has, therefore, suggested that a new scheme may now be evolved for collecting quarterly data on earnings, hours or work, absenteeism and labour turnover from a sample of factories under the powers of the Collection of Statistics Act, to be

operated directly by the Director, Labour Bureau, who may be appointed Statistics Authority for the purpose. The Committee feels that there has been some duplication of efforts in trying to collect these statistics and that in this as well as in similar schemes every effort should be made to arrive at a practical and co-ordinated scheme which will secure the maximum of desired information without duplication and wastage of labour.

Comment : The quarterly data, for the last month of each quarter, referred to are being collected by the National Sample Survey Directorate under authority of the Collection of Statistics Act, 1953.

4.4. Discontinuance: Certain returns which are either defective, redundant or belated, could perhaps be discontinued from time to time. For instance, the second half yearly returns under the Factories Act, 1948 are generally not ready for publication earlier than the annual figures. There is, therefore, no point in the separate publication of the returns for the second half year, as the annual figures published about the same time will serve the purpose. The information obtained in the returns for the first half year is published far ahead of the annual figures and should, therefore, be continued as at present. The monthly returns on employment and earnings collected from the Central Public Works Department are found to be incomplete and defective. In spite of repeated efforts it has not been possible to make any improvement in the quality of these returns. Prima facie there is a case for discontinuance of these returns, but in the interest of statistics it is felt that another attempt should be made at the appropriate level to secure the co-operation of the C.P.W.D. authorities and Works Ministry. If necessary, the proforma may be simplified in consultation with the Central Statistical Organization and arrangements made for collection and consolidation of the data within the Works Ministry if that is likely to improve matters. The Committee feels that if Government Departments themselves do not supply statistics within a reasonable time, it will have adverse psychological effects on a number of other sources which are expected to supply statistics to Government. The Labour news obtained from the State Governments on a monthly basis could, without any serious loss of information, be obtained on a quarterly basis.

Comment : The second half yearly returns collected under the Factories Act, 1948 have been discontinued. An annual return - statement XX under the Factories Act, 1948 - concerning exemptions has also been discontinued.

4.5 Training : One of the main reasons why defects and delays occur in the submission of returns is that the staff in primary units charged with the responsibility for maintaining and furnishing statistics is not of the requisite calibre and is unable to handle the work efficiently. This, of course, does not apply to the bigger establishments where qualified staff is employed. While it is not possible to insist on replacement of the existing staff by a better calibre of officials, something can still be done by way of training to make the existing staff reasonably efficient and effective. The Committee would suggest that a proper scheme be drawn up for such training. Statistics are collected from primary units by various authorities at State Headquarters such as the Chief Inspector of Factories, the Labour Commissioner, the Statistics Directorate, etc.

There will have to be coordination between these authorities in the matter of organizing training. A certain number of trainers will have to be selected from among the staff of these authorities. They will then have to be given adequate training, preferably by officers deputed by the Labour Bureau. They should then be sent out to various places for

holding brief training courses for the staff of primary units. To begin with, arrangements for training courses of a few days' duration might be made at all important industrial centres and at convenient district headquarters. The training should comprise the object of collecting information through various schedules, the precise meaning of the definitions involved, the method of filling each column, the maintenance of appropriate registers for supplying the required information, the internal checks that should be applied to ensure the accuracy of each statement, etc. This process will reveal all the practical difficulties that the staff in primary units required to fill up forms now experience. If all these matters are explained and discussed intelligently, the burden of furnishing statistics could be lightened and employers could be made to take a more intelligent interest in the supply of statistics. The uses to which such statistics are put will also have to be explained so that the part played by statistics in the development of the industries themselves and in the maintenance of cordial industrial relations will be appreciated by those called upon to undertake what is now perhaps deemed to be a thankless job. The Labour Bureau will have to prepare appropriate training manuals for the purpose.

Comment: A 'Training-cum-Liaison Scheme' was included in the Third Five Year Plan scheme for the Labour Bureau. The training part of this scheme has been in operation since June 1963. The Bureau has prepared a 'Training Manual on Labour Statistics' which describes the requirements of various types of labour statistics collected both statutorily and voluntarily and shows how to ensure accuracy and uniformity of the data. This manual intended to serve as a complete guide to those handling labour statistics at the State and reporting unit level, has been sent to all the concerned organizations for their use.

Three training courses for State personnel have been held at annual intervals in Simla in 1965, 1966 and 1967. Persons attending these courses have been required, in turn, to train the personnel of State and reporting units levels who are engaged in the compilation and preparation of returns. (Fourteen State Governments and Union Territories have organized training programs for their staff engaged in the compilation of returns being sent to the Bureau. Two State Governments have also organized training classes for the staff of primary units.

4.6 Field Check : One of the greatest defects of the present system of collection and compilation of statistics is that no attempt is made to check the quality of the statistics received from primary units. There is at present practically no field staff even in the bigger States to get defects remedied. The Chief Inspector of Factories, Bombay, has stated as follows :

" The Government insists upon the accuracy of information supplied. This office has no means to check, but the information supplied by the factories in annual returns is taken for granted as accurate unless there are obvious mistakes. If ~~great~~ ~~perfect~~ accuracy is desired, it will not be possible unless Investigators are appointed to go round and find out by personal contacts the accuracy of information supplied."

Statistics are of no use unless they are at least reasonably correct. Incorrect or fanciful statistics can only lead to wrong inferences and unsound policies. A beginning should, therefore, be made with

the checking of statistics in the field. For this purpose, it is necessary to have a field staff in each State so that the statistics furnished by the primary units may be checked on a sample basis. If the agency of the District Statistical Officers already appointed or which is going to be appointed in the various States, can discharge this function effectively, if need be after suitable reinforcement, other staff may be needed for the purpose. What is important is that field-checking on an approved basis should be entrusted to a competent agency. This field staff can also effectively advise the staff or the primary units in regard to the various matters connected with the maintenance and supply of statistics. It should be possible for the Labour Bureau to keep in touch with them and to arrange for the development of quality control.

Comment : The recommendations of the Committee concerning the initiation of field checks of the quality of data reported was examined in the Labour Bureau in consultation with the Central Statistical Organization and it was felt that this could be done by the District Statistical Officers of the various States. The States were requested to comment on this suggestion and, if it appeared infeasible, suggest alternatives. Some of the State Governments wanted statutory powers for the District Statistical Officers to carry out such checks. The matter was discussed at the 17th conference of Chief Inspector of Factories and again at the Second Meeting of the Chief Advisor of Factories Committee in 1965. The Committee felt that there would be administrative difficulties in giving statutory powers to District Statistical Officers and the matter has been taken up again with the Central Statistical Organization.

The possibility of transferring the entire work of compilation of Labour Statistics to the State Statistical Bureaus, in order to facilitate the use of District Statistical Officers, in making field checks was discussed with the Central Statistical Organization and the Directors of various State Statistical Bureaus in April 1966. A majority of the State Bureaus favoured this idea but the Labour Secretary did not since they were not collectors or consumers of most of the data. The Labour Bureau therefore suggested the use of staff in the Labour Commissioner's office for making field checks. The Directorate General, Factory Advice service and Labour Institutes agreed to this proposal. A note on the setting up of Regional Offices of the Labour Bureau and including the above point was sent to the Ministry in 1966. The decision relating to the work of field checking has not yet been received.

4.7 Strengthening of State Statistics Directorate and Other Authorities.

Improvements effected in primary units and in the field will not produce corresponding end results if the staff available to the concerned Heads of Departments and Statistics Directorates at the State Headquarters is inadequate to handle competently all the material coming in from the field. At the 13th Conference of the Chief Inspectors of Factories held at Ranchi in October, 1959, the difficulties experienced in the collection of statistics required by the Labour Bureau were discussed. Most of the Chief Inspectors of Factories complained that

the staff available with them for the purpose were inadequate. The various points raised at the Conference regarding difficulties in the collection of labour statistics and the Labour Bureau's comments thereon are given in Appendix D. During a recent discussion the Chief Inspector of Factories, Bihar, suggested that the labour Bureau should make a study of the workload involved in the collection, scrutiny and processing of the returns under each of the various enactments in the offices of Chief Inspectors of Factories of a few States and lay down standards for staff requirements separately for each Act. He mentioned that such standards should include not merely the number of computational staff required but the quality and scale of such staff and other supervisory staff required for collecting reliable statistics according to the time schedule fixed. A similar request was received from the Chief Inspector of Factories, Delhi, also. It is obvious that a steadily increasing load is being placed on State authorities in the matter of collection and transmission of statistics meant for all-India purposes. While, no doubt, much of the statistics supplied would be helpful to the States themselves, it is true that they have considerable all-India importance. The Committee, therefore, recommends that provision may be made in the Third Five Year Plan for granting suitable assistance to the State Labour Departments for strengthening the statistical units in the offices of the Labour Commissioners and Chief Inspectors of Factories, and any other authorities handling labour statistics.

Comment: A proposal for giving financial assistance to State Governments for the Improvement of Labour Statistics was approved by the Ministry in 1965. Financial assistance will be given to States for appointing additional staff for the collection and compilation of labour statistics required by the Labour Bureau and for the purchase of calculating machines. The Government of India will meet 60% of the cost of additional staff and all the cost of machines in the case of States and all the cost of personnel and machines in the case of Union Territories. So far eleven States or territories have taken action under this proposal.

4.8 Liaison Officers : We have considered whether the Central Government should set up any organization in each State for expediting the collection and forwarding of statistics. Perhaps some of the Ministries already have staff in various places for this purpose. The question of appointing special Liaison Officers for the purpose requires careful examination in all its aspects. From the point of view of the Labour Ministry, all that is required is the appointment of a Liaison Officer at the headquarters of each State both for expediting the collection and forwarding statistics and for various other matters connected with training, field checking, and correct compilation. He will obviously not be able to take on any responsibility directly but will act as the representative of the Labour Bureau in keeping a close watch over all operations far more effectively than could be done through correspondence.

Comment : Liaison work was planned as the major function for the Regional Offices proposed under the scheme of Improvement of Labour Statistics. The Ministry has recently decided not to establish such offices and the liaison work has, consequently, not been undertaken.

4.9 Coordination by the Central Statistical Organization

These are not matters which the Labour Ministry should

handle exclusively on its own responsibility. Suggestions relating to training quality control, strengthening of State Directorates, and Liaison Officers are of common interest to several other Ministries which obtain statistics from State Governments. Any arrangements entered into by the Ministry with State Governments in regard to these matters will immediately have repercussions on the relationship between other Ministries of the Government of India and State Governments. It is, therefore, necessary that a coordinated view of these matters should be taken by the Central Agency. Obviously, therefore, these are matters for the Central Statistical Organization, working under the Cabinet Secretariat, to examine and pursue. We suggest that our recommendations be forwarded to the Cabinet Secretariat for further examination and necessary action.

Comment : The training-cum-liaison scheme was prepared in consultation with the Central Statistical Organization and the work relating to field checking was also discussed with them. The Labour Bureau is not aware of any other action taken by the Central Statistical Organisation in this regard.

5. Other Suggestions

i) Improvement in the regularity and quality of statistics received may necessitate some strengthening of the staff of the Labour Bureau. Though there have been increases in the temporary staff of the Bureau for the implementation of specific schemes in the Five Year Plan, there has been no reorganization of the strength needed for the permanent activities of the Bureau.

Comment: There has been no expansion in the permanent strength dealing with the compilation of Labour statistics except in the Wages Section of the Bureau. The addition there was made on the recommendation of the Staff Inspection Unit of the Ministry of Finance.

ii) Both the Labour Bureau and State Statistical Departments lack modern machines for various statistical purposes. Manual calculations are likely to introduce errors. In the interest of speed and accuracy, modern machines should be installed. The subsidy given to State Governments should cover machines also.

Comment : A small machine tabulation unit has been installed in the Labour Bureau. As noted above the arrangement for reimbursing State Governments includes payments for calculating machines.

iii) There is a common belief that the burden of furnishing and receiving statistical tables can be reduced by amalgamating as many of them as possible into consolidated statements. This is not always so. If the additional information supplied by a statement is very slight, there is an obvious case for amalgamating it with another statement covering much of the ground. If, however, statements are amalgamated only with a view to saving one or two common columns, the combined statement might become unduly complicated. As the staff of primary units is none too efficient, every complication will introduce additional inaccuracies. No statement should be so complicated as to prevent its being readily filled in by an average clerk.

Comment : Consolidation of returns has not occurred both for the reasons stated and, as noted in the comment under 4.2 because the statutory modifications necessary to such consolidations have not been made.

iv) The statistics which are being collected suffer from very many defects. All efforts should be concentrated more on improvement of the quality of the statistics that are being collected than on collecting more information. The requirements of planning create an insatiable thirst for more and more statistics. Expansion without improvement will only create greater inaccuracies and more confusion.

Comment : Improvement has been sought through the steps commented on above in 4.5, 4.6, 4.7 and 4.8 and through the introduction of the machine tabulating unit. Pressures for expansion in the activities undertaken have also been continued.

v) The Committee has a feeling that the statistical information and analysis provided by the Labour Bureau are not being adequately employed in real research into specific problems in the field of labour. It is necessary to build up a proper research organization in the Ministry of Labour for this purpose.

Comment: One medium for such research is the Central Institute for Labour Research, established by the Government of India as an independent public body.

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A NOTE ON LABOUR RESEARCH
SUBMITTED TO
THE NATIONAL COMMISSION ON LABOUR

by
Xavier Institute of Social Service
Ranchi

Ranchi, August, 1968.

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A NOTE ON LABOUR RESEARCH
SUBMITTED TO THE NATIONAL COMMISSION ON LABOUR
BY XAVIER INSTITUTE, RANCHI

The note which follows has drawn up at the request of the National Commission on Labour (See Letter addressed to Sri Aroon Bose, Xavier Institute, Ranchi, by Dr. K.S.Singh, D.O.No.7(34)/67/NCL/Tech.II, New Delhi, dated June, 17, 1968) by a team of staff members of Xavier Institute, with the assistance of local industrial officers, researchers, and local officers of the Labour Department. Xavier Institute, however, takes the full responsibility for the views expressed here.*

At the outset it is necessary to point out the limitations within which, and the point of view from which, this Note has been drawn up:

(i) It is based on local experience only, and has therefore taken a grass-root approach. Our team did not have first-hand experience about the research carried out by the Central or State Governments, and feels therefore not competent to treat the matter at that level, except in as far as it bears an influence on local situations.

(ii) None of the members of the team has had advanced training in labour research or has been associated with major research projects, at the national or international level. We therefore consider ourselves basically as laymen in the field.

(iii) We have not attempted to reply to all the questions contained in Section X of the Questionnaire of the National Commission, but only to those about which we felt more competent to speak.

(iv) Because of dearth of factual information, the replies are not substantiated by facts, figures and illustrations, to the extent which the Commission might expect.

The only factor in our favour is that we have conducted minor research projects and surveys at the local and regional level, either as part of the training given to the students of the Institute, or in association with local professional bodies, such as the Indian Institute of Personnel Management,

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We like to thank the following persons for their kind help in drawing up this Note: Sri Aswini Kumar Sinha, Labour Superintendent, Ranchi, Sri S.K. Lahiri, Suptd, Industrial Engineering Dept. HMBP, HEC, Ranchi, Sri T.S. Rajamani, Dy, Chief Coordination, HSL, Ranchi, Sri P.K. Sen Deputy Labour Commissioner, Bihar (Retd), Ranchi, Fr.A. Delbeke, S.J. Manager, Catholic Press, Ranchi and Sri T. Karunakaran, Research Coordinator, Xavier Labour Relations Institute, Jamshedpur.

Ranchi Branch or the Ranchi Productivity Council. We are concerned about the role which labour research could, and should play in the industrial development of this region, and are keen to play our part in this vital, but as yet little appreciated, aspect of national growth.

In drawing up this Note, the team has made use of the the replies submitted to the National Commission on Labour at its Patna session, on April 15, 1968 by Sri A. Bose and T.S.Rao, in the name of Xavier Institute and the Indian Institute of Personnel Management, Ranchi/. The Branch Note follows the sequence of the questionnaire of the National Commission(Q.212-230).

If this note, in spite of its obvious limitations, is accepted by the National Commission as an illustration and a suggestion on how universities and private institutions could participate more vigorously in labour research, and thus supplement at the local and regional level, the research that is carried on by the Labour Ministry, the Central Labour Bureau, and the Labour Wing of the Planning Commission, or by the State Governments, it will have fulfilled its purpose.

A. Bose, Lecturer

Sd/- (A. Bose)

T.S. Rao, Lecturer

Sd/-

A.K. Mukherjee, Lecturer

Fr.M.V.d.Bogaert S.J., Director

RANCHI, AUGUST 15 , 1968.

INDEX OF QUESTIONS ANSWERED

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Qn.214. ALL-INDIA CONSUMER PRICE INDEX NUMBER

Question: Does the all-India Consumer Price Index Number Currently compiled, reflect adequately price changes affecting urban working class? Should consumer price index numbers be compiled for every region of the country for the purpose of wage fixation? What principles should be followed in compiling the 'all-India' and regional indices?

Reply: The question has three parts and each of these parts can be answered separately.

I. ADEQUACY

In reply to the first part of the question it can be mentioned that the All India Index currently compiled by the Labour Bureau on the base 1960-100 for fifty different industrial centres, does not reflect the price changes affecting urban working class of India correctly, because of the following reasons:

(1) Un-even Distribution of Centres:

The present all-India index is a weighted average index of fifty different indices available for fifty industrial centres, of which 32 are factory centres, 10 are plantation centres and 8 are mining centres. While selecting these centres, the following factors were taken into consideration:?

i. -Adequate representation of geographical areas and industries, so that a fairly reliable all-India index can be obtained by combining different centre-indices.

ii. -Distribution of centres to the three main industrial sectors of factories, mines and plantations, roughly in proportion to total employment in each sector, in each individual State.

iii.-Proper representation of different types of mineral and plantations among selected centres.

iv.- Nomination of centres by the State Governments in the light of total employment, administrative needs, etc.

In spite of all these precautions it can be said that the centres do not form a 'representative sample' of either the States, or of the urban centres, or of the industries. The uneven distribution of centres can be seen from Table No.1. This has been further accentuated by selection of centres on 'purposive basis'; i.e. out of 50 centres 23 have been selected only because for those centres well established earlier series of consumer price indices were already available (and which made the 'linking up' business more easier).

Some of the discrepancies regarding the selection of centres, as disclosed by Table No.1. is being discussed below:

i - In 1958, Madhya Pradesh with a very small proportion of factory employment had four factory centres; whereas States like U.P., Bihar, Andhra Pradesh, Madras, had either less or the same number of factory centres.

ii - In 1958, Mysore had more factory workers than Kerala, but Mysore had one factory centre as compared to two factory centres for Kerala. Similar facts can also be observed when Mysore is compared with Punjab, or Rajasthan is compared with Delhi and Assam, or Bombay is compared with West Bengal. To ascertain extent, these defects in the selection of centres in 1958-59 continued till 1965 and are still continuing even today.

Table No.1.²

Sl. No.	States	Number of Centres				Total Employ-ment in Factories ('000)		Total Employ-ment in Mines ('000)
		Fact.	Ming.	Plant.	Total.	1958	1965	1962
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
1.	Andhra Pradesh	2	1	-	3	222(10)	260(10)	32(9)
2.	Assam	1	-	4	5	75(5)	82(3)	8(4)
3.	Bihar	2	3	-	5	183(8)	239(9)	273(14)
4.	Bombay	5	-	-	5	1067(14)	1365(14)	23(8)
5.	Delhi	1	-	-	1	59(3)	87(4)	Negligible
6.	Kerala	2	-	1	3	166(7)	187(6)	1(1)
7.	M.P.	3	1	-	4	61(4)	214(7)	74(12)
8.	Madras	3	-	1	4	326(12)	378(11)	17(6)
9.	Mysore	1	1	2	4	187(9)	229(8)	41(10)
10.	Orissa	1	1	-	2	26(1)	67(1)	56(11)
11.	Punjab	2	-	-	2	104(6)	177(5)	2(2)
12.	Rajasthan	2	-	-	2	53(2)	75(2)	20(7)
13.	U.P.	3	-	-	3	278(11)	400(12)	2(2)
14.	W.Bengal	3	1	2	6	686(13)	913(13)	135(13)

iii. - In the case of employment in mines in the year 1962 and the selection of mining centres, similar discrepancies can be observed when we compare Andhra Pradesh either with Madhya Pradesh or with West Bengal.

iv - The centres are more concentrated in the eastern region of India, comprising of Bihar, Orissa, Assam and West Bengal (18 centres including all the sectors), In Bihar not a single city from the sugar producing centres of North Bihar has been included. Similarly, the steel city of Durgapur can be represented by Asansol; but Rourkela or Bhilai require immediate inclusion as they can not be represented by other urban centres of Orissa or Madhya Pradesh, which are situated quite far off from these two centres.

Therefore, on the basis of the facts gathered so far, one can express doubts about the correctness of the All-India Consumer Price Index, which is nothing but the a weighted average index of all the fifty centres taken together. The defect in the distribution of centres can be corrected by including a few/centres conducted sometime in 1968-1969 (or slightly later). \angle more centres in the next family budget enquiry which is likely to be

(2) Faulty Weightage System:

For calculating the All-India Index on the basic 1960-100, a weight is assigned to the index for each centre by distributing the total factory employment in a State (as the States existed in 1958-59) over the centre(s) selected within the State in proportion to the factory employment at each centre in 1958-59. These weights are kept unchanged. The index number for a centre for a month is multiplied by its weight and the sum of the products is divided by the sum of the weights to yield a weighted average index called the Average All-India Index for a month'.³

The fault in this system lies in the permanent character of weights, which remain unchanged till the next family budget enquiry is conducted and the old series is replaced by a new series of indices. It can be observed from columns 7 to 8 of Table No.1, that in the course of seven years between 1958 to 1965, there has been a decrease in the total factory employment in centres like Assam, Kerala, Madras, Mysore, Punjab, whereas, centres like Bihar, Delhi, M.P. U.P., have recorded an increase in total factory employment and in the States like Andhra Pradesh, Bombay, Orissa, Rajasthan, West Bengal, the figures remained constant.

What is true for States is also true for individual centres. In course of time the concentration of workers at different centres is also liable to change. Therefore, the weights given to different

centres can not remain unchanged and these must be reviewed at fairly short intervals so as to bring them in line with the changed pattern of employment either in the States/or in centres. But unfortunately, this is lacking in the case of All-India Consumer Price Index; hence it fails to represent the true picture of the country as a whole.

(3) Limited practical utility:

At present the All-India Weighted Average Consumer Price Index is being widely used as (a) an economic indicator of price movements, or (b) for the purpose of wage fixation through negotiation, or (c) for adjustment of dearness allowance. This is particularly more true for the Central and State Government employees, white collar employees in private firms, or for those centres for which neither the Central nor the State series of consumer price indices are currently available. But, for a vast country like India with heterogeneous population, groups divided by language, religion, caste, community and climatic barriers, with divergent food habits, living conditions, customs and manners, one single All-India Index does not carry much sense. The coverage of the 50 industrial centres is too small a number to give any co-herent picture for the country as a whole. Besides this, the sophisticated statistical techniques used for compilation of the index have also certain limitations (which have already been explained earlier).

Therefore, the All-India index may be useful for deciding policy matters, or for carrying out economic investigations at macro-economic level (and its compilation should be continued in the future); but linking of D.A. with such an index can be treated as an abstract and unrealistic attempt to compensate the rise in the cost of living of the urban working class. The solution of this problem lies to a certain extent in the compilation of regional indices.4

II. REGIONAL COMPILATION

The second part of the question can be replied in the affirmative because the short-coming of the present All-India Index can be partly removed by compiling regional indices for every part of the country. Regional indices can be justified on the following grounds:

(1) Regional Indices:

Under the present arrangement separate

regional indices within the States are not available. If we treat 'regions' as synonymous with 'States', then such state-wise indices are available for most of the States only for agricultural labourers. These are being compiled either by the Labour Bureau or by the State Governments (on the base: 1960-61=100).⁵ But in the proper sense of the term 'region' is something different from a 'State'; to take an example Chotenagpur can be treated as a region comprising Palamau, Hazaribagh, Santhal Parganas, Ranchi, Dhanbad and Singhbhum Districts of the Bihar State.

A short-cut method for the compilation of such regional indices will be to calculate a weighted average index of the centres falling within that particular region. But perhaps the best (although costly) method will be to start a fresh regional series on the basis of the new family budget enquiries in different regions. This can be done along with the Second Family Budget Enquiry which is likely to be help in 1968-69.

Compilation of such regional indices will be highly beneficial for the fixation of wages and for DA adjustments. Firstly, because the pattern of living in India differs from region to region. Secondly, for all practical purposes like wage fixation etc., regional indices are more meaningful and closer to reality than the Average All-India Index. Thirdly, in recent years the 'region-cum-industry basis has gained popularity in the field of wages and standard of living.

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(2) Coverage of the Centres:

There is another strong argument in favour of introducing regional indices. The C.P.I. that are available now are: the new central series for 50 industrial centres on the base 1960=100 and the old State or central series for a large number of centres in each State on different base periods. For some of the centres double (central as well as State) series of indices are available. But, in spite of all these it is not humanly possible to cover all the important urban industrial (either factory or mining or plantations) centres of India by a network of consumer price indices. Therefore, at present, the centres for which no index numbers are available can follow any of the following indices:

- i - All India Weighted Average Index (on base 1960=100); or
- ii - the new central series for 50 centres on base 1960=100) available for the nearest centre; or
- iii - an average of the new central series for 50 centres on base 1960=100) calculated on the basis of the index number of a few nearest centres; or
- iv - any other indices available for non-manual employees.

This has complicated the situation further. neither the workers nor the employers are perfectly satisfied with any of these arrangements. The workers have always preferred the index number that has recorded the maximum rise in recent years, whereas the employers have favoured the lowest one. This dilemma can be solved to a certain extent if new regional series of indices are compiled and its applicability is stated in clear terms. In recent years, employers as well as trade unions have supported the system of linking DA with the local index; but when the local index is not readily available, the regional index can serve as a substitute for the local index.

As for example, let us consider the case of industrial as well as non-industrial establishments in and around Ranchi. A State series of consumer price index (for working class) is being compiled for Ranchi by the Director of Statistics, Bihar, on the base July 1939=100. The series has become pretty old and out-of-date, and the employers of Ranchi are following either the All India Average Consumer Price Index (in the case of the central Government employees and employees of public sector undertakings or the consumer price index for Patna (in the case of the State Government Employees) or the consumer price index for Jamshedpur (in the case of some private factory establishments) for adjusting the D.A. payable to their employees. It is not clear, for example, whether the Bauxite mine workers of Lohardaga (Ranchi Dt.) should receive their DA according to the index number of Ranchi (factory centre approximately 76 Kilometres away), or Jharia (mining centre approximately 178 Kilometres away); or Kodarma (mining centre approximately 127 Kilometres away); or Noamundi (mining centre approximately 251 Kilometres away); or Jamshedpur (factory centre approximately 109 Kilometres away).

What is urgently needed is that the coverage of jurisdiction of the index numbers should be stated in clear terms keeping in view the market area covered for price collection under each centre.

III. PRINCIPLES

In reply to the third part of the question, the following principles can be suggested for compilation of (a) All-India Index, (b) regional indices, (c) centre-wise indices. (The last one is necessary for the compilation of the first two indices).

(1) Proposed arrangement of index numbers:

i - The first step in the compilation of index numbers in India should be the construction of one central series of consumer price indices for selected industrial centres on the base: 1960=100 (as is being done for fifty selected centres). The uneven distribution of centres can be rectified by including a few more centres from the old central or State series which are available at present and which has become out of date due to the very old base periods. This can be done by conducting fresh family budget enquiries for such old centres along with the Second Family Budget Enquiry which is likely to be held sometime in 1968-69. Attention should be paid to achieve similarity in base periods and uniformity in methods of construction and the whole task of compilation should remain with the Labour Bureau, which will be in charge of maintaining one central series instead of two series (central and State).

One possible objection to this scheme may be regarding the shortage of staff and the amount of expenditure involved in the emoluments of fresh staff to be recruited. The staff position has not improved much in the course of 16 years, which can be seen from Table No. 2 given below:

Table No. 2⁸

	Old Series (1944=100)	New Series (1960=100)
Number of markets per price collector	1.5	1.1
Number of markets per price supervisor	2.8	2.9
Number of shops per price collector	33.3	57.7
Number of shops per price supervisor	62.5	156.3
Number of price quotations handled each month per price collector	800.0	769.0
Number of price quotations handled each month per price supervisor	1500.0	2083.3

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The problem of staff can be solved to a certain extent by transferring the services of the staff of the State Statistical Departments engaged in price collection work, to the Labour Bureau and also by recruiting fresh staff for this purpose.

ii - The second step in the compilation of index numbers in India should be the construction of 'regional indices'. As suggested earlier this can be done either by calculating weighted averages from the centre-indices or by starting a new regional series on the basis of fresh regional Family budget enquiries. In the former case weights can be assigned in the same manner as is being done now in the case of All-India Average Index, with a provision for revision of weights at short intervals according to changes in the pattern of employment. If both the procedures are followed (ie. weighted average and fresh series) then there can be two different regional index series calculated according to two different methods and one can maintain a check on the reliability of the other.

iii - The third step in the compilation of index numbers in India should be the construction of an All-India Weighted Average Index Number. This can be a weighted average of the individual centre-indices (as is being done now) or a weighted average of the regional indices. Weights can be assigned in the same manner as is done at present with a provision for revision of weights at short intervals. If both the procedures are followed then one can maintain a check on the reliability of the other.

(2) Commodities and Services

In the new series of consumer price indices (base 1960=100) the number of commodities and services have been raised from 40 to 60 in the old series to 100 per centre. This is not bad compared to the C.P. index of the US, which includes 400 items. The grouping of items is being done in the following manner: I food, II pan, sugar, tobacco and intoxicants, III fuel and light; IV housing; V clothing, bedding and foot-wear; VI miscellaneous group comprising (a) medical care, (b) personal care and effects, (c) others including laundry, domestic services, etc.

(b) education,
recreation and
amusement,
(c) transport
and communi-
cation,

The principles that have been laid down for inclusion of items within the 'fixed basket of goods and services' are as follows:

- (a) representativeness of the items in respective consumption groups,
- (b) availability of suitable units for pricing,
- (c) feasibility of collecting price data on a continuous basis,
- (d) according to ILO items which account for 1 or 2 percent or more of expenditure incurred by an average working class family,

- (e) items which represent the price movement of other allied items in the same group should be included, excluding the other items,
- (f) items like repayment of debts, interest on debts which are non-consumption expenditure or consumption expenditure like subscription, ceremonials, gifts, charities, insurance premium or other forms of saving should be excluded.⁹

It is not very clear whether all these principles are being strictly observed or not and what are the actual items included for most of other centres. The trade union organisations have also expressed doubts about this aspect. Therefore, in the future edition of the monograph 'A Guide to Consumer Price Index Numbers' this should be stated in clear terms.

Another suggestion can be made regarding the inclusion of 'maintenance and repair costs' in the fixed basket. This may include repair and maintenance of house, furniture and fixtures, household effects and even the repair cost of a cycle, which is a common feature in the Indian working class household. (At present the weight of this item is perhaps being imputed to other items within the group or subgroup).

Regarding the inclusion of other items it can be mentioned that the recommendations of the Expert Committee set up by the Delhi Administration to investigate that Delhi Consumer Price Index Number on base: 1944=100, in July 1964, suggested that all the items recording 0.25% of the total expenditure of an average family budget should be included in index construction as an independent item. A lower level of expenditure (even lower than the ILO's recommendation mentioned above) was chosen because of the lower level of income in India. However, in the new series of consumer price index number (base 1960=100) all the items which recorded an expenditure of one percent or more of the total expenditure of an average budget have been included and directly priced. ¹⁰ The whole issue appears to be controversial and there is scope for further consideration in this matter. Before the revision of the present series (1960=100) through a Second Family Budget Enquiry in 1968-69, it should be decided whether in the revised series (future series) all the items recording 0.25% (or 0.50% or 0.75%) expenditure can be included or not.

Another controversial issue is the feasibility or necessity of introducing new commodities and services in an 'index basket' during the life time of an index series. According to the International Conference of Labour Statisticians (10th Session, October 1962) 'new items can be introduced when it is established that such new items are being consumed by the index population on a stable and continuing basis, and have recorded significant consumption expenditure'. In recent years, particularly in Eastern India, many new food items have been introduced through the partial or complete rationing system, eg. milo, wheat, ata, maida, etc. Similarly 'gur' is being widely used in place of sugar. Perhaps many of these items require inclusion (if not already included) through short-term sample surveys, provided the expenditure on these items are significant.

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(3) Quality specifications, selection of shops and markets, price collection.

Regarding these aspects we have the following suggestions to offer :

i - The present method of specifying the quality, seems to be arbitrary and untenable due to frequent changes in quality in recent years. Therefore, 'the specifications should be based on statistically well designed enquiries instead of intensive market enquiries so that objective data regarding the popularity of a particular variety of commodity are obtained to lay down specifications'.

ii - 'Selection of shops also should be based on statistically well designed enquiries so as to ensure proper representation of all the shops in all the markets in an index centre. Further, the weekly prices of commodities and services for purposes of index compilation should be collected through a moving sample rather than a fixed number of shops.' All these are necessary because collection of prices from the same shops may be arbitrary. It may bring slackness on the part of the price collectors as well as shop-owners and there may be repetition of the same price quotations.

iii - 'New markets emerging in any particular centre should also be included for price collection and for this purpose enquiries at regular intervals should be made in the index centres concerned.

iv - 'The price collection work should be phased over different days of the week for different markets in an index centre rather than on the same day of the week for all commodities and services, from all shops and all markets.'

v - 'Data should be obtained from any other source in the index centre when prices of a particular commodity in a particular market or all the markets in an individual centre are not available from the selected shops. The repetition of prices is not desirable for estimating the prices when some quotations are not available.'

(4) House Rent :

At present in the new series (1960=100) house rent data are collected by six monthly sample surveys only in the factory centres. In the case of mining and plantation centres the housing index is kept constant at 100 (the base period level) because most of the working class at these centres are provided by employers with free housing. Our suggestion is that in future, housing surveys should be conducted for all types of centres on the basis of a moving sample (not fixed sub-sample) encompassing all types of houses, new and old, situated at different localities.

(5) Weightage of food items :

In recent years some of the TU organisations have suggested that more weight should be attached to food items because of the higher percentage of expenditure on food items and the hardship caused due to the non-availability of food items. But in our view it will not be wise to disturb the 'weighting diagram', which is being followed now. In this respect, what can be done is that any item on which expenditure (recorded in the average family budget) is more than 0.50%, should be included directly in the calculation and there should not be 'imputation' of weights for such items. Imputation of weights for such items as wheat, ata, suji, maida, pulses (different varieties, puffed rice, torch cells, etc. does not seem desirable (particularly in the eastern regions of India).

Notes

1. Labour Survey Techniques : Labour Bureau, Ministry of Labour & Employment Government of India, 1964, p. 175.
2. Figures in brackets indicate ranking of the data. Jammu and Kashmir with one factory centre has been excluded from the table. Bombay includes Gujarat and Maharashtra and Punjab includes Haryana. Sources : The Indian Labour Statistics 1963 and 1967 and The Indian Labour Year Book 1965, Ministry of Labour and Employment, Govt. of India.
3. A Guide to Consumer Price Index Numbers, Labour Bureau, Ministry of Labour and Employment, Government of India, Second Edition 1966, pp. 19-20.
4. Ibid., p.20
5. Ibid., p.25
6. Ibid., p.25
7. Ibid., p.26
8. Chatterjee K.D., "Family Budget Enquiries and Consumer Price Index Numbers for Industrial Workers", Indian Labour Journal, January 1968, p.14.
9. A Guide to Consumer Price Index Numbers, op.cit.pp.9-10; Chatterjee K.D.. Ibid, pp. 7-8; and also Handbook of Methods for Survey & Studies, US Bureau of Labour Statistics, Bulletin No. 1458, October 1956, pp. 69-78.
10. Report of the Expert Committee on Readjustment in the Delhi Consumer Price Index Numbers (base 1944=100) and its linking with the Index Series with 1960 as base, Delhi Administration, Labour Department 1966, pp. 81-82.
11. Ibid. pp.58-59

Qn. 215. DATA ON WORK-STOPPAGES

Question : Data presently collected and compiled in respect of work-stoppages (strikes and lockouts) mostly consist of; (a) number of work-stoppages. (b) number of workers involved, (c) number of man-days lost, (d) total wages lost in rupees, and (e) total production lost in rupees. Are they adequate for measuring industrial unrest in the country? If not, what other aspects of industrial unrest require quantification?

Reply:

(1) Work-stoppage is only one among the many indices by which industrial unrest can be measured. While work-stoppage is the overt manifestation of industrial unrest there are covert manifestations of industrial unrest and it is equally important that such indications should also be taken into account when an assessment is being made of the level of industrial dissatisfaction prevailing at a particular time. Given the uncommitted nature of the large part of our workforce and given the limited capacity of our unions to undertake strike action, it is our contention that actual work-stoppage is not a very sensitive indicator of industrial unrest.

Therefore it is necessary that other indicators of industrial unrest be taken into account. These other indicators are : (a) the rate of absenteeism, (b) the rate of labour turnover, (c) the extent of industrial sabotage, (d) the extent of go-slow and work-to-rule tactics, (e) the extent of avoidable waste, and (f) the incidence of greivances.

In support of this contention that in a country such as India other indications of labour unrest must be taken into account, we have the authority of Kerr, Dunlop, Harbison and Myers.

In any economy where the traditional pattern is being traumatically displaced by a new one, tensions and conflicts are bound to arise but worker protest in such economies manifest itself in a very different manner from worker protest in the more developed economies. " Resistance by the worker to an employer's labour policy takes one of two forms : either an open revolt such as a strike, or an instinctive and often unconscious exercising of the 'strike-in-detail' - simply drifting off the job' (Carleton H. Parher)'. Further, Kerr, Dunlop and others say : "The 'strike-in-detail' also takes the form of withdrawal of effort on the job and a lack of attention, cooperation and morale, compared to workers in more advanced industrial communities. It may take more violent expressions in fighting , spontaneous flare-ups, work sabotage... "2. They also refer to absenteeism and labour turn over as forms of 'strike-in-detail' and this protesting through 'strike-in-detail' is a characteristic, they affirm, of an uncommitted labour force.

(2) Besides collecting statistics on the various forms of industrial unrest, depth studies of individual strikes should also be made. It is conceded that in most strikes the issue that causes the breakdown of relations is often the 'last straw that broke the camel's back'. Behind the reason advanced for going on strike there are usually many more reasons and among these, the psychological and social ones are often the most important, It is imperative therefore, that an autopsy should be performed of major strikes. This will enable one to know what circumstances caused the strike, what were the various influences at work, how did different interests operate, and on the basis of such a dissection it should be possible to safeguard against similar situations from developing in the future. Such depth studies have been conducted in India as in the case of the Air India Pilots' strikes and the Jay Engineering Strike. What is being advocated here is that such studies should be conducted in the case of most if not all major strikes. From such a wide probing, a definite pattern of strike prone situations will emerge.

(3) The frame-work for analysis in such studies could be :

- i - the size, technology and market background of the firm,
- ii - the main sociological characteristics of the workforce, viz. caste/community break up, age and sex distribution, presence of displaced persons, presence of first-generation emigrants from rural areas.
- iii - the political affiliation, personal and psychological background of the main union and management leaders.
- iv - the external forces at work viz- political and social factors bearing on the situation,
- v - the industrial relations' tradition of the firm,
- vi - the role of the government agencies involved.

By examining these various factors, the propensity to strike and the propensity to industrial conflict inherent in various situations can be worked out.

(4) An example of such an analysis is the work of Kerr and Siegel.³ While their analysis has been worked out at the international level similar analysis can be worked out on the national and industrial level. Reproduced below is a table showing a general pattern of strike propensities.

Table No. 1. Propensities to strike

Propensity to strike	Industry
High	Mining
	Maritime & Longshore
Medium High	Lumber
	Textile
Medium	Chemicals
	Printing
	Leather manufacturing
	Construction
	Food & Kindred
Medium Low	Clothing
	Water
	Gas & Electricity Services
	Railroad
Low	Agriculture
	Trade

This explanation of propensity to strike is consonant with the environmental theory of industrial relations advanced by Kerr, Dunlop, Harbison and Myers.

It is only when data are collected on the overt and covert manifestations of industrial unrest and when depth studies are conducted of major industrial disputes that a more sensitive picture of the industrial relations scene will emerge.

Notes

1. See, Kerr, Dunlop, Harbison & Myers, Industrialism and Industrial Man, p.172
2. Op. Cit, p.173
3. Kornhauser, Industrial Conflict, McGraw-Hill 1954, Ch.14.

Qn..216. WORK-STOPPAGES DUE TO REASONS OTHER THAN INDUSTRIAL DISPUTES

Question: At present statistical data are collected only in respect of work-stoppages arising out of industrial disputes. Is it necessary to collect similar information on work-stoppages due to reasons other than industrial disputes ?

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Reply:

(1) Industrial disputes are not the only reason for work stoppages. Bandhs, hartals, satyagrahs, dharnas and other dislocations inspired by political and social pulls such as the language agitation, State boundary agitations, electioneering campaigns, student agitations, communal unrest, have had their share in contributing to work stoppages.

Work-stoppages, we therefore, say do not only occur solely due to differences between employers and employees. To cite one example, transport services such as buses and trains have been known to be paralysed because of conflict between the public or the student community and the transport employees. Work-stoppages due to reasons totally unrelated to matters of direct concern between employer and employee have occurred on numerous occasions and an account of these must be kept. Here it is forcefully proved that employers and employees do not have relations in a vacuum, outside forces do cloud the industrial scene and if the work of production is to be carried on not only employer and employee relations but also the social and political forces at work in society at large must be brought into line.

(2) To begin with, therefore, we must know which of these social and political forces cause work-stoppages and we must also know how virulent they are in their effect on industrial work.

(3) It are not social and political force that cause work-stoppages due to reasons other than industrial disputes. Frequently government inaction in unjust industrial relations situations, or government's tall promises which are not implemented are also a cause of work-stoppages.

An example of this is the government's failure to look into, and safeguard the interest of the local people in recently industrialised places such as Ranchi.

Unorganised workers have on occasions gone on strikes and resorted to other agitational tactics because of injustices done to them by employers who have seemingly violated with impunity regulations under the Payment of Wages Act or the Minimum Wages Act. This is another example of work-stoppages arising indirectly out of Government's inaction or failure.

To sum up we may state that since it has been observed that work stoppages are caused by numerous pressures, it is essential that a record be maintained of such stoppages in order to facilitate analysis and remedial action.

Qn. 217. ASPECTS OF LABOUR STATISTICS TO BE EMPHASISED

Question : The current emphasis in the collection of Labour statistics is on data which will help in understanding the economic aspects of workers' life. Social and sociological aspects have been comparatively neglected. What are your suggestions for filling up the gap ? For better comprehension of labour problems which particulars aspect of these statistics would you emphasise ?

Reply :

Since it is agreed that a worker far from being a 'rational economic man' in the pure state is in fact subject to various influences,

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it becomes necessary to maintain statistics in regard to aspects of workers' life other than the economic. That worker behaviour is influenced by factors other than economic has been the burden of numerous research projects, be it the Hawthorne experiment or the research performed by Weber and Sayles. In fact this has been the basis on which all the present schemes in labour welfare have been launched and therefore the case for collecting information on the sociological aspects of a workers' life need not be further emphasised.

It must however, be stated that in a country such as India, where the hold of traditional and social factors has not been substituted by a value system having its genesis in the industrial civilisation, as is the case in most western countries, the study and analysis of sociological and traditional factors is essential in order to understand worker behaviour.

For instance, while the trade union movement in the USA or UK has been shaped largely by economic factors such as class struggle, and occupational interest viz. those skilled versus unskilled workers, general working class interest versus craft group interests, it can not be denied that in India a social factor such as caste has played a significant role in the trade union movement. Certain trends in the trade union movement can not be explained, unless such a sociological factor is taken into account. Again even an issue like 'bonus' has its sociological aspect, for we must remember that it started as a payment to workers in certain parts of India just before the 'Pujas' (Dashera). Recently a lot of agitation was seen in this State of Bihar over the payment of 'drought relief', yet another instance of outside factors influencing industrial behaviour.

Here we like to point out that the effect of a sociological factor such as land ownership and the phenomena of frequent visits by industrial workers to their villages and the connection between these factors and commitment on the part of the work force is a much debated issue. Myers holds divergent views on this point from those held by Richard Lambert¹ or Morris D Morris.² Lambert and Morris however, admit that more research, based on more complete data on absenteeism and labour turnover will have to be made before this problem is resolved. Unless research having a wide coverage is conducted and unless properly maintained statistics are available, most of the interpretations on the effects of sociological factors on worker behaviour will, as Lambert says, remain at the level of broad generalizations.

(2) In the light of these instances it is felt that sociological information in regard to the industrial workforce should be gathered. Data on the following aspects should be gathered: (a) caste, (b) community, (c) religion, (d) connection with land, (e) extent of ownership of land, (f) participation in agricultural activity, (g) utilisation of industrial earnings for rural investment such as purchasing of land, farming equipment, etc. (h) frequency and reasons for visits to the village, In addition information should be collected in regard to (i) age groups. This will help in working out priorities between schemes such as training on the one hand, and retiring schemes on the other (j) the standard of living of workers and (k) extent and nature of indebtedness, (l) civic amenities such as hospitals, transport and re-creational facilities available to workers, all these should be studied.

(3) Here again we would recommend the use of the case study method. We know from research studies that the background of the

workers has a definite bearing on their adjustment to industry and their consequent behaviour there.

Research projects conducted by the Anthropology Department of Ranchi University and the Harvard Research Project conducted in collaboration with the Psychology Department of the Ranchi University have examined the effect of sociological factors on worker behaviour. The behaviour of displaced persons, the behaviour of migrants, the adjustment problem of high caste people to industrial work, these have been some of the problems examined. Besides this, we may point out that it would be profitable to probe into the behaviour of highly skilled groups of persons, such as technicians who have been trained abroad. Each one of these groups of persons have their special problems arising out of their psychology, level of expectations and their training and preparedness to participate in industrial life.

(4) If statistics are collected on all these aspects, one can get a better idea of various factors which are coming to bear on the labour scene, for it is accepted that labour does not exist in isolation but is subjected to influences working in the larger society. An explanation to some of the events in industry can therefore, be explained only in terms of influences outside industry and it is for this reason that data collected on the above mentioned points will have significance.

Notes

1. Lambert, Richard D., Workers, Factories and Social Change in India, 1963, Asia Publishing House & Gokhale Institute of Politics and Economics
2. Morris, Morris D., The Emergence of an Industrial Labor Force In India. A study of the Bombay Cotton Mills, 1854-1947, 1965, Berkeley & Los Angeles, University of California Press.

Qn. 218. STATISTICAL DATA ON THE RURAL POPULATION

Question: Statistical data (employment, Unemployment, consumption expenditure, etc.) are being collected in respect of rural population annually by the National Sample Survey. Would it be feasible to make these data available separately for rural labour for each State/region? What other statistics would be required for framing an operational programme?

Reply :

(1) Conceptual Difference:

It is necessary to draw a distinction between 'rural population', 'rural labour' and 'agricultural labour'. The statistics collected by the National Sample Survey (N.S.S.) under different rounds, covers the 'rural population' which is a much wider term than the other two. Similarly, 'rural labour' is a wider term than 'agricultural labour'.

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Some of the statistics (other than N.S.S.) that are being collected now for these three separate groups are : (a) Number of persons engaged in agriculture as cultivators and as agricultural labourers (decennial census of India); (b) Socio economic conditions including income expenditure and consumption pattern of agricultural labourers (Ad-hoc Agricultural Labour Enquiries); (c) Annual Minimum Wage statistics for agricultural labourers (Labour Bureau); (d) Annual wage statistics for rural labourers (Directorate of Economics and Statistics, Ministry of Food and Agricultural, Govt. of India); (e) Miscellaneous types of statistics covering all the three groups on ad-hoc basis (C.S.O., State Statistical Departments, Bench Mark Surveys of the Programme Organisation, Farm Management Survey) etc.

Regarding collection of statistics for 'rural labour' specially, it was decided by the Agricultural Labour Advisory Committee, in the earlier part of 1962, that the third Agricultural Labour Enquiry (A.L.E.) should be Rural Labour Enquiry (R.L.E.) covering rural labour households including agricultural labour households, (the statistics for two different households will be shown separately). It was also decided to integrate the enquiry with the 18th round of the N.S.S. (started in February 1963). Subsequently, due to declaration of National Emergency the size and scale of R.L.E. was curtailed in December 1962. Publication of the results of the R.L.E. is still awaited.

(2) Feasibility:

From what has been stated above it is clear that in future it is feasible to cover statistics relating to 'rural population', 'rural labour' and 'agricultural labour' separately through an integrated and well planned N.S. Survey like the 18th round. This can be done by selecting well designed samples and suitable schedules in consultation with the statistical experts from N.S.S., C.S.O., Labour Bureau etc.

The next question to be answered is : would it be feasible to make this data available (i) annually/at longer intervals; and (ii) for each state/region? Perhaps, it will be difficult and costly to collect the statistics annually, but, it can be made available at an interval of every two or three years. (At present N.S. Surveys are conducted annually, but subjects covered differ from year to year). On the other hand A.L.E. is being conducted after every 6 years. Regarding the State/region-wise coverage our suggestion is that the statistics should be made available on regional basis (if possible on State basis also) because, it will be of great help in framing economic, social as well as agricultural development programme for rural areas, for better administration and for ameliorating the socio-economic conditions of rural labour.

NOTES

1. Labour Survey Techniques, Labour Bureau, Govt. of India 1964 pp.159,160 and also Asthana B. N. and Srivastava S.S., Applied Statistics of India. Allahabad, 1965 pp.230 and 400-421.

86 (3) Operation Programme

Besides the statistics on employment, unemployment consumption expenditure etc. (being collected by the N.S.S. for the entire rural population including 'rural labour' and 'agricultural labour') the following other statistics would be required for framing an operational programme : self employment, part-time employment, seasonal un-employment under-employment, family and house hold, casual and regular labour, women and child labour, occupation, industry, mobility, land utilization, crop pattern, land holdings, agricultural production and price trends, industrial production and price trends, problems of rural industries and occupations other than agriculture, wage structure, mode of payment, non-payment, minimum wages, earning members, sources of income, size of income, cost and levels of living, saving and indebtedness, impact of land reforms, legislations and development programme, registration with employment exchanges etc.

In such connection it is worthwhile to mention that : (i) the coverage of the statistics and concepts (or definitions) should be kept unchanged (as far as practicable) over successive surveys so as to achieve comparability and (ii) other annual statistics, which are available at present should not be discontinued.

Qn. 219. LABOUR RESEARCH AND POLICY-MAKING IN LABOUR MATTERS

Question : Are the present arrangements for research and studies in the field of labour adequate to meet the requirements of policy-making in labour and economic matters ?

Reply:

Our reply to this question contains three parts : (a) a discussion of the need of labour research for a more purposeful labour policy, (b) labour research as a means of evaluating the effectiveness of the Labour policy, and finally (c) a listing of matters which require investigation.

I. NEED OF LABOUR RESEARCH FOR A MORE PURPOSEFUL LABOUR POLICY

(1) That the present arrangements for research and studies are inadequate to meet the requirements of policy-making, is clear from a very simple example. The fact is that no material is at present available on such elementary matters as the variation of basic wages from industry to industry or from region to region; or in regard to dearness allowance, incentives, bonuses or other monetary benefits and facilities. In fact, there is complete lack of information on these points. So that in case of an industrial dispute on wages or other terms and conditions of service in a concern, material has to be collected on an ad-hoc basis, in the locality, by the industry concerned on the one hand and workmen involved, on the other. The work is done hurriedly and haphazardly, so that the Tribunal to which these are presented by the interested parties, is more confused than convinced by the conflicting claims and is reduced to finding a via media on a basis of compromise, rather than on conclusions based on solid facts. There is a real difficulty which has to be faced not only by the tribunal and other bodies which have to make important decisions in labour and economic matters, but also by administrators.

(2) There is a complete lack of any purposeful aim in labour policy or in economic matters in the higher and subordinate echelons of the administrative cadres. For instance, in labour conciliation work,

the conciliation officer is reduced to obtaining results by importunities and stratagem rather than by logical reasoning based on incontrovertible facts. There is greater reliance on sentiment than on science.

The only conscious effort at imparting a basic purpose in the scheme of things in the Tripartite Labour Conference, with its periodic deliberations, which again proceed more on the basis of compromise in the familiar political pattern, rather than on any serious study of really reliable facts and figures. The Conference, as a result is more concerned with personalities and groups, rather with broad or sweeping decisions in the interests of labour or for the improvement of economic conditions in the country as a whole. Width of outlook can only grow on the firm basis of knowledge, which is sadly lacking at the present moment. Therefore, any step taken to broaden the basis of knowledge by the collection of necessary statistics, or of facts relating to economic, sociological or labour conditions in the country, any step taken to encourage serious research and study of such conditions and to orientate policy-making by the administrative cadres on the basis of such scientific data cannot but be of immense benefit to the country as a whole.

(3) At present the policy of the Government is at least to guide, if not to control labour relations. The result is the expenditure of large sums of money on ad hoc enquiries, such as by the Wage Boards and even by the National Commission on Labour, a fundamental question, which goes to the very root of the matter is, whether this national policy needs re-orientation. That is, whether instead of costly ad hoc enquiries, the Government should not very gradually leave labour and industrial relations to be adjusted on a bipartite basis, with the State merely providing the scientific basis on which such adjustment must be made by the parties themselves, in the national interest. The national resources at present expended in maintaining the tri-partite basis of our industrial relations, which are considerable, could then be diverted to study and research and for the collection of reliable scientific data in this field which would be of great assistance not only to entrepreneurs, but also to labour. There is no doubt that labour organisations will one day attain maturity and feel confident of their power and the ability to stand on their own feet. They will then rightly demand a greater and greater share in the policy making process so far as it impinges on their relations with capital and be more and more impatient of third party interference in these matters.

The problem is how far the Government, foreseeing this future eventuality, is preparing at present to lay that broad foundation of research and study on which industry and labour must depend to adjust their mutual relations.

Looked at from this angle, such study and research are not merely a question of development but of survival. If the political, economic and social organisations of the country do not develop and in the process adjust themselves to the growing aspirations of the people, the stresses and strains must lead to a collapse at some point or other some day. Study and research from this point of view are an immediate necessity rather than a luxury.

II. LABOUR RESEARCH AS A MEANS FOR EVALUATING THE EFFECTIVENESS OF LABOUR POLICY.

In this part, some suggestions are made on how labour research could be used as a means of evolving a more purposeful labour policy.

(1) India has passed a great amount of labour legislation. This has been done as a result of the influence of the ILO, and out of a desire to establish a socialistic pattern of society, and finally as a response to needs revealed through questions raised in Parliament and in discussions held at the Indian Labour Conference. The question as to what extent this legislation has fitted into a pattern of a purposeful labour policy, has already been raised above.

Before enforcing such legislation a certain amount of fact-finding and research is undertaken through various commissions and committees, such as the Bonus Commission or the Contract Labour Enquiry Commission in Bihar etc. The evaluation of the effectiveness of such laws and policy decisions is also undertaken by similar committees, such as the Minimum Wages Committee in Bihar. The adequacy of these committees to come to the real facts may however be questioned. The very way in which these committees are set up and their mode of procedure, consisting in the study of reports and sub-missions, the taking of evidence from representatives of management and labour, and brief visits to some industrial centres, precludes such a dispassionate grasp of the real impact of labour legislation. The effectiveness of those official bodies themselves, may need further investigation, in view of what was said above.

(2) It is therefore suggested that to supplement the work of those official bodies, case studies should be undertaken from time to time on the real impact of the legislation, decisions and other details of labour policy, in a particular region or on a particular section of the population.

Some of the topics which require such an investigation in this region are listed here:

(a) the impact of the Apprenticeship Act, the performance of apprentices in the concerns where they are placed and the rate of their assimilation in industrial employment on completion of the apprenticeship.

(b) the effective use of compensation money paid to displaced persons, especially tribals, in such places as Hatia, Patratu, Gettelsud, etc.

(c) the result of the enforcement of the ESI scheme on the health of the industrial workers, their pattern of absenteeism, etc.,

(d) the real results of the Minimum Wages Act in effectively controlling the floor wages, especially of agricultural and unorganised workers in the District,

(e) the effectiveness of the Workmen's Compensation Act to help workers affected by accidents, especially contract labourers.

Contd...

It is expected that if such case studies could be undertaken along a standardised pattern, they would provide excellent tools for evaluating the real effects of labour policy decisions and labour laws.

(3) The officers of the labour department, when submitting their annual returns under the different Acts, add their own comments and in this way evaluate to a certain extent, the effectiveness of these laws, But this kind of evaluation, carried on in a routine way, is not without its limitations.

i. Their office is usually understaffed and with their many other occupations, it would not be fair to expect from these officers any depth analysis of the data they send to government. Their office staff is ~~not~~ trained and equipped to undertake such studies either.

ii. Their main handicap is that in this matter they themselves are party to the events on which they have to report, e.g. in the case of the returns submitted under the Industrial Disputes Act.

It is therefore suggested that local agencies, whether university departments or training and research institutes could be associated in evaluating the effectiveness of certain labour laws at the district or regional level, especially in the form of case studies (See reply to Qns. 215 & 216).

III. MATTERS REQUIRING INVESTIGATION

The official committees are aware only of the view points of the All India leaders in the field either representing the government or the management or the trade unions. But the purpose of research in view of helping the shaping and evaluation of labour policy should be to find out first-hand information at the unit or plant level as regards the view points of management, workers and other officials, who are aware of the actual undiluted facts, figures, and problems.

The issues needing investigation can be divided into three; those of management, those of the workers, and those of other bodies.

(1) Concerns of Management:

Concerns will have to be classified along the following lines: (a) public sector versus private sector undertakings, (b) size of industry, (c) proprietary, partnership or limited company, (d) progressive versus old school firms. The following points may be enquired into:

i. Whether they have properly constituted works committees as per Industrial Disputes Act or other committees formed out of their own accord ie. productivity committee, welfare committee, canteen committee, grievance committee, etc.

ii. To what extent are existing labour laws, statutes and awards implemented in the plant.

iii. Their concept of the functions of personnel management and industrial relations and its application in practice.

iv. How many qualified officials are there for these functions (not only top bosses but also lower cadre officers who give decisions or carry out personnel functions) vis-a-vis the number of workers in the unit.

v. Actual division of the various functions of industrial relations and the number of officials entrusted for the purpose namely: recruitment, training, promotion policies, welfare matters, safety, grievances, negotiations, implementation of awards, etc.

vi. Whether such units have well defined grievance procedure.

vii. Generally, what is the period taken to solve a few types of grievances, increments, PF, ESI, compensation arising out of accidents or injuries, etc.

eg. exact amount of wages paid or due, provisions,

viii. Whether they had any job evaluation procedure or they have just borrowed the scales of pay from some other old established firms.

ix. Number of grades especially at workers' level and whether the management or the workers think the existing number of pay scales are all right.

x. The designation for supervisory personnel, namely: chargehand, chargeman, supervisor, assistant foreman, overseer, engineering assistant, assistant, junior assistant, senior assistant, etc. Which of the above designations can be members of the unions and which are to be considered as managerial or official staff, as also which of them are covered by the Industrial Disputes Act, or the Payment of Wages Act, etc.

xi. Whether they have any written description of the responsibilities, known as job description or job specification, for the workers or supervisory staff, if not, then such an absence of written job description create problems in the shops now and then.

xii. Do they have incentive schemes made by competent persons and what are the results of such incentives.

xiii. About disputes the following should be investigated:
(a) how many of these disputes arise out of fundamental problems like wages, incentives, dearness allowance, etc.,
(b) how many of them arise out of very minor reasons, eg. disputes about the functions of a worker with particular designation or misunderstanding as to who should do a small operation, (c) personal misunderstanding problems with superiors (human relations) (see Reply to Qns. 215-216).

xiv. Whose responsibility it is to look after the welfare functions, eg. canteen. Is there a committee with representatives from both the management and the workers or is it solely with function of the management of the workers, and the management pay some subsidies, and the consequent results of these arrangements.

xv. Is there any joint management council with workers' participation in management. What is the response of the workers, and the results of such participation.

(2) Concerns of Workers and Unions:

The following points deserve investigation:

i. Whether the union officials are workers of the particular plant if not, how many from outside?

ii. From their experience do the workers prefer to have the union officials, from amongst themselves or do they prefer to have outsiders. The leaders' affiliation with political parties. (This information should be collected from the workers' mouth to be more reliable.)

iii. How many unions are there and the respective membership of each union. Is any of them recognised as representative.

iv. Comments of the various trade unions in one unit as regards the criteria and method for deciding the representative character of the union and for granting recognition.

v. Their comments about labour laws and the actual implementation by the management.

vi. Comments of the trade unions or workers as regards the workers education scheme. How many of the trade union leaders have gone through such training schemes.

vii. Sample studies should be made regarding the assessment or feeling of the workers about the management: (a) whether they think the management is unjust, unfair and exploiting, (b) or fair and efficient, (c) or completely callous about industrial relations, (d) does management keep properly qualified personnel to look into labour matters.

viii. Attitudes of the workers in a public sector vis-a-vis the private sector.

ix. View points as regards the standard of living, comforts expected and maintained by the workers vis-a-vis educational standards.

x. Whether the aspiration level is causing more dissatisfaction and injuring industrial relations vis-a-vis the benefit of quick adaptation and grasp of the technicalities of industries.

xi. Whether the attitudes and the methods adopted by the trade unions have any relationship with the level of education of the workers eg. whether they favour representation, negotiation, collective bargaining, adjudication or more direct action, vis-a-vis their education standards.

(3) Concerns of other agencies:

1. Wage boards take too long time. So we may enquire the period taken by the various wage boards to come to their conclusions.

ii. Wage boards generally decide wages assuming homogeneity to a great extent of the technical workers but engineers are aware of the justifications of differentials in inside one plant according to the various subdivisions of trades. Thus though there may be initial satisfaction on the overall awards, there are cases of disputes and breaches of peace as regards the differentials for the various grades in one single unit which may very soon adversely affect the industrial relations in one unit.

Qn. 220 SUGGESTIONS FOR IMPROVING THE QUALITY OF LABOUR RESEARCH

Question: What are your suggestions for improving the quality of labour Research?

Reply:

Some suggestions for improving the quality of labour research have already been made or will be made in the replies to the following questions. We use this opportunity to deal with some aspects of the problem which are not covered elsewhere.

I. LEVELS OF LABOUR RESEARCH AND ASSIGNMENT OF ROLES

It will help considerably to clarify the issue if what goes under the name of labour research is properly distinguished according to different levels of abstraction and analysis at which the information is handled.

(1) Collection and Reporting of Data:

This limits itself to the gathering and reporting of first hand or a raw information under different laws, regulations, codes, agreements, and awards, in the field of labour relations. The returns which employers and trade unions have to send to the government authorities under different laws, fall under this category.

The material thus generated, constitutes the primary or raw data on which interpretative analysis is made at higher levels of research. The importance of gathering correct and complete information in a standardised way at this level, for improving the quality of labour research in the country, can be hardly overstressed.

It is unfortunate that in too many publications and reports of the government or the Labour Bureau one meets many '-s and 'N.A.'s under various entries, suggesting that some of the reporting agencies have in fact not sent in their returns or have sent them too late for inclusion into the particular study. If this happens with a relatively large number, the representative character of the statistical data may be seriously impaired.

(2) Fact finding and analysis:

It is only at this second stage that one can speak of labour research in the proper sense of the word. Labour Research implies the gathering and analysis of data to find out the fundamental relationships between certain factors, which are supposed to hold generally and on the basis of which further action may be taken.

The collection and analysis of data through the help of surveys, questionnaires and proformas, through on-the-spot studies and personal interviews, undertaken by official committees or private institutions or researchers in order to investigate certain problems or evaluate the working of certain laws falls within this category.

The Report of the Royal Commission on Labour 1931, the Bonus Commission Report, the Report of the Study Group on Tribal Labour prepared for the National Commission on Labour, are illustrations at hand.

The case studies mentioned under the previous questions would also fall within this category.

(3) Interpretative and theoretical studies:

The difference between this category and the previous one is not water tight. In these studies however, a higher level of abstraction is aimed at, and a wider period in space or time is covered. Researchers, with the data provided by the two previous categories, try to build up certain models or patterns, which can then be compared with industrial relations in other countries.

The book of Kornhauser, Industrial Conflict, and Industrialism and Industrial Man by Kerr, Dunlop, Harbison and Myers, and to a certain extent Strikes in India by V.B. Karnik, fall within this category of labour research.

As regards the assignment of roles to different agencies interested in labour research, the following can be said:

(1) The collection and reporting of data is clearly the responsibility of the central and state governments. It is their duty to see to it that the reporting agencies, whether employers, trade unions or other bodies, send in their returns in time, and in a correct and complete way. In order to ensure this, stricter corrective measures against defaulters may have to be taken than is the case at present.

The Government in turn has to see that the data are properly recorded and processed. This may involve a toning up of the statistical and research wings of the respective labour ministries, especially at the State level.

The role of the central and State governments should be properly dovetailed into one another, and it would seem that though Labour is a concurrent subject according to the Constitution, the States have not played their full role in this matter.

Employers complain that they have to send in too many data, under different Acts. Government has therefore to see to it that all duplication and unnecessary overlapping be avoided in the future.

The reporting of data on the labour situation has to be streamlined, standardised and integrated, as one aspect of the national labour policy (Labour Code) which may be enforced as a result of the recommendations of the National Commission on Labour.

(2) Fact-finding and analysis is a category in which government, employers, unions and other organisations have to play a role jointly, as they have in the past. Much will depend on the calibre of the persons who are appointed on such committees as to the value of the work they produce.

(3) Interpretative and theoretical studies is a category of labour research where researchers have to dispose of much liberty and detachment, and is therefore best left to universities and other training and research organisation. They are better equipped to undertake such a work than those who are a party to industrial relations, including the government.

II. EDUCATIVE ROLE OF LABOUR RESEARCH

(1) One of the characteristics of developing economies is that the value of any research is little appreciated, with the result that research 'does not pay'. Because 'it does not pay' it does not attract the funds which would be necessary to improve its quality and in this manner a vicious circle is established.

In the case of labour research, this circle can only be broken if the educative role of research itself is stressed. Labour research can and should be used as a means to awaken the professional interests of management, labour and other parties, and thus replace traditional ways of approaching industrial society, based on old values, which are out of tune with modern requirements (cfr. casteism and parochialism).

A serious handicap to achieve this educative function of labour research is precisely the atmosphere of secrecy which beclouds the public relations of many firms, trade unions and even government departments in this area. Some of these organisations have apparently 'skeletons in the cupboard' and are not willing to expose themselves to the scrutiny of researchers, afraid that their facade might crumble and that information which they communicate, might be used against them by competitors or Government. While public sector undertakings do not suffer to the same extent from this atmosphere it is rather the distressing slowness and inefficiency of their bureaucratic form of organisation, their over-dependence on administrative rules, or unimaginative leadership that leads to the same result.

Another difficulty which hampers the quality of labour research as a means of education is the lack of rapport between universities and practitioners in the field, about which more details are given in our replies to Qn. 223. The universities have to be exposed to, and cooperate in, the educative role of labour research.

(2) It would appear that the following agencies have a particular role to play in using the findings of labour research as a means of education: (a) employers' organisations such as the Chambers of Commerce, and other professional organisations, (b) workers' organisations, (c) semi-official bodies such as the national and local productivity councils, and (d) government itself (See reply to Qn.221)

III. ROLE OF GOVERNMENT IN IMPROVING LABOUR RESEARCH

If labour research is to be improved, and to be used as a means of education, funds will have to be forthcoming, and the Government will for many years to come, be the main source from where these funds can be expected. Since these funds will be necessarily limited, they have to be used in such a way, as to produce the maximum results, and it is suggested that in this matter a liberal and pragmatic approach be used.

(1) The quality of labour research, at this stage of development, depends more on the quality and drive of creative individuals than on the institutions or agencies within which they work. In order to attract a high calibre of persons to the field of labour research, the emoluments offered will have to be attractive also. This is particularly true with young Indian scholars, who have been trained in foreign universities, and whose talents and skills should be put to best use.

(2) It should be the policy of the Government to offer monetary incentives to whatever person or institution in the field, at whatever level, is achieving genuine and solid results. This will often have to be in form of grants to aid in the publication of material that is of value. In this way promising young scholars will be encouraged to undertake and publish more research material.

(3) Research thrives in an atmosphere where sufficient liberty is given to the persons and institutions engaged in it. Steps have to be taken to ensure the professional integrity of the researchers and the institutions, and therefore one has to beware from over-bureaucratisation in this matter.

(4) Researchers, whether attached to government, universities or other institutions will be better motivated towards improving labour research, if the results and suggestions, emerging from such studies are also implemented to a greater extent than is the case at present.

There is hardly anything more frustrating than to take up a research project, which one knows from beforehand to be of no use !

(5) If the Government is serious about 'selling' the results of good labour research, it has to considerably improve the printing and get-up of its magazines and reports, which till now have been produced in a rather cheap way. In 'selling' the 'package' counts a lot.

(6) Since Hindi and the vernacular languages are fast growing in importance, the results of labour research,

in order to become tools of education, will have to be increasingly produced and published in those languages.

Notes

The following definition of social research can very well be applied to labour research : "We may define social research as a scientific undertaking which, by means of logical and systematised methods, aims to discover new facts or verify old facts, and to analyse their sequences, inter-relationships, casual explanations, and the natural laws which govern them. The primary goal of social research -- immediate or distant - is to understand social life and thereby gain a greater measure of control over it. Stated in other words, social research is a method of studying, analysing, and conceptualising social life in order to extend, correct, or verify knowledge, whether that knowledge aid in the construction of a theory or in the practice of an art". Young, Pauline V, Scientific Social Survey and Research, 1956, Englewood Cliffs, Prentice-Hall Inc., p.44.

Qn.221. PRESENT STATE OF LABOUR RESEARCH UNDERTAKEN BY EMPLOYERS' AND WORKERS' ORGANISATIONS

Question: What is the present state of labour research undertaken by employers' workers' organisations?

Reply:

(1) In view of what has already been mentioned in our reply to Qn.220 about the absence of professional awareness, and the prevailing atmosphere of secrecy which this brings along, it is not surprising to find that the state of data-collection, fact-finding and labour research, amongst employers' and workers' organisations in this region is very poor if not totally inexistent.

The Indian Institute of Personnel Management, Ranchi Branch, has several times proposed to conduct fact-finding and research programme in the region, in order to compare, for instance, wage scales, recruitment and promotion policies and practices, etc. prevailing amongst the different concerns. These proposal have, unfortunately never materialised, because of lack of funds and the absence of enthusiastic response from individual concerns.

(2) The promotion of labour research by those organisations is surely a desirable objective. Though such research will, expectedly be biased in favour of the point of view of the sponsoring organisations, and its finding may be questioned by other parties, such research would be better than the total absence of research, as is the case at present. This defect could be remedied if training and research institutions, especially those which are in close rapport with industry, could be associated in such research.

(3) It is felt that the development of collective bargaining at an industry-cum-region wide basis, would provide a great impetus to the development of fact-finding and labour research on matters falling within the field of bargaining, for it is only in a situation of collective bargaining that

both employers' and workers' organisations will relaise the usefulness of such research. In countries where collec- tive bargaining is well developed, there is hardly any major concern or trade union which does not have its own research wing.

In such a situation, however, there is a danger that both employers and workers organisations will marshall the facts and figures in such a way as to 'prove their point'. But again, such research will be better than the total absence of research and would provide a step toward more unbiased research.

(4) If left unaided, these organisations especially the workers' organisations will not be able to make headway with research. The technical expertise and manpower could therefore be provided by those training and research insti- tutions which are in close contact with industry, such as Xavier Labour Relations Institute at Jamshedpur, and Xavier Institute at Ranchi. Such an association would ensure that the research is not too biased one way or another.

biased

Employers' and workers' organisation will greatly facilitate such research work if they can help in educating their members to maintain their records in a systematic way and to make them available for consultation. The atmosphere of secrecy has to be broken down, and no one is better fitted to do this than the organisations of employers and workers themselves.

(5) Lack of interest and of funds have till now prevented any significant research in this area. This can only be remedied if Government is willing to stimulate such research by providing matching grants. A beginning could be made by organising pilot projects on problems of current interest in which both management and workers organisations and the government have a vital stake. The local producti- vity councils would perhaps provide the best forum for planning such research, and could channel the funds set aside for this purpose.

(6) Employers' and workers' organisations could, with the help of universities and other research and training institutions investigate at the plant or unit level, some of the issues which need investigation, and which have already been mentioned in the replies to QQnn. 217 and 219.

Qn. 222. ENCOURAGING TRADE UNIONS TO STRENGTHEN THEIR RESEARCH ACTIVITIES

Question: How should the trade unions be encouraged to strengthen their research activities?

Reply:

(1) It will help to clarify the issues if a clear distinction be made between research activities carried on by the central trade union organisations and those carried out by the individual unions or groups of related unions.

Although the possibilities of improvement seem to be much brighter in the first case than in the latter, the team which prepared this Note, because of lack of experience, did not feel qualified to make suggestions regarding research by the central organisations, and has limited itself to explore the possibilities of research promotion at the local level.

(2) The possibilities for promoting research by the unions are evidently very closely related with the overall atmosphere, the organisational strength, and the modern or rational approach towards union activities and industrial relations on the part of the leaders of those local unions. Labour research by unions must be seen as part of an effort to tone up the whole performance of the unions, and is closely related to the educational effort which will be part of this drive.

The picture of the trade unions in this region, barring a few exceptions such as the Khalari Cement Workers Union, and the Indian Aluminium Workers' Union at Muri, presents a sorry figures of a movement that is hopelessly scattered amongst competing factions, organised along political and caste lines, and mostly guided by leaders whose sole or primary interest is not the improvement of the workers themselves.

This sorry state of the union movement, is in its turn the result of the overall political situation prevailing in Bihar, and which is sufficiently well known, to need any further comment.

To promote research activities amongst local unions or at the regional level will therefore involve a slow and long-range effort, in which many handicaps and frustrations can be expected.

(3) A first and necessary step on this road, which can be achieved immediately, is the strict enforcement by the State labour department of the provisions of the Trade Unions Act which imposes on the unions, the statutory obligation to submit to the Registrar of Trade Unions, annual returns about their membership, executive committee members and finances.

Unions which do not send in those returns in time and in due form should be mercilessly struck off the register and lose their recognition with management, if they have any. A drastic step of this nature will help to weed out many groups which exist only on paper, or factions within a registered union, which claim to represent the majority of workers in that union.

Such a measure will only be possible if the administration of the department of the Registrar itself is toned up, and provisions are made to check the reliability of the returns submitted by the unions.

This question has to be seen within the larger context of the streamlining of the overall labour administration in the country (proposed Labour Code) and also the question of the recognition of unions, both of which are before the National Commission on Labour, but about which this Note does not deal.

The advantage of this proper collection of returns will be that a body of reliable statistics will be built up, which gives a more faithful/presentation of the actual strength and weaknesses of the labour movement, than is the case at present, and will provide good raw material for analytical studies of the long-range trends in the labour movement.

(4) As mentioned in the reply to the previous question, the promotion of collective bargaining will awaken in the unions the realisation of the necessity of carrying on research activities of their own, if they are to face management at the bargaining table. Some of the more advanced and better organised unions in India, such as the TLA at Ahmedabad and some Dock unions in Bombay and Calcutta, have reached this state of awareness, and are keen to develop their own research wings. None of the unions in this regions have reached stage.

(5) Even when such an awarness dawns on the unions, they will not be able to undertake research activities of any serious value, on their own, unless they receive aid from two sources:

(i- Technical know-how and services, which could be provided by the training and research institutions in this area, of which mention has already been made, and which will be most willing to be of assistance in such research. Such an association will ensure that this research can be closely tied up with training programmes for trade unionists.

ii - Financial assistance, which could come from Government through the central union organisations, or through other channels, such as the Workers Education Programme.

It is suggested that the local productivity councils would perhaps provide the best forum at the local or regional level through which government, central trade union organisations, and training and research institutions could cooperate to initiate such research.

(6) Where the trade unions are prepared and willing to undertake such research and training institutions are able to provide the know-how, pilot projects could be undertaken, covering wherever possible, several unions in one industry in the region, rather than a single union in a single plant. Comparative studies do more easily yield insights in the dynamics of trade unions than do studies undertaken about one union or plant only.

Qn. 223. PROMOTION OF LABOUR RESEARCH IN UNIVERSITIES AND RESEARCH ORGANISATIONS

Question: How should labour research be promoted in universities and research organisations?

Reply:

(1) Universities in India will obviously have to play

an important role in labour research. Unfortunately very few universities are at present in a position to help in this matter for the following reasons:

i - Contrary to the situation prevailing in the developed countries, the universities in India lack rapport with the world of business and labour, with the result that by and large their teaching takes place in an ivory-tower atmosphere, very little related to the problems and needs of the area in which they are situated.

ii - An atmosphere favourable towards applied research is by and large absent. The Labour Department of the Government and employers' and workers' organisations feel that the universities have little to contribute, and the 'practioners' have mostly contempt for the 'theoreticians'. The research that is carried on by the universities is mostly of a theoretical nature, and is initiated without prior consultation with the world of business or labour. A vicious circle is thus established.

The result is that labour research does at present 'not pay', in either the financial or broader meaning of that expression.

iii - Most of the universities are poorly equipped to undertake research. They lack the funds, adequate library facilities, the equipment such as calculating machines and computers to undertake such research, and the most serious handicap of all, there is dearth of lecturers who are mentally and academically equipped to engage themselves into the field of the real labour situation.

iv - Under-graduate teaching is of such a low standard that most of the students are not able to undertake any worth while research, once they are at the post-graduate level.

v - Most of the universities are ruled by tradition and are custombound, or plagued with political squabbles. This makes a quick adaptation to the changing needs and opportunities very difficult, and does not provide a proper atmosphere for potential researchers to do much creative work.

(2) The result of this inability of many universities in India to adapt themselves to the needs of the labour and industrial world, has led to the origin and development of institutions of higher training and research outside the universities. Such is at least the case in the Eastern part of the country. The Indian Institute of Management, Calcutta, the Xavier Labour Relations Institute, Jamshedpur and the Xavier Institute, Ranchi are practically the only institutions. in this part of the country, which keep rapport with the world of industry and business, and are equipped to play a role in the field of labour research, depending on the financial resources on which they can draw, and the quality of the staff they are able to recruit. Their resources should be exploited to the full.

(3) As regards the division of labour in the field of labour research, the universities and research institutions are best equipped to undertake the case studies, to which reference has already been made several times.

more The universities and the other research and training insitutions should also be/closely associated with fact-finding and other studies, undertaken by the central or State government or by employers' and workers' organisations.

They have the following advantages:

i - They offer possibilities for inter-disciplinary research of labour problems, which is so important in view of what was said about the sociological dimensions of labour problems in India (See reply to Qn. 217).

ii - They have the manpower and technical expertise to undertake such research. These have not been sufficiently used till now, to the harm of both the world of industry and the universities themselves. Research will improve the quality of post graduate teaching and prevent it from being unrelated to reality and therefore sterile. It will bring the universities in closer touch with the real world of labour,

iii - Because of the presence of post-graduate students, the universities are well equipped to undertake field research, through fact-finding and on the spot studies. Research work undertaken by the universities under the capable guidance of lecturers, will be less costly than the same research undertaken by teams of experts sent by the central or State government or by research institutions from outside the region.

iv - The promotion of such field research, incidentally, will provide meaningful employment to research workers, who have been trained abroad, and who too often, upon returning to India do not find opportunities to exercise their skills. It will therefore help to prevent the brain drain from drawing promising researchers from the country.

v - The universities and other institutions can function as third parties in the field of labour research, where opinions are strongly inclined one way or another. They will be able to produce more unbiased results than if the employers' or workers' organisations or the government undertake such research single-handed.

(4) The following suggestions are made for promoting labour research in universities and other institutions:

i - It will take time before the average universities in India are able to play a useful role in this field. In the mean time a pragmatic approach should be taken by the government and bodies interested in sponsoring and financing labour research. Those university departments and other institutions which are at present keeping good rapport with industry or labour and have proved their worth by research

in the past, or their potentialities, should be selected for research projects, if necessary, on a pilot or trial basis.

ii - In assigning research projects to be undertaken in a particular region, efforts should be made to associate different institutions in that research work. This will promote local cooperation and mutual stimulation. An illustration of such an approach is the Study Group on Tribal Labour constituted by the National Commission on Labour at Ranchi, in which researchers from the following institutions cooperated: (a) Department of Anthropology, Ranchi University, (b) Tribal Research Institute, (c) Xavier Institute, (d) Tribal Orientation and Study Centre, (e) Administrative Training Centre.

iii - Whenever assignments are given, deadlines should be fixed for submitting the results of the research undertaken, and provisions should be made for the publication of the findings if they are of good standard.

iv - Provisions should be made for the publication of research material by junior researchers, outside the arrangements mentioned under (iii), provided this material be of good standard. In this way new entrants in the labour research field will feel encouraged to undertake further work, and will in the process, become more mature and skilful.

v - The coordination of labour research undertaken by universities and other institutions for workers' or employers' organisations or for Government, could be entrusted to the local productivity councils, wherever these are active and efficient. Universities and other institutions should therefore play an active role in the productivity councils. The advantage of such cooperation would be that labour research is seen in the context of industrial development within a particular region.

Qn. 224. ASSOCIATING RESEARCH PERSONNEL FOR DEEPER ANALYSIS OF DATA AVAILABLE WITH GOVERNMENT

Question: Are the present arrangements for association the research personnel outside Government for a deeper analysis of data available with Central and State Governments adequate? What steps should be taken to strengthen this association? Should co-ordination of research work done by different agencies be achieved?

Reply:

I. ADEQUACY

The team did not feel competent to judge the adequacy of such association at the central government level, and in

judging of the same matter at the State level, it has necessarily taken the local point of view. Even so, our experience in this matter is very limited, and we are aware of this limitation.

(1) It is not known whether actually any arrangements exist for such association with State government, or whether any research personnel have in fact been associated in the past in such a manner. The only known project of this kind, was a request by the State government to the Department of Labour and Social Welfare, Patna University, and the Sri Ram Centre for Industrial Relations, New Delhi to make a study of the trade union history in the State. The results of this study are however, not available. The only other form of association is that when the State Government sends out committees to investigate one or other problem, facilities are provided for lecturers and researchers to appear before such committees.

(2) When the initiative starts out from the training and research institutions themselves, for such matters as consulting documents available with the labour department, the response from government is usually favourable. But it requires extremely long and painstaking efforts before the relevant information can be 'dug out' from government sources. Not infrequently such efforts prove to be totally in vain.

(3) The following reasons seem to account for such failures:

i - Most officers do not seem to put much faith in the efforts of research personnel, upon whom they look down, and because of the gap which exists between academicians on the one hand, and practitioners on the other. (See reply to Qn. 223). They simply are not convinced that the academicians can make any significant contribution to labour research or even that such a deeper analysis is useful at all.

ii - The maintenance and filing of documents and records in the department, leaves much to be desired, with the result that important documents can not be traced. The delay with which letters and requests are replied, would also indicate that the administration of the department needs toning up.

iii - One wonders whether the atmosphere of secrecy, which exists amongst many industrialists, and to which reference has already been made (see reply to Qn. 220) does not to a certain extent also prevail amongst government officers.

The conclusion which emerges then is that the rapport between the government at the State level and the training and research institutions is at present not adequate. As a result of this, a goldmine of facts and data about the labour history and present labour situation of the State, remains unexploited.

II. STEPS TO STRENGTHEN THIS ASSOCIATION

(1) Before suggesting what steps could be taken some

questions must be raised and answered by the government:

- Does the government want such an association at all, in other words does it believe in the usefulness of such association?

- If so, is it ready to take the necessary steps to make this association effective?

It would seem that a fundamental change of outlook is necessary if such an association is to yield fruit. In this, both parties have to play their part. Research and training institutions have to prove that they can produce work which is relevant to an/ of the problems which the government and industry is at present facing.

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The government, on its part, has to be willing to try out such an association and be ready to 'play the game' by giving the research personnel the necessary facilities and freedom to fulfil their task adequately.

(2) The following steps are suggested:

i - A pilot project could be drawn up by Government on an ad hoc basis, and in consultation with training and research insitutions for studying a particular problem that occupies the mind of government.

ii - A researcher or small team of qualified research personnel should be invited to come 'on deputation' and undertake the study. Objectives and guidelines should be agreed upon, and deadlines for completing the project should be fixed.

iii - Facilities for consulting the relevant material should be provided. This will involve the willing cooperation on the part of the office staff of the labour department.

iv - Detailed arrangements will have to be made regarding financing such projects and the use of such services as typists, office-staff, equipment, etc.

v - Research personnel should be assured of the necessary freedom even to be critical of Government, if need be. Otherwise it is not seen how the professional integrity of the researchers and the real usefulness of such projects can be achieved. If this freedom is not there, the purpose of associating research personnel from outside the government ranks will not be achieved, and their work may become a duplication of what the personnel of the government themselves can achieve.

vi - The researchers on their part should pledge the necessary discretion and secrecy, and in this way return the trust that is put in them. Findings should not be published without the previous approval of the Government.

III. COORDINATION OF RESEARCH WORK BY DIFFERENT AGENCIES

(1) A distinction must be made here between the coordination of research work carried out by different agencies on the hand (de facto), and a more comprehensive kind of coordination, i.e. the overall coordination of all research work as part of a national coordinated labour policy (a priori). The former may be considered as a step towards the latter which should be ultimate objective, if deemed desirable by government.

This reply deals first with the former and then with the latter.

(2) Coordination at the state or regional level is surely desirable and necessary for the following reasons :

i - It will ensure that the problems which are of current importance will be investigated, and that labour research becomes a useful tool for government as well as employers and labour to get a better insight in the labour problems in the state or region, under all their aspects.

ii - It will bring all the parties, interested in labour research, closer together, will prevent duplication of efforts, and promote an exchange of views which is useful to all.

iii - It will ensure that the funds set aside for labour research, -- which in India are necessarily very limited -- , are put to promote the industrial development of the state or a particular region.

(3) In coordinating research work, care should be taken of the following points :

i - Regimentation should be avoided, so that research can be carried out in an atmosphere of relative liberty and the professional integrity of researchers and research institutions can be maintained. There should be 'no strings attached' by any sponsoring organisation to funds set aside for research, and no 'party line' to be followed. In this matter only the utmost honesty, truthfulness and openness together with the necessary discretion and secrecy will bring real progress ('Satyam evam Jayate')

ii - Efficiency and the speedy execution of research projects agreed upon, should be aimed at. Overbureaucratisation of such coordination should therefore, be avoided, and the main attention should be focussed on obtaining results. These results should be reviewed, and criticised, and the over-all effectiveness of labour research in helping the labour situation and labour policy should be evaluated.

(4) The following suggestions are made regarding the coordination of research work by different agencies :

i - A state-wide or regional coordinating body should be set up, consisting of representatives of government, employers, trade unions or workers, and universities and training institutions. The initiative for this could be left with the government, but care should be taken lest the government predominate over the coordinating body.

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ii - Once it is created, this body should survey the resources for labour research available in the state or which can be obtained from outside, in the form of research institutions, and personnel, financial aid, libraries, resource material, etc.

The coordinating body should also acquaint itself with the research that has already been done or is currently in progress in the region or State.

The problems needing research should be listed in a hierarchy of priorities.

iii - On the basis of the information so gathered, the necessary coordination between resources, agencies, and problems requiring investigation should be worked out in detail. This could be done in the form of a phased programme covering several years.

iv - Once launched the progress of this programme should be regularly reviewed and evaluated.

(5) It is clear that such programmes may not prove successful without the assistance, in the form of financial aid and expertise, on the part of the central government and research institutions from outside the State, region, or even from abroad. The final responsibility for the success of this programme should, however, lie with the state or the regional coordinating body.

(6) Since the whole purpose of this coordinating body and the way in which it is constituted, approaches very closely the pattern and objectives of the productivity councils, the possibility of entrusting the whole task to the productivity councils, could be explored. This would perhaps avoid the unnecessary creation of parallel organisations, and would ensure that labour research is seen in the context of promoting the productivity and industrial development of the State or region.

(7) If the National Commission feels that a coordinated labour policy is a desirable goal, then it will have to make provisions for the proper collection of data and for labour research, as a tool for determining and continually evaluating the implementation and effectiveness of such a policy. In such a case a more ambitious and thorough coordination than the one mentioned above, is indicated.

The government may have to set up a corps of investigators (part-time worker, consisting of students of labour relations or management or full-timers) to visit the factories and compile vital data, as is being done at the time of taking the census, on topics which have been mentioned already (see reply to Qn.219). Considering the fact that not more than 2 to 3% of the entire workforce in the country is engaged in organised industries, it may not be difficult for the investigators to cover the industrial establishments every quarter or six months for compiling the data.

Compilation of accurate data and the analysis of the same will help the employers, unions and the government to identify various factors responsible for labour discontent, strikes, etc. (see reply to Qn.217), so that appropriate remedial measures can be taken.

The policy evolved by the Government and by tripartite bodies can also be reviewed in perspective.

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SUMMARY OF SUGGESTIONS

(1) A three-tyre system of consumer price index numbers consisting of (a) All-India Average Index, (b) regional indices, and (c) Centre-wise indices, should be introduced.

The first step in the compilation of index numbers should be the construction of one central series of consumer price indices for selected industrial centres on the base 1960=100 . The uneven distribution of centres can be rectified by including a few more centres from the old Central or State Series, which are out-dated now. This can be done by conducting fresh family budget enquiries for such old centres, along with the Second Family Budget Enquiry.

The second step, should be the construction of regional indices. This can be done either by calculating weighted averages from the centres - indices or by starting a new regional series on the basis of fresh regional family budget enquiries. In the former case weights can be assigned in the same manner as is being done now in the case of All-India Average Index, with a provision for the revision of weights at short intervals according to changes in the pattern of employment. If both procedures are followed (i.e. weighted average and fresh series) then there can be two different regional index series calculated according to two different methods and one can maintain a check on the reliability of the other.

The third step in the compilation of index numbers should be the construction of an All-India weighted Average Index Number. This can be a weighted average of the individual centre-indices (as is being done now), or a weighted average of the regional indices. Weights can be assigned in the same manner as is done at present with a provision for revision of weights at short intervals. If both procedures are followed then one can maintain a check on the reliability of the other. (Qn.214)

(2) While work-stoppages are the overt manifestation of industrial unrest, **collective or individual action** resulting in absenteeism, labour turnover, sabotage, go-slow, work-to-rule tactics, and grievances are its covert manifestations. In our nascent industrial society it is essential that an account should also be taken of these covert manifestations of industrial unrest.

The present data collected on strikes, are too bare. A more detailed and comprehensive analysis of the various factors at work in an industrially explosive situation has to be made. Depth studies of major strikes must therefore, be conducted.

It is only through the case study method that an insight can be gained into the roles of the different interests involved. Such an insight will be helpful in formulating future policies. (Qn.215)

(3) Industrial relations do not take place in a vacuum. Trends and events in society at large considerably affect the employer - employee relationship. Disruption of industrial life can often be traced to events and actions outside this restricted sphere.

Bandhs, hartals and satyagrahas, launched for political purposes, have caused as much disruption of industrial peace as have strikes and lock-outs.

Therefore, data should be collected on the extent to which, and the virulence with which, outside influences and movements disrupt industrial peace (Qn.216)

(4) The industrial worker is not merely an 'economic' but also a 'social and psychological' man. In order to understand worker behaviour fully an entire network of influences must be therefore, be studied and analysed.

One can, for instance, never fully explain certain events in the trade union movement, in this part of the country, unless an account is taken of the influence of caste and other traditional loyalties.

Sociological factors such as the degree of commitment, and the prevailing political and civic atmosphere, do also deeply affect the workers' behaviour.

In order to fully understand the situation, data on these sociological and other aspects, which influence workers, should be collected. (Qn.217)

(5) While answering this question it is necessary to maintain a distinction between the terms like 'rural population', 'rural labour' and 'agricultural labour'. It is feasible to cover statistics relating to 'rural population', 'rural labour' and 'agricultural labour', in every aspect, for every region and states separately, through an integrated well planned National Sample Survey like the 18th round. This can be done by selecting well designed samples and suitable schedules in consultation with the statistical experts from N.S.S., G.S.O. and the Labour Bureau etc.

The following other statistics would be required for framing an operational programme : self employment, part-time employment, seasonal unemployment, under-employment, family and house hold, casual and regular labour, women and child labour, occupation, industry, mobility, land utilization, crop pattern, land holdings, agricultural production and price trends, problems of rural industries and occupations other than agriculture, wage structure, mode of payment, non-payment, minimum wages, earning members, sources of income, size of income, cost and levels of living, savings and indebtedness, impact of land reforms, legislations and development programmes, registration with employment exchanges etc. (Qn.218)

(6) To make labour research a more effective tool in policy making,

(i) the gathering of comprehensive and reliable statistics on economic, social, demographic and other aspects of labour in a methodical and standardised way is necessary and should become a part of a purposeful over-all integrated national labour policy.

(ii) the real impact of labour legislation at the local and regional level should be evaluated not merely by official bodies and committees but by making more use of independent institutions and third parties, which can obtain a more detached and objective view of the matter.

(iii) this kind of research should aim at gathering first-hand information of the actual conditions at the local and factory level, on such matters as management practices, the performance of the trade

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unions, and the performance of the government machinery itself. (Qn.219)

(7) In order to improve the quality of labour research,

(i) the three levels of abstraction at which analysis has to take place, have to be clearly distinguished and assigned to the agencies best suited for each of these roles :

a - the collection and systematic recording of primary statistics is the responsibility of the Government. This function should be streamlined, standardised and integrated as part of an All-India labour policy, in which the roles of the Central and State Governments should be properly dove-tailed into one another,

b- fact-findings, surveys and analysis of particular problems on an ad-hoc basis, should remain the responsibility of committees, consisting of government, management and labour representatives and of independent researchers of a high calibre,

c - interpretative and theoretical studies should be left to independent researchers and research organisation.

(ii) Labour research should be used more effectively as a tool of education of those engaged in industry, i.e. management, labour and government and to promote the growth of a professional and rational outlook on the problems and thus break down resistance against objective and truthful evaluation of the problems.

(iii) the Government has to see that the scarce financial resources, available for labour research, be used in the most productive way by taking a pragmatic approach, by exploiting to the full the resources in terms of man, research institutions, etc. and by rewarding genuine work, by whosoever it be performed.

(iv) the labour publications and reports, published by Government, should be improved in their get-up, and be increasingly produced in Hindi and the vernacular languages. (Qn. 220)

(8) Managers' and workers' organisations and trade unions, should be encouraged to undertake labour research, preferably of a comparative nature, at the local and regional level, This will help to promote the growth of a more professional outlook, and break down the atmosphere of secrecy, now prevailing.

The fostering of collective bargaining will stimulate managers and workers to undertake their own research as a means to face one another at the bargaining table.

The association of independent research and training institutions in such research will ensure its objectivity.

Government should encourage such efforts by providing matching grants (Qn. 221 , 222)

(9) Universities and research organisations have an important role to play as stimulators of such research at the local and regional level, they should therefore, keep more rapport with the world of labour and industry and undertake applied research of problems that are of relevant interest.

Research and teaching should be better integrated, especially at the post-graduate level.

The Government should help in the research by providing the necessary grants, especially for the publication of material that is of good standard. (Qn.223)

(10) The State Governments should invite researchers to undertake projects on problems that are of current interest. This will ensure that the material available with Government is used as a means to come to a better understanding of the dynamics of the State's labour history and its bearing on the present situation.

Researchers should be assured of the necessary freedom, even to be critical, if need be, and should be given all the necessary facilities such as access to source and documents, (Qn.224)

(11) The possibility of entrusting to the productivity councils at the local, regional and State level, the stimulation, coordination and financing of labour research, undertaken in a non-official capacity should be explored.

This work should be in turn coordinated at the higher level, in view of eventually integrating all labour research as part of an all-India labour policy.

Coordination should however, not mean regimentation and should be saved from red-tapism. (QQn. 221, 223, 224)

(12) More intensive use should be made of case studies in labour research, than has been the case till now, especially of such problems as post-mortems of important strikes, the analysis of the impact of labour laws on certain industries or parts of the work force, studies of certain sections of the labour force with special problems, such as tribals, displaced persons, etc.

This method has the advantage of permitting a deeper, interdisciplinary and qualitative understanding of the variety of social, economic, cultural and other factors which in India play such an important role in determining workers' behaviour. Such an insight can not be gained through the usual statistical methods.

Universities and research institutions are best suited to undertake such case studies, provided they have the co-operation of the other parties involved, i.e. management, labour and the government. (QQNN. 215, 216, 219, 220)

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