

HOUSEHOLDS

Since the main text in my Graduation Exercise is on the study of Occupation by Dialect groups, in this chapter on Household I will just make a study on "Types of households". It is useful to ascertain what types of households are prevalent in the area. We wish to find out if a farmer stays with his parents or relatives or whether the couple lives by itself. This is relevant in so far as it indicates the extent of family labour involved in the cultivation of padi. From the following analysis, it will be seen that padi cultivation in this area is mainly a family affair i.e. almost every member of the family who is able, lends a hand in the cultivation of the padi crop. Consequently, very few farmers spend any money in the hiring of labourers to work their padi lots. Perhaps it would be necessary to stress at this point that most of the farmers in this area own a three acre piece of land. Thus in many instances, a family of seven or eight can provide enough labour to cultivate the piece of land so that the necessity for the employment of hired labour does not arise.

Households are classified into nine different types. This classification is based on the relationship of each member in the same household to the head of the household. The head of the household is the bread-winner either male or female. Income earning capacity or seniority in age may be the determinants for the definition of head of the household. Below is a description, briefly of the nine types of households.

- 1) Couple with children. This is the typical household usually found in a family. It consists of no "outsider" but strictly of man, wife and children, the children can be natural or adopted children. The analysis later on will show that the typical household is the most important, numerically.

* The term household, is used to define a number of persons living and eating together. If they live together in the same house, but do not share a common household budget, they are considered separate households. Thus in a house, there may be one or several households.

- 2) Couple or man and wives.
- 3) Couple with parent(s) and with/without children. The parents here refer to parent(s) of either wife or husband.
- 4) Couple with miscellaneous relatives.
- 5) Widow/widower and children.
- 6) A single person household, with his or her own domestic arrangements.
- 7) The non-resident head. This type of household represents those households whose heads do not stay at home.
- 8) Kongsu. This is an arrangement made by a group of unrelated persons of the same sex, staying and living together and sharing a common house-keeping arrangement. They could be males or all females. This type of household is however not found in Sekinchan.
- 9) Others. This is a residual category. One common example is either a widow or widower living with children and relatives.

From Table 3.1 it will be seen that the dominant household type in the padi area of Sekinchan is the family type of households. They form a total of 443 households out of 870. Next in order of magnitude is the couple with miscellaneous relatives. Here there are 151 households. Among the Chinese, it is quite usual for relatives like uncles and cousins who are unemployed to live with their relatives. While this is in a certain way beneficial, we find that serious disadvantages also arise. This is due to the fact that the amount of land that the farmer has is more or less fixed and addition to the number of his household, would bring upon the additional difficulty of more mouths to feed. Labour becomes excessive in relation to the amount of land with the result that "the law of diminishing returns" operates. As a matter of fact, the problem in Sekinchan is not one of labour but rather of scarcity of land. Many farmers have complained that the 3 acre piece of land which they own does not produce enough for them to support their dependents. One must not forget the fact that padi is harvested only once a year and the income obtained from the padi harvest for a given year, will be largely responsible for the farmer's subsistence for the same year. Hence if the amount of acreage could be increased, a certain measure of improvement in the economic condition of the farmers can be brought about.

The Table shows that there are 61 single person household which represents about 7% of the total number of households. One probable reason could be that their wives have died and the children have moved away.

TABLE 3.1

DISTRIBUTION OF HOUSEHOLDS BY TYPES

	Types of Household	Households	
		Number	Percentage
Familial Type	1) Couple with children	443	50.95
	2) Couple	22	2.53
	3) Couple with parent(s) & with/without children	34	3.92
	4) Couple with miscellaneous relatives	151	17.37
	5) Widow/widower & children	88	10.12
	6) Single person	61	7.02
	7) Non-resident head	5	0.58
	8) Others	66	7.59
	Total	870	100.00

As our survey was conducted during the off-season one may think that another probable reason could be due to the rest of the family moving elsewhere in search of seasonal occupation like rubber-tapping and other odd-jobs instead of planting off-season crop. But this is not likely for if we refer to Tables 4.1 and 4.2 in the following chapter we see that the percentage of odd-jobber is significant only 1.27%.

The fact that only five households has non-resident head indicate that most of the heads of households do not go elsewhere for odd jobs to supplement the income of the farm. This probable is due to the dislike of being away from the family. So long as they can manage to keep the pot boiling they rather not go away from their family.

The second category i.e. couple without children form the second lowest percentage only 2.53%. This shows the fertility rate of the population in Sekinchan is high. This speculation is backed by the predominance of the couple with children category. Such

being the case it is probable that juvenile delinquency could be a social problem in future unless they are being absorbed in the farms or provided with an education that is high enough for them to look for more lucrative occupation elsewhere.

To sum up we see that the familial type of household is particularly outstanding constituting about 75% of the total households. It seems that most couples have to stay not only with their parents but also with miscellaneous relatives. This is a common feature among the Chinese community because the Chinese prefer large family which to them represent signs of prosperity.

Regarding the distribution of households by dialect groups, it can be seen from Table 3.2 that the Hokkien have the highest percentage (31.98%). This is no surprise since the Hokkien form the major dialect group. The Cantonese households naturally come next in number, as they are second to the Hokkiens in terms of population. The total number of households of all the other groups are all approximately proportional to their population size.

TABLE 3.2

DISTRIBUTION OF HOUSES AND HOUSEHOLD BY DIALECT GROUPS

Dialect Groups	Total		Percentage	
	No. of Houses	No. of Household	No. of Houses	No. of Household
Hokkien	249	260	31.13	31.98
Cantonese	230	235	28.75	28.91
Hakka	148	150	18.42	18.45
Kwangsai	59	59	7.38	7.26
Teochew	79	79	9.88	9.72
Hainese	29	29	3.63	3.57
Foochow	2	2	0.25	0.25
Hengwah	1	2	0.13	0.25
Others	3	5	0.38	0.62
Total	800	816	100.00	100.00

Comparing houses with households, it can be seen that only the Hokkiens show a striking outnumbering of households as compared to the number of houses. There are 260 Hokkien households compared with 249 houses. This is again due to their large numbers. The fact that most of the houses have only one household, does not necessarily mean that only single families, in the sense of man, wife and children live in them. There may be several related families living together, but as they all probably work on commonly owned land, find it convenient to share a common household budget. Thus is more likely to be true in a rural area, because unlike urban areas, relatives need not usually have to be completely useless dependents. They could always help in one way or another in the padi cultivation, whereas a clerk could not possibly bring two or three of his relatives to help him in the office. Another reason that is attributable to most houses having only one household is probably that most of the families are so large that they have no room for tenants.

Table 3.3 illustrates the distribution of household types by dialect groups. It can be seen that, the typical household - man, wife and children has a high proportion among all the dialect groups. The Poochow have 100% but it must be pointed out that there are only two Poochow families. The Hakka have the lowest percentage of this type of household (42.69%). Coming to the category of couple with miscellaneous relative which constitutes the second most significant class (17.37%) we find that the Poochow has the highest percentage (25.40%) followed by the Hokkien with (23.1%) the Hinanese has the lowest percentage (6.9%). Many of the farmer's relative live with him because they are unemployed and because of this fact they lend a hand in the cultivation of the padi crop. This I believe, only serves to aggravate the under-employment and dependency problem. Assuming that the farmer's family can provide sufficient labour to run the farm and assuming that resources are fixed, additional application of labour will not increase output considerably. This again leads to the observation that land and capital resources should be increased in order that the labour potentialities may be tapped to the fullest extent.

The fact that familial type of household form the highest percentage in all dialect groups indicate that the labour used in farming process is derived mainly from family sources. Even children at the age often so lend a hand in the farm.

In Sekinchan therefore, farming is essentially a family affair with every member of the family lending a hand. Normally a farmer can find sufficient labour from his family to work his three acre piece of land, so that the necessity of employing padi labourers does not arise in most cases.

* But it has the second highest percentage (62.1%) under the couple with children category.

DISTRIBUTION OF HOUSEHOLDS

Types of Households	Number								
	Wk.	Cont.	Wk.	Yeo.	Even.	Main.	Foo.	Meng.	Other
	Couple with children	131	120	64	48	28	18	2	1
Couple	-	8	6	2	3	1	-	-	-
Couple with parents & with/without children	14	7	3	4	1	2	-	-	-
Couple with Miscellaneous Relatives	60	27	21	20	12	2	-	-	-
Widows or Widowers with children	21	30	20	5	1	3	-	1	1
Single Person	10	22	13	2	12	1	-	-	-
Non-Resident Head Household	1	2	-	-	-	1	-	-	-
Others	23	13	17	6	2	1	-	-	1
Total	260	235	150	79	59	20	2	2	5

¹The term mixed household is introduced to study the degree of intermarriages and integration among the races in order that household to be classified as a "Mixed Household".

TABLE 3.3

DISTRIBUTION OF HOUSEHOLD TYPES BY

Number					
Kuan.	Hain.	Foo.	Heng.	Others	No.
28	18	2	1	3	30
3	1	-	-	-	2
1	2	-	-	-	3
12	2	-	-	-	9
1	3	-	1	1	-
12	1	-	-	-	1
-	1	-	-	-	1
2	1	-	-	1	3
59	29	2	2	5	49

Intermarriages and integration among the different

TABLE 3.3

DISTRIBUTION OF HOUSEHOLD TYPES BY DIALECT GROUPS

Dialect Groups						
Foo.	Heng.	Others	No.	Total	No.	Conf.
2	1	3	30	443	50.44	57.00
-	-	-	2	22	-	3.41
-	-	-	3	34	5.39	2.98
-	-	-	9	151	23.10	11.50
-	1	1	-	88	8.09	12.78
-	-	-	1	61	3.85	9.37
-	-	-	1	5	0.39	0.85
-	-	1	3	66	8.00	5.54
2	2	5	49	870	100.00	100.00

and integration among the different dialect groups. To cite an ex

TYPES BY DIALECT GROUPS

Dialect Groups													
		Percentage											
Nx. 1	Total	Nak.	Cent.	Nak.	Teo.	Kuan.	Hain.	Foo.	Hong.	Others	Nx. 1	Total	
39	443	58.44	37.68	42.69	50.89	47.46	62.10	100.00	50.0	60.0	61.20	80.95	
2	22	-	3.41	4.00	2.54	5.85	3.45	-	-	-	4.08	2.53	
3	34	5.39	2.98	2.90	5.88	1.70	6.30	-	-	-	6.12	3.92	
9	151	23.10	11.50	14.01	25.40	20.34	6.98	-	-	-	18.36	17.37	
-	88	8.89	12.78	17.34	6.35	1.70	10.35	-	50.0	20.0	-	18.12	
1	61	3.85	9.37	8.67	2.54	20.34	3.45	-	-	-	6.12	7.02	
1	5	0.39	0.85	-	-	-	3.45	-	-	-	2.04	0.58	
3	68	8.80	5.54	11.34	7.62	3.39	3.45	-	-	20.0	2.04	7.59	
49	878	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	

... dialect groups. To cite an example, a Nakka girl married to a man coming from a Hokkien household will