

INTRODUCTION

This is an analysis based on the data collected during the Sekinchan Survey, undertaken by the Department of Economics, University of Malaya, from 6th May to 19th May, 1963. The survey was made mainly to study the socio-economic aspects of the padi farmers in the Sekinchan area; and, partly designed to give the Final year Economics students some practical experience in fieldwork upon which a Graduation Exercise has to be submitted in part fulfilment for the degree of B.A. (Hons.) in Economics.

Area of Survey:

The survey was actually concentrated on two areas, namely, one in Sawah Sempadan, an exclusively Malay area; and the other, in Sekinchan, an entirely Chinese Settlement. Therefore, for practical purposes and convenience, the survey of the former area was undertaken by the Malay students whilst the latter by Chinese students. This report concerns the padi farmers in the Sekinchan area.

A map of Sekinchan Village and the sites where the houses of the padi farmers were situated were supplied. Also provided was a block map of padi areas. Sketches of these maps are produced in Maps 1-4 in Appendix I(a), (b), (c), & (d).

For practical convenience, the survey was carried on the basis of the divisions as given in the map supplied. The whole area to be surveyed was divided into 3 sites which are as follows: Site A, Site B and Site C. For the purposes of analysis, we shall refer to these Sites being surveyed as named above.

Classification of Dialect Groups

The houses in each site were classified and divided into the various different dialect groups represented. For this report, there are only four main dialect groups, namely, Hokkien, Hakka, Cantonese and Teochew. Any residual dialect groups were lumped together under a different heading of "Others."¹ But for the analysis of Households, another group designated as "Mixed" was added to the original five.² A Hokkien household was defined as one in which all the occupants of the household were Hokkien. The other groups were so similarly defined as such. For the group termed "Others", dialects apart from the four main ones such as Kongsi or Henghwa were found. In the case of a household where there are occupants who belong to two or more dialect groups, the household was designated as "Mixed"

1. For a greater detail of this group, refer to Supplementary Table 1 in Appendix II(a) which shows a breakdown of the dialects found in the group.

2. A more precise definition of the term "Mixed Household" is given on page sixteen.

Household" to denote dialect-integration among the population. The last two named groups are not very important as there were very few cases only.

Difficulties

Though the majority of the few interviewed were very helpful and co-operative, there were a few cases where the occupants of the house refused to volunteer information. Revisits (either by the same team or different teams of field investigators) and persistent persuasion were tried to effect co-operation and establish contact. In the last resort, help was solicited from various influential people like the dialect headmen and Village Council Officers.

Questionnaire and Letter of Introduction

The information was obtained by means of a questionnaire which is reproduced in Appendix III. One questionnaire was used for each household.³ In cases where the farmers were literate, a letter of introduction explaining the purpose of the interviews were supplied. This letter of introduction in Chinese characters is reproduced in Appendix IV.

Scope of Analysis

Owing to the amount of time taken to process and tabulate the data collected, it is not possible for each student to do a complete and comprehensive analysis on the data of all the houses in the three Sites. Hence, each student has been allocated a certain number of houses in two of the three Sites, and the analysis to be confined to those houses and Sites allocated. The Sites concerned in this particular analysis are Site B and Site C. The houses allocated have been marked in different colours to denote different dialect groups in Maps 1 and 2.⁴

Due to the fact that each student is allocated only a certain number of houses in only two of the three Sites and that these houses are hardly drawn at random, there will be a considerable amount of bias in this analysis. Only 92 houses out of a total of some 1,034 houses are allocated for this analysis. Therefore, in order to have a more accurate perspective of the community as a whole, this bias must always be borne in mind by the reader. Any conclusions that are drawn may or may not be true for the community as a whole or even for the particular site but are inferred for the particular sections of the Sites allocated.

3. For the definition of "Household", see page 15.

4. See Maps 1 and 2, Appendix I(a) & (b) on pages 42 & 43.