

INTRODUCTION

This Graduation Exercise is devoted to the analysis of farm life in Blocks A, B and C of Sawah Sempadan, the Malay rice-growing area of Tanjong Karang.

There are four parts to this analysis. Part 1 deals with the population, bringing out its characteristics and distribution. Part 2 deals with the distribution of households and the size of families based on various household types. Part 3 brings out the occupational pattern and characteristics. Finally Part 4 analyses land ownership and operation.

This report should be regarded as a counterpart of an earlier report based on the survey which was first carried out in 1962. The 1963 survey is an extension of the former. Both surveys were carried out by students of the Economics Department. The survey has a twofold objective. The present survey is a preparatory census which embodies details on basic economic characteristics of padi farming in this area. It will provide background information which will help in designing an optimum sample for the Five Year Farm Survey. It is also designed to provide field training to students of economics in collecting, compiling, analysing and presenting field data.

The survey will be carried out for a consecutive five-year period so as to enable the Economics Department to perceive problems posed by changes in population, land ownership and operation and yield of padi, and thereby to suggest remedies or improvements for the benefit of padi farmers.

Sawah Sempadan was chosen for two main reasons. Firstly, it is the latest area to be brought under padi cultivation, "one of the youngest area", reclaimed from virgin swamp and reserved only for the Malays. Secondly, its

¹See R. Mamajiwalla - "Projects in Progress in the Department of Economics, University of Malaya" - EKONOMI, Vol. III, No. 1, December 1962, page 100.

²From a briefing by Prof. Ungku Aziz at Kuala Selangor.

nearness to the Econs. Dept., headquarters of the survey, made it conducive for a field trip. It has been suggested that other areas be chosen when the Tanjong Karang project is completed.

The Sawah Sempadan padi area covers 6,100 acres of flat land, divided into 23 blocks with an almost equal distribution of lots of 3 acres each. However, these blocks are not of even fertility. The fertile lands are those situated in the centre of Sawah Sempadan, while the outlying blocks are less fertile due to nearness to swamps especially in the northern region. The blocks are separated from one another by drainage and irrigation canals. The water is drawn from and emptied into a stream at the northern boundary of the area. There are three drainage gates at the northern boundary and two at the south.

Each student was assigned a minimum of 3 blocks for analysis. I was assigned Blocks A, B and C at the northern side of the area nearest the swamps.

Tables have been appropriately drawn up for the various topics under discussion. The figures for various items needed have been calculated from master-tables drawn up from questionnaires of the survey. Information collected consists of details on such matters as nature of ownership of farms, size of farms, occupational pattern, age distribution and household composition. Also collected in the questionnaires are cropping pattern over selected agricultural areas, intensity of off-season farming, extent and nature of mixed farming etc. But for our analysis only the first half is considered since the second have been analysed in great detail by 1962 Students.

Averages calculated in the tables is the arithmetic mean. Percentages in most instances except when noted otherwise, are calculated down the columns according to the respective totals of that column. The total percentages of each column have been conveniently rounded to 100%.