

## CHAPTER IV

### OCCUPATION

Occupation is defined as the kind of work or nature of duties on which the person enumerated has spent most time.<sup>1</sup> Such persons are classified as economically active. The rest would therefore constitute the economically inactive, that is those who are unemployed.

Six types of occupations are listed in this analysis, viz:

1. Farmers and farm helpers (denoted by the word "Farmer") are all persons who are gainfully employed, including part-time farmers and farm workers. These are self-employed people, though in actual fact most of them do earn wages by selling their labour to other farmers who require it during the planting and harvesting seasons.
2. Housewives are those females normally engaged in household activities in their own houses. It does not include paid domestic servants.
3. Students include all persons who are not in employment and who attend a public or private school, regardless of level or type, or who study privately.<sup>2</sup>
4. Odd-jobs are those persons employed in odd jobs, where there is no specific employment but in many varieties of work.
5. Others include a teacher, barber, fishermen, labourers and rubber-tappers which form only a minority of the total economically active population.
6. Unemployed: those not gainfully employed in any of the above occupations, for example children below school going age, and aged persons. In this content I have purposely classified students as unemployed and therefore economically inactive. A better definition of unemployed would be persons who are not working and not actively looking for work, so that it will include children below school going age.

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<sup>1</sup> See Census of Population, Federation of Malaya, 1957, Department of Statistics. Report No. 14.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

I have classified those who are employed between the ages of 15-64 as economically active, and the rest economically inactive. The economically active forms 52% of the total population (or 504 persons). The remaining 48% are dependents of these economically active.<sup>3</sup>

## 2. Occupation & Distribution

With reference to TABLE 13 and 14, the main occupation is padi farming and farmers and farm helpers account for 531 persons<sup>4</sup> gainfully employed. Block A has only 120 farmers since the area is smaller and some farmers who cultivate the land do not stay there. Block C has the largest number of farmers - 212 while another 199 farmers are found in Block B. Of the total 531 farmers, 262 are Malays, 191 Javanese and 78 Banjarese. Malay farmers constitute 49.07% of total Malay population; while Javanese and Banjarese 52.92% and 55.31% of their respective totals.

The figure for housewives is extraordinarily small. This is due to the fact that when asked what their occupations were the womenfolk would say they are padi farmers. Therefore they have been included under farmer or farm helper while in actual fact they are only part-time farmers, the rest of the time being devoted to housework. This is especially so in cases where they have young children to take care of. In some cases those who consider themselves "housewife" do not work in fields at all, whilst "padi farmer" do both. There is a total of 13 housewives, 12 Malays, 1 Javanese and 2 Banjarese. Their ages range from 15 years and above, since it is not uncommon for females to marry at an early age in the rural areas.

Students account for 119 persons or approximately 29.5% of total population. Unemployed persons constitute 246 persons or 30% of total population. Therefore there is a total of 465 persons who are economically inactive. Malays have the greatest number of students (119) and unemployed (131). The Javanese have 60 students and Banjarese only 20. 73 Javanese

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<sup>3</sup>According to Silcock - "Economic Potential of Malaya" - Readings in Malayan Economics, page 95, persons below the age of twenty should be considered as dependents. But since in this padi area even those below twenty years of age do help in farming activities, as well as those above sixty four years of age, I have classified dependents as those below 16 and above 64 yr.

<sup>4</sup>This figure is derived by adding all those classified under farmer and farm helpers, i.e. including those who are economically inactive. The actual figure would therefore be slightly lower.

TABLE 13  
OCCUPATION BY TYPES AND BY BLOCKS

Types of Occupation	Block A	Block B	Block C	Total
Farmers	120	199	212	531
Housewives	4	12	2	18
Students	45	73	101	219
Odd-jobs	1	2	4	7
Others	1	14	9	24
Unemployed	45	115	86	246

<sup>a</sup>See discussion on page 22.

are unemployed. So also are 37 Banjarese. These figures take into account children below school going age as has been explained previously. They therefore do not act as a problem towards unemployment. Malays have the largest proportion of its total population occupied under "Others".

Those employed under "Others" are either wage earners or self-employed. Wage earners include labourers, while self-employed include barbers, shop-keepers and fishermen. However, these people are not part-time farmers, i.e. they are employed full-time in their various occupations. This fact is derived from the completed questionnaires under "Occupation". This holds true for all except in one case, that of a midwife. By the nature of her occupation, she does not work full-time.

TABLE 15 shows the distribution of occupation by sex, age and ethnic groups. It shows 56 farm helpers in the 5-14 years age group. These are merely helpers and do not work full-time and would be more appropriately classified as economically inactive.<sup>5</sup> They have left school and since there are no other opportunities open to them they help their families in the farming activities.

<sup>5</sup>See page 23.

TABLE 14

## OCCUPATION BY ETHNIC GROUPS

Types of Occupation	Ethnic Group					
	Malays		Javanese		Banjarese	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Farmers	262	48.07	191	52.92	78	55.31
Housewives	12	2.19	4	1.11	2	1.41
Students	119	21.83	80	22.26	20	14.18
Odd-jobs	4	0.73	3	0.83	0	0.00
Others	17	3.11	3	0.83	4	2.82
Unemployed	131	24.03	78	21.72	37	26.24

In this 10-19 age group are two odd-jobbers, and 1 classified under "Others". Some of the youngsters have to help in the farming activities due to lack of labour especially when they do not have big brothers or sisters, or when one of their parents have passed away. It should be noted that padi farming is based on family labour in most instances. In the older age group, i.e. 60 years and over, these people perform the same type of operation that is helping the younger farmers. Surprisingly, however, they sometimes work full time.<sup>6</sup> There are 32 such farmers, of whom 4 are females.

Students are only found within the 5-19 age group, 5 being the minimum for school-going age. There are 219 students, 123 males and 96 females. The students concentrate the 5-14 ages group while the 15-19 age group has only 14 students. This is due to the fact that there are no schools in this area which accommodates students above that age. Students can only reach standard six in a Malay school, and if they fail to gain admission into secondary schools or one of the Sekolahs Lanjutan Kampong, they have to leave. These students present a potential labour force in another ten years or so, and also constitute the present problem of dependency.

<sup>6</sup>See Conclusion

TABLE 15

OCCUPATION GROUPS BY AGE AND SEX

Age	Occupation Groups													
	Farmer		Housewives		Students		Odd-Jobs		Others		Unemployed		Total	
	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F
0-4	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	77	77	77	77
5-9	5	7	61	50	-	-	-	-	-	-	30	40	96	97
10-14	12	32	50	44	2	0	1	0	1	0	6	6	71	82
15-19	50	56	12	2	1	0	6	0	2	0	2	0	71	62
20-24	31	30	-	-	1	0	4	0	-	-	-	-	36	33
25-29	14	34	-	-	-	-	4	1	4	1	-	-	18	36
30-34	24	27	-	-	1	0	2	0	-	-	-	-	27	28
35-39	14	30	-	-	-	-	2	0	2	0	-	-	16	31
40-44	24	16	-	-	2	0	0	1	0	1	-	-	26	19
45-49	21	16	-	-	-	-	2	1	2	1	-	-	23	18
50-54	25	12	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	25	15
55-59	14	4	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	0	15	4
60-64	14	3	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	2	15	6
65 & Over	14	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	3	15	5
Total	262	268	123	96	7	0	21	3	128	128	128	128	531	514

154 children of age below four years are classified as unemployed while another 84 are between 5-19 age group bringing a total of 238, (115 males and 123 females). The 84 persons are those who have left school but are not actually gainfully employed, though in real life they would be helping in farming and in housework. The number here includes those between 5-19 years. It is not necessary that all children above 5 years attend school though for them schooling is compulsory. Some of them have only a year or two of school life. In the old age group (55 years and over) only 8 people are unemployed, due to physical weaknesses and in one case due to blindness.