

CHAPTER IV

OCCUPATION

1. Concepts and Definitions:

Many research workers in the field of economic activity have pointed out the difficulties of defining a person's economic activity. G.W. Barclay(1) has pointed out that it is not easy to set a scheme for determining which people are "economically active" and which people are not. This implies a standard for judging what activities constitute "productive work", and some consistent criteria to judge what degree of performance sufficient to class a person as "economically active". It is probably true that most people fall clearly into one category or the other. But there are many who do not fit easily into either.

The method used in this survey to determine a person's "economic activity" is to ask each person what is his usual occupation(2), or "gainful work". According to this approach, therefore, the economically active are simply those who report some usual occupation in the periods of the survey.

In this survey of this particular community it would be adequate to distinguish nine occupational types based on the reports of the persons interviewed:-

A. ECONOMICALLY ACTIVE GROUP:

1. Farmers:

Persons whose greater part of the time is customarily spent in the cultivation of padi and other farming activities.

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- (1) G.W. Barclay, "Techniques of Pop. Analysis". - New York (1958).
 - (2) One of the main difficulties in defining a person's economic activity is the fact that many persons are engaged in more than one activity. The criterion for classifying persons into occupational types is "What is the person's customary occupation", which implies in which activity most of his time is primarily occupied.

2. Housewives

Those women whose greater part of the time is spent in household duties. Housewives are classified as economically active persons(1).

3. Odd-jobs workers and part-time farmers

Those persons whose time the greater part of which is spent doing miscellaneous works as well as farming activities.

4. Farm helpers:

Those persons who provide the farmer with labour for farm works during planting and harvesting seasons. They may be paid farm hands or unpaid family helpers such as children and relatives.

5. Non-farmers:

That category of persons whose occupations are not in any way associated with farming activities. They may be teachers, shopkeepers, carpenters, midwives, etc.

B. ECONOMICALLY INACTIVE GROUPS

6. Students:

School-going children and other persons who attend any other educational institutions.

7. Minors:

Children of 6 years of age and below.

8. Dependents:

Those persons who are economically dependent on others. This group includes old persons, invalids, the sick and children not included in the group "minors".

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- (1) In the conventional occupational classification, household duties are not regarded as economically active or productive works. Housekeeping and nurture of children requires a large output of effort and it is as important and as productive as the services rendered by paid maidservants or a nurse. Therefore, the effort of housewives must also be regarded as economically productive and must enter the occupational statistics.

TABLE 18

POSITIONALLY ACTIVE & PROV. INACTIVITY PERCENTS

	ECONOMICALLY ACTIVE			ECONOMICALLY INACTIVE		
	NOS.	%	NOS.	%		
MALAY	344	57	63	255	43	52
TAIWANESE	281	45.3	37	238	54.3	43
TOTAL	545	100	496	100		
MALE	293	52.8	239	47.8		
FEMALE	252	47.2	237	52.8		
TOTAL	545	100	496	100		

ECON. ACTIVE	ECON. INACTIVE
545	496
52.3%	47.7%

3. Unemployed:

Those people who are not actively working at the date of survey, but are "seeking work". These people are not permanently unemployed, but are temporarily out of work.

2. Economically Active & Economically Inactive Population:

Table 18 shows that of the total population of 1,041 persons, 52.3% are gainfully employed while 47.7% are economically inactive. In other words, 47.7% of the population are dependent on the livelihood of 52.3% of the population. This gives us a dependency ratio of about 91% - ie. to every 100 gainfully employed persons, there are 91 persons dependent on their income.

It is interesting to study the distribution of these economically active and economically inactive groups among the two ethnic groups, and between males and females. Of the 545 economically active persons 63% are Malays and 37% Javanese. Of the 496 economically inactive persons 52% are Malays and 48% are Javanese. It is seen that the Malays have much higher percentage of economically active persons than the Javanese, and also slightly higher percentage of economically inactive persons.

The extent of dependency is that 43% of the Malays are dependents on 57% of its population, while 54.2% of the Javanese are dependent on 45.8% of its population.

Of 545 economically active persons 52.8% are males and 47.2% are females. Of the 496 economically inactive, 47.8% are males and 52.2% are females. The figures indicate that considerable percentage of the female population are engaged in productive occupations. On the other hand, looking at the distribution of economically inactive persons by sex, we note that 52.2% of the total economically inactive are females, and 47.8% are males.

It may be fruitful to pay some attention to the dependency aspect of this population. At first glance the seriousness of the problem may not be clearly apparent. We note that 47.7% of the population are dependents on the livelihood of 52.3% of the population. It appears that this proportion of dependents are well within the means of the working population to bear. Nevertheless, if we examine "who" actually shoulders this burden of dependency, we may appreciate the seriousness of the problem. We note that out of total 545 economically active persons, 47.2% are females, and (as will be shown later) 23.7% of the economically active are virtually children (10 - 19 yrs.). In other words, large percentage of the population are dependents largely on the livelihood of women and children.

TABLE 19

DISTRIBUTION OF OCCUPATION BY ETHNIC GROUPS

ETHNIC GROUPS OCCU-PATION	MALAYS			JAVANESE					
	NOS.	% OF TOTAL MALAYS	% OF TOTAL POP.	NOS.	% TOTAL JAV.	% TOTAL POP.	TOTAL	%	
FARMERS	242	40.2	23.2	149	34.9	14.3	391	37.6	
HOUSEWIVES	55	9.0	5.3	25	5.6	2.4	80	7.6	
OLD-JOB & PART-TIME FARMERS	8	1.3	0.8	6	1.4	0.6	14	1.3	
FARM-HELPERS	6	7.0	3.5	13	4.1	1.7	54	5.2	
NON-FARMERS	3	0.5	0.3	3	0.7	0.3	6	0.6	
NON-INACTIVE	STUDENTS	90	14.9	8.5	107	24.4	10.3	197	18.9
	MINORS 6 YRS. & BELOW	131	21.8	12.6	103	24.6	10.4	239	23.0
	DEPENDENTS OLDS & CHILDREN	33	5.5	3.2	22	5.0	2.1	55	5.3
	UNEMPLOYED	4	0.7	0.4	1	0.2	0.1	5	0.5
TOTAL	602	100	57.3	439	100	42.2	1041	100	

3. Distribution of Occupation by Ethnic Groups:

It could be seen from Table 19 that large proportion of the population falls within three categories: farmers, students, and minors of 6 years of age and below. 37.6% of total population are farmers, 18.9% are students and 23% are minors. These three categories make up a total of 79.5% of total population.

7.6% of population are housewives, 1.3% are odd-jobs workers and part-time farmers, 5.2% are farm helpers, and only 0.6% are non-farmers. The Malays have more farmers than the Javanese. 23% of total population are Malay farmers, while only 14.3% are Javanese farmers. The Javanese, on the other hand, have slightly more number of students than the Malays. 10.3% of total population are Javanese students and 8.5% are Malay students.

Of the total of 602 Malays, 40.2% are farmers, 14.9% students and 21.8% minors. These three categories make up a total of 76.9%. Of the total 439 Javanese, 34.9% are farmers, 24.4% are students and 24.6% are minors. These three make up a total of 83.9%. It is noteworthy that the Javanese have more number of students than the Malays.

There are very few non-farmers in this area. Only 6 persons out of total of 1,041 reported themselves as non-farmers; comprising of 3 Malays and 3 Javanese.

It is noted that substantial number of women reported themselves as housewives; altogether 7.7% of total population consisting of 5.3% Malays and 2.4% Javanese.

4. Distribution of Occupation by Age:

The extent of some pursuits of livelihood follows a typical pattern of age. Between 15 to 50 years of age, nearly all men and women report some regular occupation. A good picture of the economic characteristics of the population in this area would be obtained by studying the distribution of occupation by age as shown in table 20. Table 20 indicates that of the total 496 persons economically inactive, 92.3% are within the non-adult age group of 14 years and below.

This shows that large percentage of dependents are children of 14 years of age or less. Another important fact is that of the total 545 economically active persons, 23.7% are within the age-group of 10 - 19 years. This indicates that quite a substantial proportion of the gainfully employed are virtually children.

TABLE 20

DISTRIBUTION OF OCCUPATION BY AGE AND SEX

OCCUPATION SEX	AGE	FARMERS		HOUSE- WORKERS & PART-TIME FARMERS		NON-FARMERS		STUDENTS		MINORS		ECONOMICALLY DEPENDENTS		INACTIVE		TOTAL	
		M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F		
	0 - 4	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	172	
	5 - 9	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	5	47	26	36	21	10	16	182	
	10 - 14	6	5	3	-	1	11	25	22	28	4	26	2	-	-	161	
	15 - 19	32	18	9	2	1	2	7	2	16	6	-	1	2	103		
	20 - 24	34	30	16	2	-	2	2	1	1	3	-	-	-	-	86	
	25 - 29	23	24	11	-	-	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	60	
	30 - 34	29	24	12	3	-	2	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	72	
	35 - 39	24	11	10	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	46	
	40 - 44	21	11	8	1	2	-	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	53	
	45 - 49	25	2	1	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	29	
	50 - 54	11	4	4	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	11	
	55 - 59	7	3	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	7	
	60 - 64	25	-	3	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	20	
	65 & above	14	-	2	-	-	-	1	2	-	-	3	3	-	-	24	
TOTAL		257	154	90	3	15	39	15	116	81	124	115	17	38	2	13	1041

This phenomenon of child - employment seems to be true of most predominantly agricultural communities. This characteristic is closely related to the youthful age-structure of the agricultural population. To overcome the disadvantage of age structure, there developed a pattern of early employment. The pressure of necessity forces young boys and girls to go to work at an early age. This is one way of offsetting the burden of dependency which they carry. Because large proportion of people are in the younger age-groups, a fairly small increase in the percentage of employed, between ages, say, 10 - 14 years will produce a large increase in the actual number of employed.

Of the total 391 farmers, we see that 45.5% are within the ages of 10 - 29 years; in other words, nearly half of the farmers are relatively young. The division of farmers by sex, shows that there are 257 male farmers and 134 female farmers. It is significant to note that 24.6% of the economically active are female farmers, and 14.7% of economically active are housewives. This indicates that considerable percentage of economically active women reported themselves as farmers. This clearly shows that the effort of women form a substantial part in farming activities. In the Malaysian rural community, and for that matter in most of the rural societies in the world women serve as an important source of family labour for farm works. Although a substantial proportion of their time may be spent in housekeeping, farm activities are not incompatible to motherhood and household duties.

Student population forms about 18.9% of total population, or in absolute figures, 197 persons, consisting of 116 males and 81 females. Almost all of these students are school-going children of 19 years or less. Minors of 6 years and below form 23% of total population, composing of 124 males and 115 females.

5. Distribution of Occupation by Rows:

An inter-row study of the occupational distribution is attempted in two tables: table 21 shows the distribution of occupation by ethnic groups and rows, while table 22 shows the percentage distribution of occupation by rows. (percent of total population).

Table 21 indicates that of the total 293 persons living along Row I, 40.3% are farmers, 5.5% are housewives, 15.0% students, and 21.8% are minors. In Row II, of the total 236 persons living along it, 36% are farmers, 6.8% housewives, 20.8% students, and 28% are minors. Similar pattern of distribution is observed in Row III and IV. Row III contains

TABLE 21

DISTRIBUTION OF OCCUPATION BY ETHNIC GROUPS AND ROME

ROMS	ETH. GAPS.	I			II			III			IV					
		M	J	TOTAL	%	M	J	TOTAL	%	M	J	TOTAL	%			
FARMERS	87	31	118	40.3	53	32	85	36.0	43	35	84	33.5	54	108	39.3	
HOUSEWIVES	11	5	16	5.5	11	5	16	6.8	11	7	18	7.3	21	9	30	11.4
ODD-JOB WORKERS & PART-TIME FARMERS	2	-	2	0.3	2	-	2	0.8	1	4	5	2.0	4	2	6	2.3
PART- TIME HELPERS	23	-	23	7.8	2	4	6	2.5	5	6	11	4.1	6	8	14	5.3
NON-FARMERS	2	2	3	1.1	2	3	1.3	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	
STUDENTS	29	15	44	15.0	16	23	49	20.8	27	32	59	23.8	18	27	45	17.0
MINORS (6 YRS. & BELOW)	42	22	64	21.8	35	30	66	28.0	30	29	59	23.8	25	29	50	18.9
DEPENDENTS OLDS & CHILDREN	16	9	24	8.2	3	5	8	3.4	6	4	10	4.0	8	5	13	4.9
EM. EXPLAINED	-	-	-	-	1	-	2	0.4	3	-	3	1.2	-	1	1	0.4
TOTAL	210	83	293	100	125	111	236	100	131	117	248	100	136	128	264	100

TABLE 22

PERCENTAGE DISTRIBUTION OF OCCUPATION BY ROWS
(PERCENT OF TOTAL POPULATION)

OCCUPATION	ROWS	I	II	III	IV
FARMERS		11.3	8.2	8.0	10.1
HOUSEWIVES		1.5	1.5	1.7	2.9
ODD-JOB WORKERS & PART-TIME FARMERS		0.1	0.2	0.5	0.6
FARM HELPERS		2.2	0.6	1.1	1.3
NON-FARMERS		0.3	0.3	-	-
STUDENTS		4.2	4.7	5.7	4.3
MINORS (6 YRS. AND BELOW)		6.3	6.3	5.7	4.8
DEPENDENTS (OLD PERSONS & CHILDREN)		2.3	0.8	1.0	1.2
UNEMPLOYED		-	0.1	0.3	0.1
		23.3	22.6	23.8	25.3
ECON. ACTIVE		15.4	10.7	11.2	14.9
ECON. INACTIVE		12.7	11.9	12.6	10.5

33.5% farmers, 7.3% housewives, 22.3% students, and also 23.8% minors. Row IV, however, contains 39.8% farmers, 11.4% housewives, 17.0% students, and 12.9% minors. It is seen that in these four rows besides farmers which are the obvious majority, student population and minors forms a large proportion of the total population.

All the four rows contain considerable percentage of persons in the economically inactive group. Row I, contains 35% of its total population, Row II, 52.6%, Row III, 52.8% and Row IV 41.2%.

Table 22 shows what percentage of farmers, housewives etc. of total population are residing along each of the Row I, II, III and IV. This shows the relative distribution of occupation by rows. In Row I, 15.4% of entire population are economically active, while 12.7% are economically inactive. Row II and III contain slightly higher percentage of economically inactive persons, while in Row IV, the economically active persons exceed the number of economically inactive by 4.4%.