

RURAL DEVELOPMENT IN THE THIRD WORLD 1970-1977

Dr. A. J. H. Bauer

PRINCETON
HD1131
.B38



INTERNATIONAL INSTITUTE FOR LAND RECLAMATION AND IMPROVEMENT/ILRI
P.O. BOX 45, 6700 AA WAGENINGEN, THE NETHERLANDS 1980

INTRODUCTION

Modernization of the rural environment to benefit the agricultural population is a most pressing problem, particularly in the Third World countries where such a large proportion of the people find their living in agriculture.

In the past decennium, rural development has therefore become a major theme of study. Many specialists have turned their attention to the matter; many seminars, workshops, and expert meetings have been organized. Of all these meetings, it may suffice to mention the UN/FAO World Conference on Agrarian Reform and Rural Development (WCARRD) held in Rome in July 1979.

Accompanying the increased attention for the subject is a growing demand for bibliographical information. In 1979 the Commonwealth Agricultural Bureaux (CAB) started the publication of *Rural Development Abstracts*, a quarterly journal containing literature references from 1978 onward. In earlier years, other bibliographies on rural development were published.

Is there any reason to add a new literature survey to the already existing ones? This question was answered in the affirmative during a Seminar on Integrated Rural Development held in January 1977 at The Hague, where Dutch experts with different professional backgrounds met for an exchange of views. They suggested that a concise list of publications be compiled the reasons being that the body of literature on the theme was rapidly expanding, that the coverage of subject matter and time by existing bibliographies varied widely, and that a time gap could be filled by taking the period 1970-1977.

A further consideration was that such a title-collection could possibly be published in the series *Bibliographies* of the International Institute for Land Reclamation and Improvement, Wageningen.

The basic material was already partly available. About ten years ago, I started compiling lists of literature on socio-economic problems in the Third World, focussing my attention on agricultural and rural matters. That, and the rest of the documentation, was drawn from:

- original publications in the library of the Department of Rural Sociology of the Tropics and Subtropics, Agricultural University, Wageningen;
- accession lists of the main libraries in The Netherlands covering the relevant fields of study (for example, the Library of the Royal Tropical Institute, Amsterdam);
- bibliographical journals, of which, in particular, the *World Agricultural Economics and Rural Sociology Abstracts* (WAERSA), published by CAB, may be mentioned.

At present, the title collection is ~~in~~ the keeping of the Department of Rural Sociology of the Agricultural University, Wageningen. After consultation between that Department and Ilri, from this great body of literature, a selection was made to form the present bibliography.

The main problem posed to a bibliographer is which selection criteria he should employ. What exactly is to be understood by the term "rural development"? On close examination it appears to be a concept of which the contours are vague. Definitions vary; some overlap; some are controversial; but three characteristics are typical of rural development "new style", as it is

- based on deliberate planning (thus the reverse of "spontaneous change");
- coupled with the input of modern technology and organization (so not based on self-help alone);
- serving to benefit the rural population as a whole (not merely to a privileged part of it).

In my selection of titles, I have given special attention to certain aspects of rural development: to "participation", "small peasants", "rural women", "strategies", and "project organization".

Some countries, like Japan and Israel, are classified as Third World countries, although they can no longer be regarded as such. Their vast experience in rural development, however, can I feel, be most instructive to other countries.

Where it seemed opportune to supply additional information about a given publication, I have indicated the relevant issue of WAERSA and the serial number of the title inserted in it. For a limited number of references, viz. where the title does not provide sufficient information about its relevance to the subject, I have partially cited abstracts from WAERSA. I am grateful to the publisher of WAERSA for his permission to do this.

I am also grateful to Mrs. B. de la Rive Box-Lasocki, who assisted in the selection work, and to Mr. G. Naber, who produced the authors' and subject indexes.

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