

## CHAPTER XXII

### JUTE STATISTICS

Initial compilation.

Compilation of statistics of jute acreage and production are made by various Government agencies Central as well as State and by the Indian Central Jute Committee. The I.J.M.A. also collects, compiles and publishes statistics relating to jute and jute goods which are available to their constituents and the trading public as well as the Centre and State Governments. As far as West Bengal is concerned, the basic area under jute was surveyed in 1941, and since then, a special enumeration of jute plots used to be annually carried out as this was useful for implementing the regulation for restriction on the cultivation of jute. Jute forecasts of late are made on the basis of estimates arrived at by random sample survey whose result may be regarded as dependable for the district level but not for estimates for smaller areas even allowing for sampling errors. The Agriculture Department of State Governments compile estimates of jute products from data collected by their officers as well as from the Revenue Officials. In the main jute growing States, a Jute Development Officer also functions in close liaison with the State Director of Agriculture as well as the I.C.J.C. in the matter of compilation of statistics, dissemination of market information and development activities generally. At the Centre the Director of Economics and Statistics in the Food and Agriculture Ministry maintains and publishes statistics relating to area, production and price of raw jute in the compilation entitled 'Estimates of Area and Production of Principal Crops in India'. Information regarding prices of raw jute are published every week in the bulletin of Agricultural prices and annually in 'Agricultural prices in India'. A compilation of statistics entitled 'Jute in India' is also published annually which includes statistics relating to production, consumption, stocks, movement, trade and prices of jute and jute manufactures.

Forecasts and market reports.

In regard to statistics maintained by the trade the one most commonly used is that compiled by Sinclair Murray & Co. Ltd., who as soon as the sowing season starts issue

separate reports for India and Pakistan giving weather conditions and extent of sowing in comparison to previous season. These weekly reports give the necessary data regarding the progress of jute production and are used by all sections of the trade. Government forecasts come very much later, namely end of July, for acreage sown, and end of September for total expected yield. Surveying the jute forecasts over a period of years the Fawcus Committee (1940) had commented on their unreliability in general in comparison with trade estimates. While the latter were prepared by local persons experienced in the subject and kept informed of changes, the official agencies, particularly in permanently settled areas were only the thanadar or village headman. As indicated, the Government machinery for collection of information has been augmented since. In his reply to our questionnaire Shri K. D. Jalan has made the following criticism—

“Since 1947-48 the crop estimates of jute are being published after a great delay. Before partition preliminary forecast used to be issued by the second week of July, the final forecast in September and revised estimates in March. Now the preliminary forecast is being issued in September and final forecast in February. The publication of revised estimates has been discontinued. On account of this delay the figures lost much of their utility to the trade and industry and give rise to unhealthy speculation with its corresponding repercussions on the markets and the prices. The sowing are usually completed in the month of May and June, though at many places much earlier. If information and data are collected from the various growing districts in each State as and when the sowings are completed and if they are collected simultaneously, there is no reason why the estimates should take so much time for issue. In view of their importance to the industry and its working, it is desirable that they should be given a priority by the Departments concerned. It is suggested that directions be given to the State Agricultural Departments, to see that the figures are submitted to the Central Government by the end of June at the latest, so that the consolidated forecast could be published by the second

Criticism of  
Government  
statistics.

week of July. Similarly, the final forecast should be published around September or October by which time the harvesting of the crop is usually completed. The figures could then be revised if necessary and issued later. The time schedule so fixed must be adhered to, if the estimates are to serve any useful purpose."

While recognising that the trade place greater reliance on the estimates prepared by trade channels, we consider that if steps are taken to accelerate the process of compilation and the jute development organisations in the different States are further strengthened so as to enable them both to make these compilations in time and to give sufficient publicity to them, particularly to statistics of current prices, the utility of Government statistical publications will be greatly enhanced.