

APPENDIX A

The procedure regarding the collection of data in respect of families in the study of 1956 mentioned in chapter VI.

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The schedule used is given at appendix B.

A few factors presented difficulties in collecting the data. These were: (a) the nature of dispersal of the Nair houses (b) the reluctance of the Nairs to disclose the truth about their incomes even to the people of their own village (c) the fact that each Nair house in its compound with an atmosphere or privacy is a world in itself (d) consequent on these it takes much time to be very familiar and to establish a sense of rapport with each family separately to get all the desired kinds of information. Therefore I trained two assistants one for each village to collect data and I contacted only such families with educated and enlightened members.

My original programme was to cover all Nair families of the upper and middle groups particularly to see if new marital residence types were occurring and to know the range of diverse possibilities in getting income. The time-consuming nature of the work and the reluctance of the well-to-do families to discuss such matters clearly led me to cut down the programme. However, my impression was that all families of the middle group deserved to be covered since they were only 33 as against 118 of the upper group and they have been drifting away from their dependency on the upper group of Nair castes. It had become common experience in these villages that women of the middle group resented working as full time servants of any family as they formerly used to do. Therefore 29 of the middle group (88 per cent) were taken omitting only 4 about whom information was not forthcoming with my usual course of efforts. However, the economic category of all 151 families was assessed as mentioned in chapter VI based on the adequacy of income from agriculture (in a seasonally normal year) for household expenses. The four economic categories, very inadequate (V.I.), inadequate (I.), sufficient (S.), well sufficient (W.S.) were in some cases arrived at by seeking information indirectly from neighbours who were reliable for such purposes. In the rest of the cases the family was asked to say how far the income was adequate. This information was cross-checked and corrected by the help of informants who knew most of the families in terms of two factors: (a) whether a family sold any surplus paddy (b) whether it had to buy paddy from the market (c) how far each family was known in general as

one of means to live on its agricultural income alone. It may be noted here that even in a seasonally normal year income may be poor for a family which does not manage its lands efficiently, and there are several such families. Therefore the area cultivated is not a reliable basis to judge its economic category. Further, the area would consist of four different types of land and would yield a complex of data which were not necessary for the purpose in hand.

Of the 118 of the upper group of Nairs 70 were marked out for study (59 per cent), leaving out the rest which included some who required more specific efforts on the part of myself or my assistants to gather data. In omitting some it was ensured that a few were omitted for each of the 9 topographic sectors of the two villages. At the same time the number studied was kept high enough so that well over 50 per cent of families of all the four economic categories were studied and as many of the families of V.I. category as possible were included. Thus, of the upper group, the families studied were 11 out of 14 V.I. (79 per cent), 21 out of 32 I. (66 per cent), 23 out of 43 S. (52 per cent) and 15 out of 29 W.S. families. Of the 99 families studied, in all, 16 are V.I., 33 I., and 30 S. and 20 are W.S. During the processing of the data it was found that the distinction between upper and middle group of Nairs was not necessary to be maintained since a Nair family of S. of the middle group would present characteristics of a S. family of the upper group as for instance in joining for agricultural work etc., a feature which my informants were emphasising.

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