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STATISTICAL FIELD SURVEYS IN GHANA
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Note prepared by the Ghana Delegation

STATISTICAL FIELD SURVEYS IN GHANA
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Sample investigations in Ghana have shown a steady expansion, but it is only recently that it has been possible to propose plans for developing them as a permanent part of the statistics organisation. The influences affecting survey work have been as follows:-

- (1) 1950 World Census of Agriculture.
- (2) Ad hoc information requirements, including retail price indexes.
- (3) National income statistics.
- (4) The more general need for obtaining complete statistical coverage of the economy.

Although the need for an organisation capable of carrying out field enquiries was recognised when the statistics office was created in 1948, it was not until the latter part of 1950 that any progress was possible in this direction. The World Census of Agriculture had, at that time, created considerable interest and, as agriculture forms the principal source of income in Ghana, attention was logically turned towards investigations concerning the physical aspects of agricultural production.

Agricultural production and crop movements

In 1951-52 a small pilot survey was carried out to investigate recording techniques and to build up a nucleus of trained enumerators. In the following year a further enquiry was undertaken with the object of obtaining definite results for a food farming area of approximately 300 square miles. This investigation led to some standardisation of recording methods and made it possible to develop random selection of households at the second stage of the sample. However, the only control at the first stage, which consisted of villages, was by means of geographical stratification.

The results of this enquiry emphasized the fact that consumption can be measured more cheaply than production at the household level and they also showed the possibility of a link between household surveys and the movements of crops by road and rail.

To obtain a basic idea of the pattern of inter-regional trade in local produce and the sources of food supplies for the main towns, crop movements enquiries were carried out in 1953-54, covering most of the south-eastern and central part of the country.

Urban area budget surveys

In 1953 ad hoc demands for statistical information began to have some effect on field work. A household budget survey was carried out in Accra in 1953 and surveys of population, housing and household budgets were undertaken in the rural area of Akuse in 1954. The Accra survey was designed as the basis for a revised retail price index, while the Akuse enquiries formed part of the investigations made in connection with the Volta River Project.

Urban area household enquiries continued in 1955 with budget surveys in Sekondi-Takoradi and Kumasi. By this time their scope was being somewhat enlarged by making more extensive population surveys as a preliminary to the more detailed household budget records. This made it possible to show the relationship between the group covered by the budget records and the remainder of the community and also to give some additional general information as a by-product.

The basic object of the urban surveys was still, however, to provide information on expenditure patterns for retail price indexes and budget coverage was limited to the lower income groups. It has since been felt that their value would have been somewhat greater without these limitations. A more general coverage would have made it possible to show the principal results as aggregates for each town, giving the information a wider application e.g. in estimating personal consumption, income distributions, etc.

Miscellaneous enquiries

Also during the period 1951-54 a number of other small investigations were made in conjunction with the Government Departments concerned. These included an employment survey of school-leavers, a survey of fuel consumption, physical measurements records and occupational surveys in villages affected by the development of Tema harbour. The results have not, however, been issued as published reports.

Cocoa production surveys

In 1955 efforts were being made to build up more adequate national income statistics and survey work was directed once more to the rural areas which constitute the principal gap in statistical coverage. Investigations were concerned mainly with the major industry, cocoa. Results of the earlier agricultural enquiries had shown that there was not a strong internal demand for quantitative information about agricultural production and this, together with the needs in respect of national income work, has encouraged all more recent surveys to concentrate on household budget records rather than on the physical aspects of production.

In 1955-56 a survey of population and household budgets of cocoa producing families was carried out in the Swedru area of south-eastern Ghana. This covered a total population of about 300,000 persons and the budget sample at the second stage of the enquiry included 1,080 cocoa families. In the next year a similar enquiry was made covering the whole of the Ashanti Region. In this case the total population was about one million persons and the budget sample consisted of 1,620 families.

In both of these surveys the method adopted was somewhat similar to that used in the urban areas. The sampling frame for the first stage of the enquiry was derived from the enumeration district organisation used in the 1948 population census and all persons in a random sample of about 25% of districts were enumerated. At the second stage the selection was systematic from the enumerated families owning cocoa farms and a rough stratification according to the quantity of cocoa produced was used to keep the sampling error within reasonable limits. It was necessary to maintain the budget records for considerably longer than in the case of the urban area enquiries and both cocoa surveys covered the seven month period of the main crop harvesting season.

The Ashanti survey differed from that in Swedru area in that more attention was paid to farm records. A proportion of cocoa farms in each stratum was measured with the object of obtaining some information on yields and other factors.

Inter-Regional Trade

In 1957-58 a further survey of crop movements was undertaken covering as far as possible, all important inter-regional traffic. It continued for 12 months and one of its objects was to provide the means for obtaining production estimates from the results of consumption surveys in different parts of the country. It also resulted partly from local demands for information about internal trade and partly from the difficulty in supervising more active field operations at a time when there was an unexpected shortage of senior staff.

Future Development

The need for statistical information is now becoming more strongly appreciated and the proposals made for the general development of the statistics organisation in Ghana have been outlined in a separate paper. One of the principal proposals is for the development of a permanent regional organisation which will form the channel for collecting statistical information of all types from the general public and enterprises.

During the period 1951-57 the regular field staff of the Office was built up to a strength of rather more than 100 persons. The use of temporary staff was avoided as far as possible and it was only in the urban area budget surveys that teachers were employed on a part-time basis. In the foregoing paragraphs it has been shown how this staff was used to carry out ad hoc enquiries in many areas. It is now clear, however, that a relatively small mobile organisation cannot provide the information needed in assessing the economic position at a time when development is becoming more rapid. It is necessary to develop a means for collecting data from households and enterprises continuously in all parts of the country and, for this reason, the permanent Regional organisation has been proposed.

It is estimated that a field staff of approximately 300 will be required. They will be mobile only within administrative Regions, being permanently attached to Regional statistics offices. Three offices are being provided in the Second Development Plan for this purpose at Tamale (Northern Region), Kumasi (Ashanti) and Takoradi (Western Region).

The Tamale office is nearing completion and an additional 50 enumerators and supervisory staff are now being recruited in the north. Work has already started on a household budget enquiry covering the whole Region. This is particularly important for National Income purposes as little information is at present available on levels of income and expenditure in that part of the country.

A number of the more experienced members of the field staff used in previous surveys are taking part in the Northern Region enquiry for supervisory and training purposes. As soon as the locally recruited staff are operating efficiently most of the older members will be transferred to form the nucleus of the permanent staff in other parts of the country.

There are at present no survey programmes operating in the remainder of the country as other available field staff are engaged on preparations for the 1960 Census of Population which is not considered in this paper. Routine work on market price collection and some remaining transport checks is, however, being maintained.

During the next few years it is likely that most of the Regional statistics staff will be engaged on surveys of household consumption and expenditure and agricultural production, but it is intended that the continuous sample survey should be modified from time to time to include information needed by other Government organisations e.g. questions on housing, education, health and internal migratory movements. Some of these enquiries would require the attachment of technical staff from the organisations concerned to the permanent survey teams.

The Regional statistics offices will also act as collected centres for information from enterprises, and to some extent, the field staff attached to them will be involved in this work. In the case of the smaller firms and village industries which cannot be covered on a regular basis it is proposed that sample surveys should be made every few years to assess the level of output.

The proposals in respect of statistical development in Ghana are at present under consideration and until this has been completed it is not possible to give any firm indication of the speed at which field operations can be expanded. It should be understood that these proposals envisage a somewhat more rapid expansion than was previously considered possible.

Publications

The published reports on field surveys appear in the Statistical & Economic Papers series of the Office and are as follows:-

- (1) Agricultural Statistical Survey of South-East Akim Abuakwa, 1952-53.
- (2) Accra Survey of Household Budgets, 1953.
- (3) Akuse Survey of Household Budgets, 1954.
- (4) Sekondi-Takoradi Survey of Population and Household Budgets, 1955.
- (5) Kumasi Survey of Population and Household Budgets, 1955.
- (6) Survey of Population and Household Budgets in the Oda-Swedru-Asamankese Area, 1955-56.

Unpublished reports on some of the other enquiries referred to in this paper are available in cyclostyled form. In the case of the Ashanti cocoa survey tabulations of results were prepared shortly after the end of field operations but the text of the report has still to be completed.
