

12-1930

Farming in India

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Recommended Citation

Scott, Winfield (1930) "Farming in India," *Science Bulletin*: Vol. 3: No. 4, Article 13.

Available at: https://scholarworks.uni.edu/science_bulletin/vol3/iss4/13

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casional shower. It is soon noted; however, that alto-cumulus clouds drift in from the west. There is a rapid thickening of the clouds as the cold air forces its way into the warm. A brief period of precipitation generally occurs, sometimes heavy, sometimes light, and usually accompanied by electrical display. This is the thunder squall. It is soon over, however, the temperature drops rapidly, the clouds disappear, and a period of clear cool weather follows. The size of these storms varies throughout the year. They are generally small and poorly defined in summer and large and well defined in winter. The average size for summer is from 50 to 500 miles, while in winter they reach an average of 500 to 1000 miles.

Cyclones and anticyclones dominate the prevailing westerly wind belts of the northern and southern hemispheres. Since there is less land in the southern hemisphere than in the northern, cyclones and anticyclones are of less significance.

The nature of cyclones and anticyclones is quite well understood as to direction and rate of movement, temperature, pressure, wind direction, moisture and cloud. Observations of the above elements made simultaneously each day by the 200 weather bureau stations located throughout the United States, southern Canada, and northern Mexico, and sent by radio from the ocean fronts make it possible for the government to forecast the weather quite accurately for 48 hours in advance of these storms.

Teachers of general science should seek to acquaint pupils with the nature of cyclones and anticyclones, with weather map interpretation, and the value of the Weather Bureau service to agriculture and people in general.

E. J. Calbe.

* Weather maps may be secured from the Dubuque Weather Bureau, Dubuque, Iowa, at a nominal cost.

FARMING IN INDIA

Agriculture

The following extract from an article written by Saint Mhal Singh of India (See Wallace's Farmer, April 30, 1909) is given as a description of farmers in that populous country. The Hindoos are the Eastern Branch of our own Aryan race.

"If the American farmer were to seek contrast to his life and labor, he would find it on the farm in India: and the contrast would be as clearly defined as that which exists between day and night.

"Almost all the farm land has to be irrigated. While the rainfall is heavy at seasons, it is uncertain, and prolonged droughts make irrigation positively necessary". (In the main the water for irrigation is collected in wells or large ponds during the rainy season and then drawn to the field by oxen or carried by hand as needed. When the Monsoons fail the wells or reservoirs are not filled, at least partial crop failure results, and famine is likely to follow—C. G. Hopkins).

"The farm in India is very small. It is very rarely larger than 10 or 20 acres—often it is only two or three acres.

"As to the nature of the crop grown in the country: wheat, corn, various kinds of lentils, cotton, and sugar-cane are grown exclusively in northern India, except in portions where the land is low and the rainfall heavy. In such regions rice is grown. Rice is the principal crop in southern India.

"Considering the amount of hard drudgery the farmer of India puts into his work, the yield from the labor is pitifully disappointing.

"At the harvest time extra hands are needed and they are usually employed with the understanding that the farmer will pay them in certain amounts of grain. If the payment is made in coin, it seldom exceeds two and

a half annas (five cents) a day. According to government statistics the income of the average East Indian is only fifteen cents a month, and farmers as a class live in the most miserable poverty.

“There are 450,000 square miles of waste land in Hindustan, or nearly one-fourth of the country that is today uncultivated, though capable of yielding rich harvests. The people of India do not know enough to bring these lands under cultivation. The soil that is in use is never allowed to lie fallow, even for a brief space of time. Crops follow one another in quick rotation. The farmer lacks the knowledge and the resources to enrich the land by means of fertilizers. The only fertilizer that he knows about is cow dung and, unfortunately, he is able to spare little of this for enriching the fields, for timber is scarce in most parts of India, and the cow chips are used for fuel.

“When these old fashioned methods are taken into consideration, it is easy to understand why agriculture does not pay in India. Since 95 per cent of the people in Hindustan are engaged in farming or allied industries, it is easy to realize why the people live in excruciating poverty. Famine rages in the country all the year round, and it will continue to do so until the East Indian agriculturist is taught to use better methods. As it is, only one out of 147 women and only ten out of 100 men farmers are capable of reading and writing and only one out of every five villages in India has a schoolhouse.

“The home life of the farmer is so filled with desperate poverty that it lacks all picturesque details. The house usually consists of but one room or, at at best, two or three, and all of these are most rudely furnished. There are no carpets on the floor which is dirt, uncovered by boards or even matting. The men and women usually squat on the floor, using small, narrow pieces of gunny sacks to sit on. The bedstead is

home made and may be described as a cot made in the most elementary manner, of bamboo, laced across with coarse twine. The same room is used for storing goods of all descriptions, for preparing and eating food, and for sitting and sleeping purposes. Not infrequently the cattle are given a corner in the room. Since married sons of the father live at home, the shortage of space compels two or three families to herd together in the same apartment.

“Life for the woman is especially filled with drudgery. She gets up between three and four in the morning. While the husband is feeding the stock, she milks the cows. Over the night the milk has been boiled and allowed to curdle. The woman puts it into an earthen pot and churns it. Buttermilk forms an important item of the scanty breakfast. About the only thing the farmer eats along with the whey is corn or wheat bread, which unlike in this country, is made thin like pancake, and six or eight inches in diameter. Both men and women take a bite of this bread and pour down a quantity of buttermilk. In eating no knives, forks, or spoons, are employed. The fingers are made to perform the various eating operations.

“The life of great hardship and excruciating poverty that farmers of India are obliged to lead, makes them subnormal. They lack vim and vitality. In waking moments they are only half awake. Through insufficient nutrition they are unable to do the hard work they would be able to do otherwise. Naturally the people in India are fatalists by religion. They look upon life as an adversity that has to be shouldered as best it can be. They are not afraid of death; in fact they long for it, for they believe that on the other side of existence they will lead a happier and a better-fed life. Thus do the people of India live and labor.

Winfield Scott.