

SECTION 9.

STANDARDS OF LIVING.

An Investigator of the urban African population is soon struck by the extent to which the Africans are divided into diverse tribal economic, religious groups. The people are drawn from some 15 Tribes, each with its own tribal customs and beliefs. These differences are occasionally evident in the clothing and hair styles and ornamentation. For example, conservative Mdebele women continue to wear beaded skirts and to weight their legs and arms with rows of copper rings, and Zulu women from the Kraal wear their hair piled in high buns filled with ochre and their dress is tied togo-wise over their shoulder. These conspicuous distinctions are however mainly worn by women who come on visits from rural areas and do not undertake work in the town. They spend their time looking after the house, gossiping and often brewing beer. Differences of food and living habits are less obvious to the European, but of great importance to many of the people. The Zulu still enjoys his beer of maize and malted corn and the Bagatla and Bakwena their ding or sour porridge, and the Pedi their stamped mealies, the Lulu their hard porridge. Traditional rights are still practised at birth, marriage and death, and goats are bought on the market for sacrifice by many of the South Eastern and South Central Tribes, while the Shangaan Thonga usually use chickens.

At the same time, residents in the Location in an Urban environment makes it impossible to carry out most tribal ceremonies and has toned down differences. The growing ~~importance~~ increase in individualism, remoteness from senior kinsmen, who would formerly have enforced tribal observedness, has been described in the last chapter. Occupational, political and religious bonds cut across tribal variations. In this chapter, I described the economic conditions in relation to housing.

The African is rapidly absorbing a money economy through his position on the labour market, from living on the land at a subsistence level in an environment where luxuries were practically non-existent

and differences in wealth were quantitative, rather than qualitative. He has come into the City characterised by great differences of wealth, operative primarily along a colour line and is surrounded by luxuries which he cannot afford.

The ~~inadequacy~~- inadequacy of the incomes of the average urban African to meet the requirements of decent living has been stressed in numerous reports. (Smidt Report, Yanish Report, Native Economic Commission 1932). Our evidence supports these findings and it will further be shown that though wages have risen considerably the standard of living has not improved because of the increased costs of essential goods.

INCOME.

In the country a man's income is derived from the soil and has been estimated to average approximately £30 per annum. It is largely because of the rural poverty and in many cases a complete absence of land and property in the reserve that men have come to the town. The reason given for the migration of men has in all cases been given as land shortage. "we were hungry" or "There was famine" stated informants. It was therefore to earn a higher wage that men came to the town.

In 1940, the Non-European and Native Affairs Department issued a Report of African Family Budget in which it was estimated that an African man's average income was £4. 2. 0. per month and an African family income £5. 6. 8. per month. Since 1940, wage determinations have raised the rates ~~wage~~ of unskilled labourers and cost of living allowances are being paid.

According to the figures of 157 families in our sample, the man's average income was £8. 5. 6. but this figure was high because of the earnings of four individuals as independent traders with incomes of over £25 per month. ~~xxxxxx~~ Without the incomes of this minority (4), the average dropped to £7. 16. 2. The average unskilled wage rate in Johannesburg in 1934 was estimated at £7. 12. 7. The some of £7. 16. 2. was arrived at from the earnings of men in employment, though at present it is not difficult for an African to obtain work, there are always a number out of work through ill health or other reason. At the time of our survey, these men were unemployed, thus further reducing the average. None of these men were receiving any unemployment benefit.

It appears to be taken for granted that African women should help contribute to the family income. Fortunately, for the African community, there is no social barrier such as operate among Indians and upper ~~ea~~ class Europeans against women contributing as wage earners, and selling their labour on an open market. In the country, the women bears the brunt of the Agricultural work and when she comes to town she continues to work. Apart from her duties in the house, most African women take in washing or go charring. 52% of the women in our sample were employed by Europeans. Washerwomen and charwomen worked 2 - 4 days a week, flat workers every day, and other domestic servants return home only on Sundays and Thursday afternoons. Washerwomen earn on an average of 10/- per bundle per month for every person's washing undertaken. Informants estimate that a hard working woman if fully employed, can do five bundles a week, earning between £2. 10. 0. and £3. per month. Most of the families which we ~~invest~~ investigated earned £2. per week from washing. In some cases, a few women ~~jeinged~~ joined together, and they were able to earn more. In one case, four neighbours co-operated and each earned £3. 5. 0. per month. Women with young daughters can also earn more, because of the additional help, but washing again is not a secure employment when the employers

go on holidays the work stops, and in three cases, women who had been earning over £2. per month suddenly found themselves without any wash. Moreover, from the washing must be deducted the following weekly costs of production:

Soap approximately 1/-.

Coal half bag 1/3.

Wood 3d.

Starch 4d.

Train or bus fares - approximately 1/- per week.

This makes no provision for wear and tear of utensils. The nett income from laundry work very rarely amounts to £1. 15. 0. per month. Charwomen or women who do washing on the employers premises receive from 2/6 to 5/- a day, plus two meals and in some cases, tram fare. Most of the day workers work three days a week and earned a nett amount of 7/6 a week, plus their meals. Married women with young children found it impossible to undertake domestic work, unless they have someone with whom to leave the children. In the Native Western Township there is a Creche which takes in children for 3d a day or 2d for two, and provides them with two meals. The Creche is becoming increasingly popular. On Mondays particularly, the numbers sore. The average attendance is . Few married women are able to undertake full time domestic work. Those who do so earned from £3 - £5 per month according to their skill and the Suburbs in which they were employed. Apart from wages, women sometimes receive clothing for themselves and their children, and scraps to take home to with them. To a people living on the starvation line, such gifts are extremely important. ~~££~~ From the wages however, must be deducted bus fares and period of unemployment due to illness or the absence of the employer. We estimated that the wife contributed approximately 17.3% of the family income. (Compare 13.5% of Institute Report). This amount covers only the legitimate occupations for Europeans.

A number of women have less respectable but more remunerative

DISTRIBUTION OF POPULATION PER HOUSE OR EXTENT OF OVERCROWDING.

The Location was built on the assumption that the country was the real home and that the City was a place of temporary sojourn. No accommodation was provided for the natural increase of the family apart from the size of house, the low wages and high cost of living, tend to limit the size of the family in the town. Lodgers are not permitted without permission of the Superintendent, but with the housing shortage, the Superintendents realise that sub-letting of a room frequently occurs. Over-crowding is not an absolute condition. In some kraals in the country as many as 11 children may be found sleeping on the floor of the hut, but one cannot apply Kraal standards to the Location. First of all under tribal conditions parents together with young children occupy one hut, but as soon as a child is weaned, it is customary to separate the child and accommodate it with other young children usually in the charge of a grandmother or other old woman. Boys and girls were always separated before puberty. It is not difficult to add a hut to a Kraal, and overcrowding through force of circumstances did not occur except on rare occasions. Very different are conditions in the Location where additional cannot be added according to the needs of age and sex. For our standard of overcrowding in the Location we adopt the standard used by Professor Batson in his Cape Town survey.

The average number of people per house was . Of these houses, were overcrowded. The percentage of houses with more than two adults per person was . In terms of the age and sex of the occupants, i. e. according to a recognised standard of decency, the percentage of houses over crowded was . The number of houses with

sub-tenants was 51, the number without 87. Most of the sub-tenants were single men and women or widowed, but there were also young married families including married sons and daughters, who had been unable to obtain homes for themselves and their wives and children.

Collection Number: AD1715

SOUTH AFRICAN INSTITUTE OF RACE RELATIONS (SAIRR), 1892-1974

PUBLISHER:

Collection Funder:- Atlantic Philanthropies Foundation

Publisher:- Historical Papers Research Archive

Location:- Johannesburg

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