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1/5/83.

Credit & Construction

Construction activity^{is} also noted for informal credit & lack of accounting. Thus ~~his owner~~ Ariff, ~~a~~ a labourer in Nanakpur gets timber battens 'on credit' from neighbour Mshd. Yusuf who is a saw-mill owner who himself, I discover later, is barely breaking even. The shop-keeper selling girders & s. rods has bought his stock of Rs 14000/- on credit, on the guarantee given by his friend in 'Haveli' to the steel merchant in Badami Bagh in Lahore. The shop-keeper is illiterate, ~~he~~ keeps his receipts from the steel sales ^{in a knotted handkerchief} separately. He has added approx Rs 1/- on to his purchase price, is still does not remember exactly how much each item cost him but seems confident that when all has been sold the handkerchief will yield more than Rs 14000/-.

The Kilnowner Ramzan ~~has~~ borrows from friends & relatives to finance his kiln - offering 25% over the loan in return (or is it 25% of profits, if any) of course the 'advance' / loan system offered to brickmoulders both attracts, keeps & insures a ^{steady} brick-making labour force for the owner in an otherwise volatile labour climate in which the peak agric. cycle threatens depleting the labour force otherwise; for the ~~the~~ moulders, their indebtedness insures they will get at least enough to survive from the kiln owner (often more for events such as weddings etc) who has too much 'invested' in the fellow to drive him away or starve him outright (which would drive him away) (not unlike the rich nations keeping the poor nations afloat, bec's the latter owes them too much for the former to

write them off or ~~not~~ foretell them to 'run away' to the socialist camp.) The small kiln owners - neither have kept accounts of their 'investment' or sales so they say, & hope when all receipts are in they will make some profit & otherwise they seem philosophically to be prepared for a loss.

Meanwhile the operating owner - works as an agric. laborer now that the harvesting season has cut ~~at~~ his brick sales & supply of essential inputs for a and firing - rich work rotten waste & brick-makers - & the land-owner ^{owner} ~~operator~~ waits patiently for all bricks to be sold, meanwhile complaining how yet another part of his land has been taken by WAPDA with as yet no recompense.

Even our school teacher who works part time for his saw-mill owning & operating brother's father does not keep exact accounts of expenditures or receipts.

Business survival in rural Sindh seems based on credit, trust & hope along with or perhaps beco's of the parallel exploitation. Thus the kiln-owner Ramzan has invested Rs 90,000 in loans ~~on~~ to or on behalf of his brick makers, who will & do abscond. However they make bricks for 25/1000 (which comes down to 16/1000 after loan deductions) which even unbaked, he can sell for Rs 50-60/1000 (he sells those damaged by rain for Rs 45/1000)

However the kilns do keep meticulous accounts - incl. 'copies' little notebooks for the brick makers listing loans & deductions & payments for them, illiterates, to check out with friends.