

ABSTRACT

Redundancy and the Socio-Economic Adjustment Process - the Closing of a Sugar Estate at Gray's Inn, St. Mary, Jamaica.

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As a result of its Structural Adjustment Policy, the Government of Jamaica made its entire work-force of six hundred redundant from the Gray's Inn Sugar Estate, St. Mary, at the end of the 1983/84 crop season. The present paper analyses the closure of the Sugar Estate which forms the context for studying social change and examining the techniques of adjustment to redundancy and the socio-economic processes of adjusting to redundancy at the individual, community and societal levels. In this paper efforts will be made to address the imbalance arising from the traditional concern of sociologists with the problems of redundancy as mainly management issues and focus will therefore be on the viewpoint of workers and the issues affecting them. It is argued that:

- a) personal and community response - passive or active - is directly related to the perception of redundancy as problematic or opportunistic;
- b) experiences of multiplicity of occupations and low socio-economic status will likely minimise any adverse effects of redundancy on respondents in the process of adjusting to redundancy;
- c) redundancy re-enforces dependence and underdevelopment.

The Structured Interview Schedule and Case Study are used to show

how retrenched workers and the community responded and adjusted to the closure of the sugar estate.

Select Socio-Demographic, Socio-Economic and Socio-Psychological variables are used in exploring the issues in Chapters One to Three. The impact of macro-decisions on individuals socio-economic situation proved positive for the most part. Most workers became gainfully occupied after redundancy, highlighting the strength of the work ethic, and the resilience and resourcefulness of respondents.

It is hoped that this contribution will provoke debate and generate further studies on the impact of closure policies on socio-economic adjustment.