

BRITISH AID TRACTORS IN INDIA

[The Project](#) - [The Evaluation](#) - [The Main Findings](#)

The Project

The project involved ODA loan aid of £4.5m for the supply of 3850 British tractors between 1971 and 1974. The tractors were distributed throughout India and were sold to farmers at prices reflecting costs, import taxes and distributors' commission.

The Evaluation

The evaluation was carried out by Dr G Dalton, a Lecturer in Farm Management at the University of Reading. The objective of the evaluation was to determine whether the project had been successful and to identify the reasons for the outcome, and the work included a survey of 177 of the tractor owners.

The Main Findings

- Most tractors were working as intended. Arrangements for maintenance through private contractors were satisfactory but restrictions on the import of spare parts was affecting the scheme's continuing success. The initial 15% allowance for spare parts was too low. New arrangements for the continuing import of spares were essential.
- The tractors have displaced bullocks, and by freeing land previously used to provide feed and improving crop yields and intensities have increased farm profitability.
- The tractors were found out to be owned and used mostly by the relatively larger farmers and deployed for cultivation and transport on irrigated land. They worked on average between 1100 and 1200 hours a year on at least 76 acres of land - very high utilisation.
- Smaller farmers with tractors tended to supplement their income by tractor hire. Hiring *per se* is a difficult business to operate profitably, requiring organising ability and community standing to secure payment for services. However, private tractor hire schemes probably operate more successfully than cooperatives or state-run schemes.

Because tractors allowed the land to be cultivated more intensively, it is not thought they reduced on-farm employment.