A thorough review of literature is essential for any research endeavor. Review of literature helps in determining the work both theoretical and empirical that has been done earlier. It assists in delineation of the problem area; provides a basis for theoretical framework; provides insights into methods and procedures; suggests operational definitions of major concepts and provides a basis for interpretation of the findings.

In this chapter, relevant literature having direct or indirect bearing on the present study has been reviewed and presented below.

Ray (1970) reported that majority of agricultural labourers belong to schedule Caste, Schedule Tribe and Backward Classes. These stigmatized people are depressed since their birth. The various kinds of social sanctions precluded them from taking to more productive occupations.

Adequate nutrition is both an end and means to development. This dual relationship is well acknowledged now and appears to be complementary in nature. In India the first doubt regarding unequal distribution of gains of growth was expressed after the publication of second report of Agricultural Labour Enquiry. Later on Dandekar & Rath's (1971) study revealed widespread poverty nearly after two decades of growth. The results received worldwide attention and anomaly was laid to faulty planning. Prior to the study, growth (per capita income) was accepted as single major objective of planning in developing nations (Shah. 1980) rendering consumption as residual (Marrama, 1959). Improving nutritional standard was never primary objective of planners in underdeveloped countries.
After Dandekar and Raih (1971), bi & multi-model planning came to be accepted as the main development strategy, which focus on eradication of poverty along with growth. Poverty is currently measured in relation to calorie intake. Poverty line which help in the measurement of poverty is determined in terms of level of income (or expenditure) at which observed level of calorie intake is equal to recommended level of daily allowance. All those whose level of income (or expenditure) falls short of the income at poverty line are termed as poor.

Commenting on the miserable conditions of agricultural labourers Azad and Mathur (1976) reported that "it is rather ironical that in an agricultural country like India where more than 70 per cent of the population depends on agriculture for living and nearly half of the country's national income is derived from agricultural production, agricultural workers stand at lowest rung, economically and socially, living in abject poverty and are subjected to inhuman treatment."

According to the Report of Agricultural Commission of Agriculture (1976), the major aggravating factors that are likely to worsen the problems of agricultural labourers are the demographic addition to labour force, the expansion of non-agricultural avenues of employment is unlikely to provide adequate relief to agricultural labourers from pressure of population for many decades ahead and absence of basic institutional reforms and effective control to promote selective mechanization and technological change in agriculture.

Kaul et al. (1977) studied the inter-state variation in intake of calories and protein on the basis of diet surveys conducted by the National Institute of Nutrition. They concluded that per capita income and/or per
capital availability of food grains were two factors behind the inter-state differences.

In India the social origin of agricultural workers as a proletariat class is an outcome of the process of property differentiation, which had its roots in class domination by the ruling class. Thus, the social origin is an economic issue, which could be seen, in various socio-economic structures. This point is highlighted in the following quote of Mencher (1983) "...there were those who were absolutely indigent in the fullest sense, the landless labourers. Members of depressed castes not only undertook work considered abhorrent by the caste peasants, such as tannery, scavenging, etc. but were also in large measure agricultural workers...Thus chanars and dhansaks who had their own prescribed occupations, worked as agricultural labourers...The caste system seemed to have worked in its inexorable way to create fixed labour reserve force for agricultural production. Members of low castes, assigned to the most menial and contemptible occupations, could never aspire to the status of peasants holding or cultivating land on their own,"

Sharma (1983), estimated that thresher mishaps are a recurring feature on the country's agriculture scene. About 10000 farm labourers have been incapacitated in the last 12 years and the number of accidents has been increasing since the last three years. About thousand labourers are believed to have been maimed during the current wheat-harvesting season in the country as against 950 last year. In the year before last, 924 workers were involved in such accident.... Nearly 400 farms labourers in Punjab and Haryana, the two predominantly agricultural States, lost one of their limbs during the just concluded wheat harvesting season.
Estimating the strength of Jawahar Rozgar Yojna (JRY) to remove poverty, Singh and Sinha (1983) observed: "The 'JRY' at its best could pay wages less than minimum wage which is a paradox of 'poverty elimination'. The different wage rates possible under JRY are Rs.9 per day in face of prevailing wages of Rs.12-15 in Karnataka, in Gujrat Rs.15 against Rs.22.75, at Pune Rs.19 against Rs.27, In Maharashtra Rs.15 against Rs.22, Rs.18 against Rs.23 in West UP and Rs.18 against Rs28.85 in Delhi." These wage rates, far below prevailing minimum wage are "exploitation level wages" for mass rural unemployed people. What one expects the JRY as a "productive generated programme" is a self deceiving one.

Bhagat et al. (1984) found that most of agricultural labourers' children were taking 50-75 per cent of recommended allowances of calories. Twenty per cent of children were having less than 50 per cent protein, 15 per cent calcium and 45-59 per cent vitamin C of recommended amount.

Kalkar (1985) while examining the impact of Green Revolution on the work of rural women in subsistence agriculture in Northern India found that it has resulted in pauperization, marginalisation and increased inequality between the sexes.

Satyam (1986) observed that the change in employer-employee relationships is the important effect of Green revolution. The security that was ensured for landless through customary obligations and ties of personal dependence, a feature of feudal society, has now been rapidly eroded due to commercialisation and impact of market forces. This has led to dependence of landless on the market forces that do not guarantee the same type of security that was assured to them in feudal society.
Patel (1987) reported that in Gujarat, seasonal out-migration of labour is accepted as a way of life of poor workers in five of the districts of the state. 889 of the 956 households in three villages covered in the study were migratory in the sense that at least one member of each household had migrated during the proceeding year in search of employment. Seasonal out-migration is essentially an inter-district movement towards agriculturally developed regions in the state.

The Sub-Committee of the Parliament Consultative Committee (1988) observed that the anti-poverty schemes undertaken with the objective of improving the living conditions of agricultural poor have made no major impact. The reason being the sum allotted is too meager to meet the requirement.

Bhalla (1988) observed that the cropping pattern affects absorption of agricultural labourers. In all cases where paddy dominates decisively in the production profile, it is found that labour absorption per hectare for 'all crops' is high. Low labour absorption per hectare, on the other hand, is peculiarly associated with crop cycles in which irrigated wheat is sown in the rainy season. Other things remaining the same, a shift in the cropping pattern in favour of paddy, sugarcane, cotton, jute, and groundnut tends to enhance the demand for labour. On the other hand, the introduction of HYV wheat, in the long run, may tend to depress overall labour requirements.

Patel et al. (1988) examined the employment pattern of rural women in Hissar district, Haryana. It was found percentage of women to total family members employed on the farm was found to decrease with the size of land holding, but large farms had relatively higher employment of female labour than small and medium farms. The major crops absorbing
female labour were cotton, paddy rice, wheat and rabi fodder and major operations were weeding and hoeing, harvesting/picking. And threshing and winnowing. Rural women worked between 9-14 hours a day and in general had only a supported role in agricultural decisions.

Gandhi and Saxena (1988) studied effect of family planning programme in Abampur, Rajpur district in MP. The family planning programme was found to have had a decreasing influence on population growth rate, birth rate and infant mortality rate of the block. The female literacy rate had also increased.

In survey of agricultural labourers' in Mathura district, UP, Sharma (1989) shows that female agricultural labourers are discriminated against. The female wage rate is below prescribed level, and hence, there is a need for more effective implementation of Minimum Wage Act.

Jha (1990) made a study in Munger district of Bihar on the Agricultural labourers and revealed that Bhumihar Brahmins, who constitute the rich land owning class in the district were found to have incurred most of the debt. The average debt per cultivating family worked out to be Rs 404.

Khan et al. (1990) reported that there was no significant relationship between income and knowledge level of respondents with regard to family planning.

Rathore and Shekhawat (1990) conducted a study in Rajasthan and reported that the knowledge of farm women was not associated with their age.
Nair (1990) said that women workers in unorganised sectors suffer from few and poorer opportunity of work, face greater impact of unemployment and underemployment and casual nature of work, greater vulnerability because of lack of skills and education. Lesser mobility and heavy responsibilities, a systematic social practice of under grading their work and lack of access to better technologies, tools and productive assets.

Better employment opportunities, or even a search for them, are the primary cause of male migration. In case of females, marriage plays the dominant role and employment is relatively unimportant. The majority of rural migrants studied were illiterate. Migration for rural purposes, for both rural males and females is very low (Roy and Chakrawarthy, 1990).

Prasad (1990) reported that child workers in Indian agriculture receive extremely low wages and work for long hours without leisure or holiday.

Nanchanajar (1990) examined the position of scheduled caste agricultural labourers, working as permanent farm servants in comparison to others in context of Green Revolution, in village Kanchakodur, Krishna District of Andhra Pradesh. There is weakening of patron-client relationship and weakening of the feudalism. Child labour from schedule castes still exists. Almost all male and females of the schedule castes under the working age joined the workforce as agricultural labourers.

Misty (1990) stated that the forest labourers are in a woeful position as a result of the Forest Department to implement the provision of the Minimum Wages Act; and the inadequacies of the Minimum Wages Act.

The study conducted by Sidhu and Grewal (1990) showed that farm mechanisation, especially tractorisation, has not replaced human labour.
Any substitution due to tracterisation of farm operations has been compensated by labour increasing forces such as increase in crop intensity and labour intensive shifts in cropping patterns.

Jha (1990) observed that, all over the country the conditions of agricultural labourers are simply appalling, as they are miserably poor and their level of living is exceptionally low. Poverty, unemployment, exploitation, misery and uncertainty have become their common features. Virtually they do not lead a normal social life.

Awasthi et al. (1991) found inadequacy of about 24 per cent of energy (calories) than that of recommended energy allowance of Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) in more than 70 per cent male and female children irrespective of their age.

Sheela (1991) stated that 41 per cent of respondents have annual family income between Rs.4,800 to Rs.10,000, 39 per cent of the above Rs.10,000 and 20% of them had upto Rs. 4,800.

Kaur (1991) made a study on Agricultural Labourers in Hissar District of Haryana, stated that a very few possessed one or two milch animals and they bought them out of loan they got for it.

Kaur (1991) identified the problem perceived by women labourers as lack of employment opportunities, problem of overwork, lack of job security, wage differentials and low wages.

Mehta and Kohli (1991) study is based on data for two points of time, 1971 and 1981, and covers the 26 districts of Rajasthan state. The data shows that regional disparities in development are the most important factors influencing the volume and direction of migration.
Geetha Lakshmi (1992) observed that in irrigated area, 50 per cent of respondents borrowed money from big farmers (landlords), while 41 per cent from money lenders and 34 per cent from friends and relatives. In the infed area, 81 per cent of the respondents borrowed money from big farmers, 54 per cent from relatives and friends and 48 per cent from money lenders.

Geetha Lakshmi (1992) studied participation of landless farm women labourers in farm activities and identified that more than 80 per cent of them participated regularly in farm activities such as seeding, harvesting, transplanting and winnowing. They were engaged in collection of firewood during their off days.

Geetha Lakshmi (1992) reported that inadequate food, clothing, wages, medical facilities, drinking water facilities, transportation facilities, abilities to provide education for their children, lack of electricity for the house as the major problems faced by landless farm labourers.

Sarkar (1992) reported that male health assistants or auxiliary nurses/midwives play a small role in educating rural wives in family welfare planning, acceptance is more likely to be encouraged by female health personnel.

Srivastava (1993) opined that in order to appreciate and eradicate the problems of agricultural labourers, there is need to evaluate the sociological factors which have resulted into failure of their economic development.

Ankush et al. (1993) found that 39 per cent of the respondents aspired for increase in their land holding by five to six acres, and 73 per cent aspired for increase by two times more than their present income.
Narayana (1993) reported four important reasons for inter-regional migration are employment, education, family move and marriage. Employment and educational reasons have dominant influence on male migration and marital reasons have decisive influence on female migration to both rural and urban areas.

Channamra (1994) observed a significant relationship between age and annual income and knowledge of ICDS beneficiaries.

Shashikala (1994) stated that annual income of 57 per cent of respondent families was above Rs. 11,500 and income of rest was up to Rs. 11,500.

Pawar (1995) reported that most of the agricultural labourers are landless and totally dependent on wage earning. They constitute the most backward, unorganized and down-trodden sector of the work force. They gradually live below the poverty line and have really been deprived of the fruits of their own labour over decades. Even today they do not get an adequate share of the fruits of the planned economic development. Finding a job every day is their daily work. Unemployment and Underemployment, very low wages, combined with social oppression, make the life of agricultural labourers miserable. The most important feature is that the poverty stricken labourers are not only under debt but the burden of debt has been on increase. This has adversely affected the economic living and social conditions of the agricultural labourers. In majority of the cases, indebtedness persists for generations.

Pawar (1995) revealed that through surveys of landless agricultural labourers, it was found that agricultural workers are not aware of any welfare schemes and welfare laws. And all the programmes and laws have
behaviour. The association of age and family size with communication behaviour was positive but non-significant.

Kohli and Kothari (1996) stated that primary occupation dominates the occupational structure of Rajasthan. Also female participation is less than the males.

Kaur (1996) concluded that women in general are concentrated in low technical, low productivity subsistence sector jobs, or in low paid work. The technological upgradation of crop production in the developed region has almost wiped out women from cultivation.

Desarda, H. M. (1996) suggested that there has been a considerable backlog in the initiation of development projects, and where projects have been implemented, particularly irrigation dams, the projects have not been successful as official statistics suggest, and consequently do little to improve the situation of the people.

It was noted that 1996 World Food Summit is an opportunity for heads of the states to make binding commitments to end world hunger. It directed the Nations to take initiative on: providing farmers with guaranteed access to agricultural inputs; monitoring nutrition better by setting up programmes to ensure all women of child bearing age and all children receive a yearly health and nutrition check; and putting in place safety nets to guarantee all adults a minimum income, in cash or kind, sufficient to ensure subsistence. (Maxwell, 1996)

Singh (1996) concluded that growth in agricultural output due to Green Revolution does not seem to have an effect on female agricultural workers. Due to increase in number of women wage workers in agriculture, their real wage rates were low. Agricultural growth per se did
not cause a significant decline in male-female agricultural workers' wage differentials.

Bhuvel village, Kheda district, Gujarat was first surveyed in 1946 and then again in 1993. The major changes observed in work force are: a reduction in proportion of agricultural workers and increase in non-farm employment; increasing feminization of agricultural labour; replacement of permanent labour by wage labour; within wage labour the growth of temporary and casual labour; and inflow of migrant labour. (Kumar, 1996)

Rathore and Gaur (1996) while comparing the time utilization pattern of males and females in tribal and non-tribal areas. Farm women work for longer hours than men, from 13-18 hours a day. Most of farm women's activities were related to intercultural and post harvesting activities in both tribal and non-tribal villages.

Guha (1996) opined that Employment Guarantee Scheme on Maharashtra helped in building coalition of the rural poor, especially agricultural labourers by way of weakening the influence on a few large landholders in agricultural wage determination.

Focussing on rural labour in Bihar, Prasad (1996) stated that role of governmental and non-governmental agencies is found to be insignificant in organising rural labour due to weaknesses in methods and approaches.

According to Government of India (1997), in Orissa wage for male ploughman was Rs.14.48 in 1991, which rose to Rs.23.28 in 1994. This was lowest in the country as compared to other states. The wage for ploughman was in Punjab. In 1991 it was Rs.37.11 which rose to Rs.61.51 in 1994-95. Though wages have increased from 1990-91 to 1994-95, the
increased wage could not cover their increased need for food and other essential items.

Lata et al. (1997) found that in Haryana state, both men and women performed transplanting and harvesting of paddy, whereas threshing, carrying load on head, weeding by khurpi were exclusive domain of women.

Kishore Kumar and Bijimal (1997) reported that a majority of agricultural labourers stated that unemployment or loss of employment, low wages, indebtedness, small holdings, poverty or malnutrition and frustration as major push factors responsible for agricultural labourers' migration.

Thakur et al. (1997) noted that despite the large number of unemployed agricultural labourers, there is still often a shortage of workers during peak labour periods in Bihar. Out-migration is greater in poorly developed agricultural area, particularly highest among landless farmers. This is not just because of unemployment, low wages, and a slack season, but also because of scarcity of jobs due to lack of infrastructural facilities providing off farm employment.

Bisht and Tiwari (1997) examined the trend of migration from central Himalayan region, UP. They found that out-migration hampers the implementation of developmental programmes, but is a result of low agricultural production and lack of industrial development and other activities. Other factors responsible for migration are education, road connectivity and levels of markets/service centres.
Jha (1997) study focuses on recent condition of agricultural labourers in India, particularly in Bihar. The study shows evidences of stagnant and declining levels in the State.

The Commission on Agricultural Costs and Prices (CACP) in its study on performance of agricultural sector during 1998-99 found that large increases recorded in farm incomes do not appear to percolate down to agricultural labourers. Other findings of the study are: the percentage change in the money wage ranged from 17 per cent in Andhra Pradesh to negative in the case of Maharashtra and Orissa. And 3-10 per cent increase is observed in States of Harayna, Madhya Pradesh, Punjab, Rajasthan and Uttar Pradesh. However, adjusting for increase for cost of living, the April to April real wage increase is found to be negative in Assam, Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Orissa and Tamil Nadu and between 0-3 per cent in most of the other states.

Bhushan (1999) on working conditions of agricultural labourers reported that since Independence many promises have been made on behalf of central government to ameliorate the socio-economic conditions of landless rural poor. But the fact is that even after independence their fate is the same; rather it has become worst all over these years. One of the incidences reported by the Parliamentary sub committee is an eye opener when it was found that an agricultural worker in Patna district was gunned down for recovery of Rs.10 only. And the only action taken by the police was the confiscation of the licensed gun used by the murderer.

Farzana (1999) in her study found that in comparison to the landless households (32%), a majority of households possessed dairy and poultry.
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According to V.V. Giri National Labour Institute (2000) conclusions on incidence of indebtedness among agricultural labourers households' majority of the agricultural labourers took loan to meet their survival needs. This clearly indicates the fact that agricultural labourers in our country are not paid minimum wages as prescribed by the State. Non payment of minimum wages and rising prices in the market have made the life of casual workers miserable. Agricultural labourers do not get work round the year, because in agriculture the work period stretches to four months. To meet both ends labourers enter into debt bondage. This ultimately leads to their oppression and exploitation.

Srinivasan (2000) on enactment of welfare schemes and laws commented that despite as many as 12 legislation and 14 welfare schemes operating in the country, the plight of agricultural labourers is pitiful. The legislation, unless strongly backed by workers organisations on issue basis, is never enforced. In fact, Union Ministry of labour while analysing the effectiveness of existing Acts and Welfare Schemes in its annual report for the year 1999-2000 pointed out that the existing Acts and Welfare Schemes have not adequately protected the interest of the agricultural workers. The Ministry has envisaged alternative strategies such as creating 'welfare fund' by enacting yet another 'comprehensive' legislation for agricultural workers. Sadly, preparation is continuing but never tabled in Parliament.

An Agricultural Workers bill was prepared in 1997 but kept in the files. The workers went on Dharma in 1998 to pressurise the Government to table the Bill. The then Cabinet Committee just passed the bill and nothing has happened since then. In 1999 another modified version of the bill was prepared and the story of negligence continues.
Bhattacharya (2000) stated that nearly half of the women migrate from rural-to-rural areas for marriage.

Sig and Singh (2001) found that those belonging to labour families were seen migrating more in numbers as compared to land owning farmers. Large number of landless labourers (69 %) migrated because of lack of social security in the village. Majority of landless labourers and marginal farmers earned up to Rs. 4,000 per annum in their own village.

Singh and Mishra (2001) neighbours were used up to greatest extent as individual communication sources followed by relatives and friends and tribal leader, village development officer, progressive farmers, veterinary officer and bank personnel. Among mass communication sources, radio was most frequently used source followed by T.V., fair and exhibition. Newspaper and posters were less used mass communication sources. Radio and tribal leaders were perceived as highly credible sources of information.

Bochalya and Dhaka (2001), studied the credit utilisation pattern of beneficiaries youth under Prime Minister's Rozgar Yojana (PMRY). They found that majority of respondents (50.67 per cent) had fully utilised the credit for productive and specified purpose, nearly half (49.33 per cent) of the respondents spent the money in activities other than intended. Among 49.33 per cent of the respondents 9.33 per cent utilised for medical aid followed by home consumption (18.16 per cent), social ceremony (2.77 per cent), litigation (6.67 per cent), payment of old debt (10.67 per cent) and election (1.33 per cent). It was reported that poor economic condition of the respondents led them to utilise money in other activities.
Heyer (2002) studied agricultural labourers of Chakkiliyans, the lowest status and most numerous scheduled castes in Coimbatore in 1981-82 and 1996. It shows during the period under study their position has changed dramatically. The position of agricultural employers weakened considerably, but Chakkiliyans nevertheless found it difficult to stand up to them. This was partly because they were still getting a relatively attractive agricultural employment package in 1996, partly because they were in such a weak position in relation to alternative opportunities.

Murugesan (2002) studied agricultural labourers in districts Kanniyakumari and Kota. 48 per cent of the respondents belonged to the Hindu religion, out of which 32 and 46 per cent belonged to Schedule Caste community in Kanniyakumari and Kota district respectively. 60 and 66 per cent were having 4-6 members in their families and 42 and 50 per cent were living in kaccha houses in Kanniyakumari and Kota districts respectively.

Murugesan (2002) studied agricultural labourers in districts Kanniyakumari and Kota found that various schemes such as JRY, EAS, TRYSEM, IRDP etc, are being introduced in study area with an objective to improve the working and living conditions of the agricultural labourers and to provide social security cover to them. However, the study reveals depicts that none has crossed above the poverty line through these schemes. It was also observed that some of the effects of mechanisation in agriculture are simply disastrous for the agricultural labourers i.e., the replacement of animal and human power by machines in the study region.

Murugesan (2002) reported that the most important feature of poverty stricken labourers is not only debt but also the burden of debt has been on increase. This has adversely affected the economic and social
conditions of the agricultural labourers in the study area of Kota and Kanniyakumari districts. In majority of the cases (62 per cent), indebtedness persists for generations.

Murugesan (2002) found that almost all the respondents both the casual and permanent labourers in the study area (Kota) are deprived of the basic needs for normal living. Unemployment, insufficient and uncertain wages, combined with social oppression make the life of the agricultural labourers miserable in these areas too. Though the casual labourers are paid as daily wages between Rs.50 to 75, it uncertain and meagre for their sustenance.

Singh and Singh (2003) reported that higher percentage of migration takes place amongst marginal farmers and landless labourers from low socio-economic strata. Most of them worked as daily wage labourers and labour jobs as reported were not available daily in the village. This compelled them to migrate. Most of them migrate on temporary basis.