CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION AND METHODOLOGY
India is primarily a country of villages and agriculture constitutes the basis of its economy. About 70 per cent of India's population derives its livelihood from agriculture and nearly one-half of its gross national income is contributed by the rural sector. Apart from supplying foodgrains to a large population of the country, agriculture provides raw materials to major industries like cotton textiles, jute, tea and sugar etc. The purchasing power of the vast majority of the people in India is inextricably linked up with the fortunes of agriculture since the prices of consumer goods are closely associated with the agricultural prices.

No doubt, a rise in rural purchasing power, as a result of the increased agricultural surplus, acts as a great stimulus to industrial development. Prof. Nicholls is of the view that the existence of substantial agricultural surplus is a pre-condition for industrial development. In fact, the inter-action between agricultural and non-agricultural sectors facilitates the growth of both. The demand for non-farm inputs of industrial origin stimulates industrial activity. The industrial growth in turn increases the demand for wage-goods and raw materials, which helps in expanding agricultural employment and income. Increased

agricultural income creates increased market demand for industrial consumption goods thereby providing a stimulus to industrialisation and market development. Thus, India can become a strong industrialised nation only if its agricultural base is substantially widened and strengthened.

Even in future, agriculture will continue to remain India's leading industry both in respect of the contribution it makes towards the gross national product and also promoting employment avenues for the unskilled and unorganised labour force in the rural sector. Since increased agricultural surplus acts as a major stimulus for economic development as well as for raising the standard of living of the people, the prosperity of the whole economy hinges upon the prosperity of agriculture. Thus, "despite her great cities and industries, India is, and will remain in the foreseeable future a predominantly agricultural nation, and her progress will largely depend upon the progress of agriculture and of the rural population."  

In such a predominantly agrarian economy of India, agricultural labourers (AL) constitute the most important segment of rural population and rural workforce. About 74 per cent of the total workforce of 228.9 million in 1971 was reported to have been in agriculture. Further, during the seven years, 1971 to 1978, the

labour force has been estimated to have increased by 36 million, of which nearly 29 million were absorbed in the agricultural and unorganised sectors.¹ But, more surprisingly, it is one of the economically weakest and socially handicapped sections of our rural population. This is largely due to low productivity of land and labour in Indian agriculture as is evident from Appendix 1.

Traditionally, landless labour occupies the lowest rung of the ladder in the rural hierarchy, where it is land and caste which govern status, economic power and political influence. AL usually belong to the scheduled castes and backward classes and having no asset base, they are the most vulnerable section of our rural population and form a major segment of the so called 'weaker' or 'poorer' sections of the society. They toil on land they do not own in scorching sun, shivering cold and beating rains from early morning till late in the evening. Still, most of them are ill fed, ill clad, ill housed and illiterate and live a down-trodden existence in miserable conditions. Mahatma Gandhi identified the major malady of the rural scene as "the divorce between intellect and labour" which resulted in condemning millions of persons to live and work in despair and drudgery.²

Unfortunately, AL are sunk in acute poverty and live under inhuman conditions. They have no job security. They face chronic


² Quoted by M.S. Swaminathan, 'Towards Replicating Economic Growth-Generating Gainful Employment.' Kurukshetra, April 1, 1979, p. 16.
unemployment and underemployment. Their wages and earnings are unduly low. Due to inadequate income, they are very often compelled to borrow money to satisfy even the bare necessities of life. The perpetual indebtedness of ALs make them tied with the employer moneylenders and reduces their bargaining capacity and earnings. In fact this section forms the focal point of our poverty. Dandekar and Rath\(^1\) have estimated that in 1960-61 about 40 per cent of the rural population lived below the poverty line and most of them were AL. These are the people who, for want of adequate food, are unable to attain their full potential, who are particularly vulnerable to diseases and natural calamities and live a precarious life.

A new dimension was added to the problem of AL with the adoption of the new agricultural technology which has a built-in bias towards the promotion of inequalities and poverty galore. The benefits of the new strategy accrued to large farmers more, least to small and marginal farmers and the landless poor were the worst hit lot in this respect.\(^2\) Likewise, the fruits of the development programmes that have been implemented so far have, by and large, accrued only to the affluent sections of the rural society. Thus, 'the fruits of growth did not percolate to the lower classes. The big farmers benefited the most, the landless labourers the least.'\(^3\)

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1. V.M. Dandekar and N.Rath, Poverty in India, Indian School of Political Economy, Bombay, 1971, pp. 8, 16.


This tendency ought to be checked in order to achieve economic and social justice to all its citizens and to establish an equitable, a just, a stable and a happy society as embodied in the preamble of the constitution of India.\(^1\) The U.N. Expert Group on Human and Social Development has also expressed the view that 'the focus of the economic growth must shift from index numbers of national income to the people themselves. People are the world's greatest asset. Bringing out their creativity and potential is the means as well as the end of development.'\(^2\)

In view of these facts, of late, the economic condition of landless labourers and marginal and small farmers who form a major segment of the so called 'weaker sections of the society' has evoked a general concern. A number of studies conducted by the government and research scholars from time to time have highlighted the extreme degradation of this section of rural population. But in case of such a complex and gigantic problem, the general inferences drawn on the basis of 'macro' approach have not been of much avail to diagnose the problem. Hence, as a pre-requisite to evolve policy measures, a study of the problem of AL at 'micro' level is imperative for a proper and fuller understanding of the magnitude of the problem. In order to overcome time lag deficiency, it is also required that frequent enquiries be made of their problems. In what follows an attempt has been made to


study some aspects of Agricultural Labour in Jalaun District and to suggest policy measures for providing them better life and work conditions.

Importance of the Problem:

In a country like India which aims at establishing an egalitarian society, a study of various aspects of AL is very important not only because they constitute the largest single section of India's labour force but also because they are the most vulnerable section of our society. Since they are mostly drawn from the depressed classes, their study brings us face to face with the problems of millions of silent and downtrodden mass of humanity. According to World Bank President, Robert McNamara, nearly 800 million in the world today 'are caught up in what can only be termed absolute poverty — a condition of life so limited as to prevent realization of the potential of the genes with which they were born, a condition of life so degrading as to be an insult to human dignity.'\(^1\) Of the 800 million world's poor, more than 300 million live in India.\(^2\) Among India's poor, the AL (especially the landless ones) are the poorest and they are quite large in number.\(^3\)

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3. The number of landless labourers in India in 1971 was estimated at 47.5 million. See Indian Agriculture in Brief, 16th Edition, 1978, p. 17.
The daily per capita income of a rural labourer who was mainly employed in agricultural pursuits in 1963-64 was as low as 42 paisa as against the then average per capita per day national income of one rupee.\textsuperscript{1} With such a low income, it becomes very difficult for AL to have both square meals a day. Indeed this is a deplorable situation and calls for an urgent improvement in the economic condition of AL because 'poverty anywhere constitutes a threat to prosperity everywhere.' Economic and social inequality breeds hatred, violence and threat to our social stability. A study conducted by the Ministry of Home Affairs sounds warning in these words: "The problem has to be tackled on a wide front, effectively and imaginatively. Failure to do so may lead to a situation where the discontented elements are compelled to organise themselves and the extreme tensions building up within the 'complex molecule' i.e. the Indian village, end in an explosion."\textsuperscript{2}

It is heartening to note that the various measures taken by the Government in recent years to provide the basic needs to all its citizens, especially to the weaker sections of population and to remove poverty and inequality will go a long way to instil in them a sense of confidence and hope for better living and better place in society. Once they are made to get rid of their old ties and dogmas, they would contribute their best for the


betterment of their standard of living and also for the progress and prosperity of the country. The Third Plan rightly stressed that those at the lowest rung of the agricultural ladder should find a pivotal position in the scheme of milieu wherein the small man...is enabled to put his best in the interest of higher standard of living for himself and increased prosperity of the country.¹ What is required is to create an environment and opportunities for the optimum utilization of their potentialities and abilities in growth oriented programmes. To quote Robert McNamara, 'What these men want are jobs for their survival, food for their families and a future for their children. They want the simple satisfaction of working towards something better — an end to misery and a beginning of hope.'² Thus the rural transformation to be aimed at is the growth of an egalitarian agro-industrial society with more employment and less poverty.³

To sum up, since the problem of AL directly influences the problem of poverty, agricultural production, SC and ST and to some extent of the success of democracy and the development of harmonious relations among agrarian classes, the case of AL in India deserves to be properly studied and presented so that suitable policy measures may be evolved and executed for their amelioration and betterment.

1. Third Five Year Plan, p. 5.
Importance of Regional Studies:

Next to China, India is the second largest populated country in the world. Her population constitutes about one seventh of the total world population. Having an area of 32,76,141 sq. km., it is also the seventh largest country of the world. Lying in the southern peninsula of the Asian continent between latitudes 8°4' and 37°6' north and longitudes 68°7' and 97°25' East, it measures about 3219 km. from north to south and about 2977 km. from east to west. India has land frontier of 15,200 km. and a coastline of about 6100 km. At present there are 23 states and 9 centrally administered regions in the Indian Union. Thus 'physically, India is one of the largest countries of the world. It contains a variety of climates, soils and flora. It is a land of contrasts.'

In such a vast country of a continental size, regional differences are bound to be great because "extreme varieties of climate from one end of the country to another, existence of different races with differences in social and religious traditions and beliefs, and general illiteracy among the masses are among the chief causes which daily affect the productive activities of the people." Thus a country's economic life is

influenced to a great extent by its natural and human resources, social and cultural background and political environment. In the matter of these resources and other supporting factors, differences do exist among the states and the regions. Thus, "We have on the one hand, the wirtschaftwunder of the Punjab, on the other the alarming examples of Assam, Uttar Pradesh (eastern) and West Bengal."\(^1\) Not only this, even within a state there are regions which are quite different from each other.

For instance, Uttar Pradesh is a big state and is divided into five regions, viz. Western, Central, Bundelkhand, Hill and Eastern region. Due to differences in economic and cultural conditions, the economy of one region is quite different from that of another region. Similarly, within a region, the economy of one district differs from the other. Apart from physical factors there are a few other factors which cause variations between villages even within the district. These comprise the size of different villages and the availability of infrastructure facilities and basic needs of life in different villages.

Due to these factors, sometimes differences within the sub-divisions of a district become well marked and therefore to acquire a fair and complete picture of the district, these factors must be taken into account in any study of an economic problem. The problem of agricultural labour is so complex that its certain aspects viz. wages, unemployment, income and

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indebtedness require to be studied at district level because in such matters conclusions drawn at zonal and all India level will not be of much avail. All these facts make a prima facie imperative case for regional studies. Pointing out the importance of micro level studies, M.V. Gharpade observed, "A major weakness of our planning has been the neglect of micro analysis at the grass roots level. Insufficient and inaccurate data is largely due to the inadequacy of pains-taking field research."^1

A regional survey would provide necessary data and information for formulating economic plans at grass root level and also help to evolve appropriate avenues for the optimum utilization of the unexploited resources of the region. To quote Tarlok Singh, "In the interest of systematic regional planning and development and serious efforts to diminish regional and other imbalances, dependable statistics and information systems must be established not only at the state level but also for sub-regions and districts within each state."^2 Regional survey at village level in respect of agricultural labour is also significant to provide a remedy for the solution of the problem where it exists. This is particularly significant when there is a shift in plan formulations from 'top-down approach' to 'grass roots approach.' In view of this policy, an economic study should begin with the village as a primary unit, district as the second

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unit and the state as the last stage and thereafter the conclusions should be drawn for the country as a whole.

In a vast country like India, lower level regional plans provide the basis for higher level plans and for framing regional plans, studies at regional levels are of vital importance. No doubt, regional studies are very helpful in reducing regional disparities and in achieving sustained economic development of all the regions. In fact a study of the problem of agricultural labour at regional level enables us to assess the nature and extent of the problem, to ascertain the factors inhibiting improvement in the economic condition of AL and to suggest remedial measures in respect thereof.

Thus, in divergent physical, economic, social and cultural conditions existing in different regions of India, micro level studies are of vital importance. To quote P.K. Mukherjee, "In view of the varied and divergent climatic conditions and agricultural practices in different parts of India, regional surveys beginning with a village as the smallest unit of study and ending in the examination of the conditions and problems of different states or their components, are essential for a complete grasp of agricultural economic conditions in the country."\(^1\)

Review of Literature:

In the first half of the twentieth century, no systematic and sincere efforts were made to study the problem of agricultural

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labour. Though in the economic literature pertaining to the structure of rural society, serious concern has been expressed about the swelling ranks of AL, yet no serious work has been done to explain the genesis of this class and its appearance on the rural scene. It was only in 1950 when with the launching of the first Agricultural Labour Enquiry (ALE), the systematic research on the various economic aspects of AL started. For the purpose of review, these studies may be broadly divided into the following three categories:

(i) those pertaining to pre-independent India,
(ii) those conducted after 1947, and
(iii) those conducted after 1966-67 especially to show the impact of the New Technology on AL.

1. Studies Prior to 1947:

In the pre-independence era, no due attention was paid to the problem of agricultural labour. Even the two Royal Commissions, one on Agriculture and the other on Labour took little interest in their problem. The Royal Commission on

1. For review of studies dealing with the problem of AL, see


Agriculture termed the problem of agricultural labour as "a simple one" and did not consider it necessary to devote more than five and a half pages to it in their voluminous report of more than seven hundred pages. 'Considering that the AL formed the largest single group within the agricultural population, this is certainly a classic of understatement.' The Census of 1931, conducted only three years after the publication of the Royal Commission's Report, disclosed that AL formed 38 per cent of the total agricultural population of the country.

The Royal Commission on Labour did not discuss the problem of AL in India as it was ruled out of their scope by the term of reference. Except passing a few resolutions, the Indian National Congress took no interest in labour problems. In May 1927, the AICC called upon the working committee to organise rural and urban labour in provinces. The Faizpur Congress demanded statutory provisions for securing a living wage and suitable working conditions for AL.

2. S.J. Patel, Agricultural Labourers in Modern India and Pakistan, Current Book House, Bombay, 1952, p.4
Even the eminent Indian economists like Nanavati and Anjaria, Jathar and Beri, Wadia and Merchant, K.K. Dewett and others, Prof. Alak Ghosh, Prof. Radha Kamal Mukherjee and Dr. Saljit Singh paid minimum attention to the question of agricultural labour in their pioneering and immemorial works on Indian Economic Problems. During all these years it was regarded that labour problem existed only in industries and the problem of agricultural labour was not worth giving much attention. Deploiring the then prevailing state of affairs in an article in the International Labour Review of 1944, Sir Atul C. Chatterjee wrote, "We have seen how the State in India has acknowledged the need for providing suitable conditions of labour for industrial and commercial workers when employment is available for them. But as regards landless all no effort has so far been made to provide suitable conditions of labour in ordinary times for this class of workers..."¹

Before 1947, most of the researchers in the field of agricultural labour confined mainly to the conditions of the serf or the bonded labour. A few important studies of this period include those by Lorenzo,² Dantwala and Desai,³ Mavinkurve,⁴ Mishra⁵ and Howard.⁶

⁴ B.S. Mavinkurve, 'Agricultural Wages and System of Payment in the Bombay, Karnataka', ILAE, April, 1948.
It is really strange to observe that even an august body of ILO did not assign due importance to the problem of agricultural labour. Reviewing the booklet issued by ILO on the 19th session of the International Labour Conference, the writer says, 'While all must admit that the handling of agricultural labour is very hard, the ignoring of the problem can by no means be condoned.'

It was only in 1943 that the Tripartite Labour Conference while recommending an enquiry into the conditions of labour suggested further that this should be extended to agricultural wage earners as well. The Indian Labour Minister's Conference held in 1946 approved of such an enquiry, but nothing was actually done. Thus, except passing a few resolutions and expressing concern for AL from time to time, no concrete steps were taken to help them till 1947.

(II) Post Independence Period Studies:

Soon after attaining the independence, the Government of India passed a Minimum Wages Act (MWA) in 1948 for the benefit of AL. The Act aims to ensure the payment of minimum wages to AL. The first ALE was conducted by the Government of India in 1950-51 with a view to having a reasonably satisfactory picture of the socio-economic conditions of AL. The second ALE was conducted in 1956-57 to assess the changes in their social and economic situation as a result of the development programmes

launched during the First Five Year Plan. But due to conceptual differences, the second ALE failed in its objective of providing a comprehensive picture vis-a-vis the first ALE. Thus, despite the two ALEs, our areas of ignorance concerning agricultural labour are quite vast.  

Widening the area of study the First and Second Rural Labour Enquiry (RLE) was conducted by the Ministry of Labour, Government of India during the period 1963-65 and 1974-75 respectively in respect of all rural labour households-agricultural and non-agricultural. The following are the important sources of data revealing the economic conditions of AL:

1. All India ALE Reports 1950-51 and 1956-57, Ministry of Labour, Government of India.
2. All India RLE Reports 1963-65 and 1974-75, Ministry of Labour, Government of India.
7. Reports of Agro Economic Research Centres (ABRC).

9. Farm Management Surveys at selected centres.

10. Studies conducted by the Indian Institutes of Economic Growth.

11. Reports of All India Labour Conferences and Seminars,\(^1\)
    Reports of Projects and Universities' research studies,
    Annual Conferences of Indian Economic Association and
    Indian Society of Agricultural Economics.\(^2\)

Some important studies conducted at regional levels
include 'Agricultural Labourers in Four Indian Villages' by
AERC, Vallab Vidya Nagar and 'The Life of Landless Labourers in
Uttar Pradesh' by Orientation and Study Centre, Lucknow University.

Further, quite a large number of studies have been
conducted by the economists and researchers in this field. A
few important studies include those by K. Bardhan, C.H. Shah,
V.M. Rao, A.V. Jose, A. Rudra, V.S. Vyas, K.N. Raj, N.A. Mazumdar,
Raj Krishna, M.L. Dantwala, D.T. Lakdawala, Rath and Joshi, S.V.
Sethuraman, Dandekar and Rath, Dr. V.K.R.V. Rao, C.N. Vakil, Kale
and Hasalkar, John Connell and Michael Lipton, Biplab Das Gupta
and others, S.M. Pandey, K.K. Ghosh, P.G.K. Panikar, P. Bardhan
and A. Rudra, K.C. Alexander, etc.\(^3\)

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1. For example Shri Ram Centre for Industrial Relations and
   Human Resources organised a seminar on "Rural Labour:
   Problems and Policy Perspective" at Ludhiana on Jan. 13-15,
   1976 in collaboration with the Punjab Agricultural
   University, Ludhiana.

2. The Indian Society of Agricultural Economics in its 32nd
   Annual Conference held at Kanpur in 1972 (Dec. 23-25)
   discussed some aspects of Rural Labour and Employment.

3. For references, see bibliography.
(III) 

Research Conducted to Highlight the Impact of New Technology on AL:

The introduction of new technology in Indian agriculture has opened new vistas for agricultural development but it has not been equally favourable to all the classes. A number of studies showing the impact of green revolution on employment, wages, income and productivity of the AL have been conducted in recent years. Some of the important studies are by Martin H. Billings and Arjan Singh, F.R. Frankel, C.H.H. Rao, C. Mutiah, P. Visaria, Deepak Lal, N. Krishnaji, Ian R. Wills, M.S. Randhawa, P.C. Aggarwal, Richard H. Day and Inderjit Singh, Theodor Bergmann, Biplab Das Gupta, S.S. Acharya, A.C. Sharma, G.R. Saini and R.K. Sharma, P. Bardhan, Herdt and Baker, Jasbir Singh, etc.1 The picture that the observers of the current rural scene have painted is one of emerging contradictions. Therefore, genuine and sincere efforts are being made to understand the implications of the rapid technological changes for the problem of rural poor in general and of AL in particular.

At international level, ILO Geneva is rendering invaluable services to the cause of working class by bringing out various important publications such as Year Book of Labour Statistics, Labour Reviews, Labour Bulletins, Mimeographs and Reports on Labour Conferences and Seminars organised by it from time to time. ILO and FAO also provide a good deal of information on the subject.

1. Ibid.
Thus, we find that of late various attempts have been made by officials and non-officials at different levels to study the socio-economic problems of AL in India as well as at international forums and as a result quite a rich literature and variety of data are available depicting their true picture. However, it is strange to find that in practice no concrete measures have been taken to better their wretched condition.

The Hypothesis:

Even after more than 28 years of planned economic development, the adoption of new technology in agriculture and a series of Land Reforms measures, the economic condition of AL is very miserable vis-a-vis the other sections of the society. It is often argued that the fruits of growth, especially of the green revolution did not percolate to the weaker sections of the society. To test the validity of this proposition, a thorough study of various socio-economic aspects of AL will have to be carried on.

Scope of the Present Work:

The area of the present work is confined to the study of economic conditions of AL in Jalaun district of Uttar Pradesh. It attempts to show how these workers work and live, the amount they earn and spend and the debts they owe, etc. The other aspects to be examined include the size and earning strength of ALHs, wages in relation to price levels, the problem of bonded labour and the impact of green revolution and land reforms on the living conditions of this section of the rural population.
The object of this study is to analyse employment and unemployment, wages and earnings, income and expenditure and level of living and indebtedness of AL. An attempt has also been made to ascertain the causes of their poverty and pathetic condition and to suggest measures for their uplift and betterment. Thus, apart from presenting a correct picture of the work and living conditions of AL, the present study provides the first hand and unbiased data and other materials for a quick diagnosis and solution of the characteristic problems confronting this class of workers in the district of Jalaun.

However, in this study woman and child labour have been excluded because their participation in regular agricultural workforce is very nominal. One such hypothesis is that in Asian agriculture, children, adult women and old constitute a 'reserve army' of 'intermittent workers,' whereas adult men constitute the 'regular workforce.' This hypothesis is fully valid in case of India.

Reference Period:

The data compiled for the present study relate to the agricultural year 1978-79 (July-June).

Methodology:

The necessary information and data for the present study were collected by survey and case study methods. Pre-tested

'Questionnaire Schedules' were used to elicit information from the respondents. These schedules were filled in by direct personal interview method since 'this is by far the most popular method of rural enquiry in the social sciences, especially in more economically oriented surveys.' The data collected were duly checked, tabulated, analysed and the inferences were drawn thereof.

In an economic survey like this, the problem of a suitable definition of sample units, deciding about their location and determining the size of the sample, is the most important task and at the same time a basic one. All forms of sampling involve some choice of sampling units. The sample chosen should be neither too small nor too large but it should be representative of the total population from which it is drawn.

The sampling design involved two stages. In the first stage the sampling unit was the village and in the second it was the household. In the present survey, villages were the primary units and ALHs were the ultimate units or 'key informants.' The village is a more important unit of study in South Asia. This is particularly true in case of India having about six lakhs villages. 'Village' is essentially a 'family-resemblance' concept. Some essential characteristics of a

village are smallness, nucleation, social and religious customs and emphasis on agriculture etc. But, since the socio-economic conditions widely differ in different villages, the selection of representative villages is very important for conducting a useful study.

Selection of Villages: For selection of villages, all the development blocks in the district were treated as basic strata and two villages from each basic stratum were selected by systematic sampling method.* This method is quite different from the one followed by the RLE (1974-75) wherein the sample villages within each basic stratum were selected with probability proportional to size (PPS) with replacement. This method

* This system is very simple, convenient and most commonly used. For example, this method has been used by G.S. Bhalia in his outstanding work, Changing Agrarian Structure in India, Meenakshi Prakashan, Meerut, 1974. This study particularly deals with the problem of Agricultural Labourers in Haryana. Both the 'random' and 'purposive' methods are at two extremes and have got their own limitations and demerits. While purposive selection is based on convenience, the random sampling is based completely on chance. In contrast to both of these methods, the systematic sampling method ensures better representation, if the first selection for each stratum, as has been done in this study, is made by using random numbers. Moreover, it can easily yield a proportionate sample, if we take advantage of its even spread over the population through a corresponding ordering of the latter. To quote Leslie Kish:

"Systematic sampling is perhaps the mostly widely known selection procedure. It is commonly used and simple to apply. It provides an alternative for random and independent choice of sampling units and is sometimes called a "pseudo-random" selection. It is often used jointly with stratification and with cluster sampling...The prime reason for using systematic sampling is that its application is easy, "foolproof", and flexible."

was not used for ensuring the comparability of results at block level by selecting equal number of villages from each block. Further, it is equally true that 'there are many practical difficulties in using purely random sampling methods.' ¹ Again, in ALEs/RLEs, for the selection of villages, the whole India was divided into zones, states and sub-zones according to geographical and economic factors. No doubt, this procedure ensures better representation but it could not be attempted in the present survey since such classification is not well marked at district level and no data are available on zonal basis. Hence, the selection of villages has been made blockwise since block serves as an economic unit for practically all the development purposes.

First of all, listing of villages was done for each block. All the villages having population of fewer than 500 were left as they are situated in remote corners of the district where approach was difficult in the absence of transport facilities. Likewise, the villages with a population of 5000 or more were excluded in listing as they are atypical of the villages and are very few in number. Thus, all the villages having a population of 500 and more but less than 5000 were recorded blockwise along with their population in the same order as given in the District Census Handbook of 1971. The villages so recorded were assigned rank numbers according to their population for each block separately. The first rank number

¹ P.K. Mukherjee, op. cit., p. 183.
was given to the village having the lowest population and this process was carried on till all the villages in each block were awarded rank numbers. For example, the population of 10 villages (A to J) is given and the rank numbers awarded will be as under:

Villages: A B C D E F G H I J
Population: 750 615 501 1218 1580 1307 975 895 3315 2710
Rank (Nos.): 3 2 1 6 8 7 5 4 10 9

From the lists prepared in the above manner, two villages from each block were selected by 'circular systematic method.' The first selection in case of each block was made by random numbers and the second selection was made by adding interval in the first number. To illustrate this point, the list prepared for a block has 50 villages, the interval will be 25. If the first selection is 20th, the subsequent selection will be the 45th village. By this process, 18 villages in all were selected as shown in Fig. 1. The classification of selected villages according to population size is given in the following Table:

TABLE 1.2*: Number of Villages Selected According to Size of the Villages.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S. No.</th>
<th>Size Class of Villages</th>
<th>No. of Villages</th>
<th>Percentage to total villages</th>
<th>Population</th>
<th>Percentage to total population</th>
<th>No. of Villages selected</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Very small villages (under 500)</td>
<td>472</td>
<td>49.32</td>
<td>1,23,607</td>
<td>17.62</td>
<td>Nil</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Small Villages (500-999)</td>
<td>275</td>
<td>23.74</td>
<td>1,92,620</td>
<td>27.45</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Large villages (2500-4999)</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>2.40</td>
<td>78,191</td>
<td>11.14</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>Very Large Villages</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0.62</td>
<td>27,568</td>
<td>3.93</td>
<td>Nil</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Source - Census of India, Union Table A-III 1971, pp. 134-135.
DISTRICT JALAUN (U.P.)
LOCATION OF THE VILLAGES
SELECTED FOR THE STUDY

INDEX
- DISTRICT HEADQUARTER
- TEHSIL HEADQUARTER
- BLOCK HEADQUARTER
- LOCATION OF THE SELECTED VILLAGES
- RIVERS & STREAMS
- ROADS - PULICA
- RAILWAY LINE
- DISTRICT BOUNDARY
- TEHSIL BOUNDARY
- BLOCK BOUNDARY

SURVEY OF INDIA: QUARTER INCH MAP SHEET
NO 54M, 54D & 63C;
Selection of Agricultural Labour Households:

Agricultural Labour Households (ALHs) were selected as the ultimate units for intensive survey. Since the Census of 1971 provides data in respect of AL and not of ALHs, a list of ALHs was prepared for each selected village in consultation with the village pradhan, the village lekhpal, village level worker and a few aged and experienced AL as per our defined concept. These households were arranged alphabetically and 50 per cent households were selected by 'circular systematic method.'

The number of ALHs in 18 selected villages was estimated as 780. Thus information from 390 sample households was canvassed by filling up the Questionnaire Schedules given in Appendix 2 for each household. However, due to complete refusal or non-cooperation of the respondents, 15 schedules could not be completed. Consequently, in all 375 ALHs were actually surveyed. A blockwise list of selected villages and surveyed ALHs is given in Appendix 3.

Before proceeding for actual field survey, a cursory test of selected samples was made and the sampling units were found to be fairly representative because it included villages of all categories; small, medium and large, developed and developing villages and villages situated on road-sides and in remote areas and it also consisted of ALHs- with land and without land. This fact was duly confirmed with my personal experience and knowledge of the area under study.

2. For definitions of Agricultural Labourer and Agricultural Labour Household see the next section of this Chap.
For collecting information from the respondents, pre-tested Questionnaire Schedules were used. The head of the household was personally contacted for recording the information in the schedule under proper headings. Each question was clearly explained to the head of the household and for obtaining correct information and figures supplementary and cross questions were also asked. Thus, in this study due precautions were taken at each stage to ensure the maximum accuracy, however, it cannot be claimed that this study is devoid of all limitations and bias.

Limitations of the Study and the Difficulties Encountered:

In this study my endeavour has been to be as objective as possible and to base results on empirical data and information gathered. However, in such a micro village level study based upon primary data collection, data cannot be exempted fully from memory bias and other built-in bias in responses obtained from ALHs. In fact an enquiry concerning rural areas and the weaker sections of the society has to encounter several difficulties and is always subject to some limitations. Since the present study deals with the various aspects of AL, it has not been possible to discuss some problems more intensively.

It is a hard fact that most of the AL are illiterate, suspicious, shy, short in memory and of incalculable nature. Therefore, several difficulties were experienced while collecting information on such aspects as income, expenditure and indebtedness as secrecy in such matter is considered very significant from the point of view of social prestige. Again, in the absence of proper
records, respondents had to put strains on their memory which is not reliable at all times. The ILO team in the UAR considered that 'data dependent on the head of the household's memory could only be considered accurate in so far as (they) referred to a period not exceeding two days previous to the interview.' ¹ Moreover, asking questions from people who are unaccustomed to keeping written records, cannot be expected to elicit accurate information. ²

Usually, they preferred privacy in the interview at least on matters like income, indebtedness and bonded labour. Even in such cases "there are attendant problems of concealment and mis-reporting according to the sensitivity of the particular question especially in the absence of privacy."³ Therefore, data concerning income, expenditure and indebtedness have got their own limitations.

Furthermore, they did not respond well if interviewed when wished to work and when they feel tired. Sometimes, consistent questioning incurred their annoyance and anguish and they became unco-operative. But, I readily got rapport with them by gentle behaviour and tactfully handling them and later on they found the interview quite a pleasant way to use time.

It was strange experience to find that some households even after reporting that they were not in debt, showed deficits in their


budges while giving a detailed account of their income and expenditure. It is a general tendency of the people to show less income and more expenses. Similarly, in case of indebtedness, some households concealed their debt or showed only a part of it while the others gave an inflated figure just to impress that they were in very bad condition. But such discrepancies were detected and corrected accordingly by enquiring supplementary questions such as components of income, heads of expenditure and sources of borrowings, etc. When they were reminded of debt relief under 'Twenty Points Programme,' they immediately disclosed the exact amount of their debt.

Thus, subject to limitations mentioned above, the data collected and the results drawn in this study, represent a reasonably satisfactory and fair account of the economic conditions of AL in Jalaun district of Uttar Pradesh.

A Review of the Concept of AL and ALH Used in Various Studies:

For conducting a systematic study of economic conditions of AL, it is very essential to define clearly the terms AL and ALH. But 'it is difficult to agree upon a completely satisfactory definition of AL.'¹ The obvious result is that many definitions of the term agricultural labour have been used by various authorities which render the results of two different studies incomparable.

It is surprising to find that even in different Censuses and ALE/RLF Reports, different concepts of AL and ALH have been used.

¹. S.J. Patel, op.cit., p. 68.
For example, in the Census of 1961, an agricultural labour was one working on some else's land for wages in cash or kind. But, the Census of 1971 widened the scope by defining AL as 'a person who works in another person's land for wages in money, kind or share.'

However, a different concept of AL was used in the ALEs. While in the first ALE, people engaged in raising crops on payment of wages were considered as AL, in the second ALE, even those engaged in allied occupations like animal husbandry, dairy and poultry etc. were categorised as AL. Realising the futility of these definitions, the concept of ALH was used.

In the first ALE, an Agricultural Labour Family was one in which either the head or the family or 50 per cent or more of the earners reported agricultural labour as their main occupation. But in the second and subsequent labour enquiries income instead of employment was the criterion for determining the ALH. Due to these conceptual differences, the results of two ALEs are not comparable.

It is heartening to note that to ensure comparability of the results of two enquiries, uniform definitions of AL and ALH were used by the Third and Fourth ALEs. Extending further the area of coverage, the Third ALE (1963-65) defined agricultural

2. Census of India, 1971, Series 21, Uttar Pradesh, Part II-A, p. XIV.
labourer in these words: "A person was treated as agricultural
labourer if he followed one or more of the following agricultural
occupations in the capacity of a labourer on hire or in exchange
whether in cash or in kind or partly in cash and partly in kind:

(a) farming including the cultivation and tillage of soil, etc.,
(b) dairy farming,
(c) production, cultivation, growing and harvesting
of any horticultural commodity,
(d) raising of livestock, bees-keeping or poultry
farming, and
(e) any practice performed on a farm as incidental to
or in conjunction with the farm operation."

Agricultural Labour Household was defined on the criterion
of the rural households which derived major portion (more than 50
per cent) of their total income during the last 365 days preceding
the date of enquiry from wage paid manual labour in agricultural
occupations, only were regarded as ALHs." 2

Thus Census data and ALE/RLE data are not strictly compara-
able hence should be used with great caution. Keeping in view
the suitability and to ensure comparability of results, we have
used in the present study the definitions of AL and ALH as those
used in the fourth and the latest RLE (1974-75) Report.

1. RLE (1964-65)- Final Report, Government of India, Ministry of

2. RLE (1974-75)- Summary Report, Government of India, Ministry