CHAPTER IV

EMPLOYMENT AND UNEMPLOYMENT
During the past few years increasing attention has been paid to the 'employment problem' in developing countries since the problem of hunger and mal-nutrition is closely linked with poverty and unemployment. A policy of full employment has been accepted as the first and most effective component of a programme to eliminate extreme poverty. In pursuance of this objective, the ILO initiated the World Employment Programme in 1970, which aims at contributing to the adoption of productive employment as a major goal of national and international policies for economic and social development. Accordingly, expansion and creation of substantial employment opportunities has been a major goal of all the six Five Year Plans, formulated in India so far since independence.

For determining the extent of employment and unemployment, it is essential to ascertain the size of labour force in the total population or participation rate. Obviously, agricultural labour force, at any time, is a function of the growth in population and


* The employment problem can mean different things to different people, or even to the same person when viewed in different contexts. *Generally, a person is listed as employed if that person had worked for pay or profit to himself or his family on atleast one day (sometimes even less, sometimes more) during the reference period, usually the week immediately preceding the survey* and also those who have a job but are temporarily not at work. See:

the participation rate. 'Participation' means membership of the working force for any part of the period for which labour utilization data are collected. The term workforce refers to all persons, males and females, who fall in the age group 15-59. But not all the members of the workforce may become part of the labour force. "The term 'labour-force' refers to all those who are employed, say for more than a prescribed number of days in a year, on one or several jobs and those who are willing to work but are not able to get the job." 

Participation rate is affected to a great extent by the sex and age composition. The factors that increase participation rate are expansion of education, increasing pressure of inflation, desire for a better standard of living, increasing female participation due to late marriage, erosion of joint-family and kinship ties and fall in dependency ratio. In many parts of the country, the participation of women in work is low, highly specialised and seasonal. The trend in the district under study is not an exception to this general feature. Usually, women from wealthy families do not participate in agricultural work. However, in Indian AERD data it is found that participation of women is significantly higher in high migration villages. In such villages men belonging to ALHs seek work outside the village during peak seasons, leaving the women to look after small family lands.

3. Biplab Das Gupta and Roy Laishley, 'Migration from Villages', EPW, 10(42), October 18, 1975, pp. 1652-1662.
Employment in Agriculture

One of the intriguing features of India's economic development that took place in recent years, is that the proportion of labour force dependent on agriculture has not diminished at all; in Jalaun district it has rather increased from 63.10 per cent in 1909 to 81.1 per cent in 1971 as discussed in Chap. II. At all India level, agriculture and allied sectors employed 73 per cent in 1961 and 73.8 per cent in 1971.

Employment in agriculture has certain peculiarities as compared to that in industry. The outstanding feature of employment in agriculture is its seasonal character. Whereas employment in industry is more or less regular and certain, employment in agriculture is irregular and uncertain due to its peak and slack seasons. Generally, in the peak agricultural seasons of sowing and harvesting, all the farm workers are over employed to finish the work within a short period. Contrary to this, in the slack season of weeding, majority of the workers, particularly those who depend mainly on wage employment, remain either fully employed or continue to work at a very low rate of wages. Thus it is possible that acute under-utilization of labour in 'slack periods' may co-exist with labour shortage in 'busy periods' in the case of a village.¹ The effects of the 'slack period' on labour utilization can be offset to a varying extent by off-farm jobs and different crop combinations,

¹ For social constraints on labour supply in agriculture see P. Sanghvi, Surplus Manpower in Agriculture and Economic Development, Asia Publishing House, Bombay, 1969.
while the peak period demand can be met either by labourers hired from other villages or by bringing in non-regular members of the workforce, such as women and children to help out.

Agricultural workers may utilise their labour either as hired labour or as self-employed. Most of the workers remain unemployed for a long period in a year. Even the self-employed workers are generally under employed. They are continuously in search of employment in non-agricultural activities but the job opportunities available outside agriculture are not adequate to absorb the labour rendered jobless during the slack season. Therefore, the problem of employment should be resolved within the framework of agriculture and the rural economy.\(^1\)

Migratory character of AL is another distinct feature of employment. In busy seasons, AL migrate from regions where labour is relatively abundant to regions where it is scarce. Migration may be either temporary or permanent. Usually, AL migrate temporarily in nearby villages to tide over peak period demand for labour. In a few cases, they shift permanently to towns or industrial agglomerations with the expectation of better jobs and living conditions. The rural-urban migration is higher in intra-districts than that at inter-district and inter-state levels. In the absence of data, it is difficult to quantify the extent of migration in the district. However, it is observed that only a few workers migrate to towns in search of job during the slack season.

\(^1\) Tarlok Singh, *India's Development Experience*, op.cit., p. 102.
It is generally believed that AL are less mobile due to their illiteracy and ignorance, difference in living patterns in rural and urban areas, ties with joint family and the emotional attachment with the village, etc. In fact, an individual might not be tempted to leave the joint family to take up employment elsewhere without a significant increase in his material income to compensate for the loss of psychic income.\(^1\) Biplab Das Gupta identified intra-rural inequality as a major factor leading to migration.\(^2\) A case study of four villages in U.P. reveals that emigration in all the four villages is due to diminutive size of holdings, indebtedness, low wage and lack of employment opportunities. Additional income was the sole motivation in the case of migrants in three out of the four villages.\(^3\)

An important characteristic of employment in agriculture is a gross under-utilization of labour from the point of view of duration (per day, per week, per month and per year). While attached AL get employment for a year or a major part of the year, casual labourers are employed for a short period and remain unemployed for many days. In case of self-employment, AL are generally under-employed.

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There are no fixed hours of work for AL. The length of working day varies according to seasonal conditions, urgency of the operation, strength of trade union and the nature of contract, etc. Normally, an agricultural labourer has to work for long hours varying from 10 to 12 hours according to urgency of the agricultural activities. Permanent workers usually work for longer hours as compared with casual labourers. They have very few holidays with pay. Therefore, daily and weekly hours of work should be fixed and enforced. Although, it is difficult to fix hours of work in an industry like agriculture, yet it is very necessary; otherwise, the effectiveness of minimum wage fixation would be considerably reduced. ¹

Factors Affecting Employment of AL ¹

The employment of hired labour in agriculture is affected by various factors such as the size of holding, irrigation, adoption of new technology, climatic and soil conditions, cropping intensity and cropping-pattern, the volume of AL and avenues for employment outside agriculture, etc.

The days of employment are affected to a great extent by the size of holdings. The smaller the size of the farm, the more is its dependence on family labour and less on hired labour. With increase in the size of holdings, the proportion of farm labour put in by hired workers increases while that of family worker decreases. Thus

the demand for labour will increase if there is highly skewed distribution of land holdings in favour of large holdings.¹

Irrigation is another important factor which affects the demand for labour. Irrigation encourages double and multiple cropping and consequently labour use in farm sector goes up. Actually, irrigation leads to changes in cultivation practices and crop patterns which increase the demand for labour. For example, 'the man days per cropped irrigated acre are about double the number of man-days on the cropped unirrigated acres.'²

The use of new technology has much influence over labour use in agriculture. While mechanisation of farm operations is generally labour displacing, the application of other biological inputs is labour absorbing and the net result will be decided by the relative strength of the two forces. However, there are ample evidence to show that the effect of new technology on demand for labour would be positive.³ But this will happen only if the adoption of new technology is by the large farmers and if the distribution of holdings is highly uneven in favour of large holdings.

Climatic factors very often reduce the demand for labour. In case of failure of monsoon or excess rains, many workers are


3. For a review of various studies relating to effects of green revolution on employment, See Chap. VI.
rendered jobless. Cropping pattern is another important determinant of the demand for labour. Some crops are more labour intensive than others, e.g. tobacco, sugarcane, vegetables. For some others the demand for labour is low, e.g. jowar or some fruits.\textsuperscript{1} It is usually seen that the share of male labour is overwhelmingly higher in cash crops than in food crops. Thus the demand for labour and cropping intensity are positively correlated.

The pressure of population on land greatly determines the level of employment in agriculture. The supply of AL is presented by a large number of landless labourers, marginal farmers, intermittent labour and depressed classes. With rapid increase in population, the volume of AL has increased considerably and consequently the number of days of employment per labour are likely to be reduced. The inadequacy of employment opportunities in non-agricultural sector has further deteriorated the employment situation in agriculture.

Most empirical studies show a positive correlation of wage and employment with cropping intensity, irrigation and the availability of job opportunities outside agriculture, and a negative correlation with the number of ALs. But no less important than these demand and supply factors is the influence of institutional factors.\textsuperscript{2} Thus due to lack of adjustment between demand for and supply of labour, most of the workers remain idle for a long time.

\textsuperscript{1} V.S. Vyas, 'Agricultural Labour in Four Indian Villages', op.cit.
\textsuperscript{2} Biplab Das Gupta \textit{et al.}, \textit{Village Society and Labour Use}, op.cit., p. 13.
Extent of Annual Employment:

Employment is usually measured in terms of man-days or man-hours devoted to different production processes. However, 'the measurement of employment activities will inevitably be a complex matter particularly in agricultural settings.'¹ In this study, the extent of employment and unemployment has been measured in terms of "days of work." For ascertaining the days of employment the procedure adopted was the same as followed by the NSS in its 27th Round. According to it the hours of work were not recorded but three levels of intensity of work were recorded. Work less than 4 hours a day was recorded as zero intensity work, between 4 and 8 hours a day as half intensity and 8 hours or more as full intensity.² This simply means that coding or categorization was done at the field enquiry stage rather than at the tabulation stage.

An agricultural labourer may utilize his labour in wage paid employment or self-employment. The wage paid employment may be classified into agricultural and non-agricultural work. The Table 4.01 shows the extent of annual employment of AL (men workers) in the district.

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TABLE 4.01 : Work Pattern of Adult Male AL in Estimated Number of Full Days During the Year 1978-79.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Agricultural</th>
<th>Non-agricultural</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Wage Employment</td>
<td>179</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>226</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(71.31)</td>
<td>(18.73)</td>
<td>(90.04)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self Employment</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(5.58)</td>
<td>(4.38)</td>
<td>(9.96)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>193</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>251</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(76.89)</td>
<td>(23.11)</td>
<td>(100.00)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Figures in brackets are percentages to total days of employment.

Thus an adult male worker was in employment for 251 days. The wage employment in agricultural and non-agricultural work accounted for about 71 per cent and 19 per cent of the total days of employment respectively. He was in self employment for about 25 days accounting for 10 per cent of the total days of employment. At all India level, the average days of wage-employment of men AL in agricultural and non-agricultural occupations were 185 and 25 days respectively in 1974-75. The corresponding figures for the district according to survey are worked out at 179 and 47 days respectively. Thus the average days of wage employment are slightly higher in the district than those for all India. But the figures are not strictly comparable since they relate to different years. The days of wage-employment have declined at all India level in case of all (men, women and children) labourers during the period 1964-65 to 1974-75 as is evident from Table 4.02.
TABLE 4.02 : Extent of Annual Wage Paid Employment of Workers Belonging to ALHs - All India

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Average No. of Days Worked In</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Agricultural Employment</td>
<td>Non-Agricultural Employment</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Men - All</td>
<td>217 193</td>
<td>25 22</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>242 215</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Women - All</td>
<td>149 138</td>
<td>11 11</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>160 149</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children - All</td>
<td>207 178</td>
<td>17 16</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>224 194</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


In contrast to wage-paid employment, the days of self-employment have increased during the period 1964-65 to 1974-75 in case of all AL at all India level.

It was also observed that in comparison to casual labourers, attached workers were generally employed for a longer period in agricultural operations. Further, the workers with land reported less wage-employment as compared with the landless labourers because the former had to devote some time in cultivating their own land.

According to days of wage paid employment in agricultural work AL can be classified as under:

TABLE 4.03 : Percentage Distribution of AL According to Days of Wage-Employment in Agriculture.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Days of Work</th>
<th>Percentage of Workers</th>
<th>Cumulative Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Upto 90</td>
<td>0.80</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>91 - 120</td>
<td>14.93</td>
<td>15.73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>121 - 150</td>
<td>18.93</td>
<td>34.66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>151 - 180</td>
<td>17.60</td>
<td>52.26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>181 - 210</td>
<td>25.87</td>
<td>78.13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>211 - 240</td>
<td>16.27</td>
<td>94.40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>241 - 270</td>
<td>5.07</td>
<td>99.47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>271 - 300</td>
<td>0.53</td>
<td>100.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
From Table 4.03 it can be seen that the maximum number of AL (about 26 per cent) got wage employment in agriculture for 181-210 days i.e. for about 6-7 months in the year 1978-79. About 16 per cent of the total workers could find job in agriculture hardly for 3-4 months. AL working for more than 210 days (i.e. for more than 7 months) accounted for about 22 per cent of the total AL.

**Employment Situation in Different Blocks:**

The days of employment vary in different blocks due to their varying climatological and biological factors and job potentials. A better idea of comparative employment situations in different blocks can be had from Table 4.04.

**TABLE 4.04: Average Number of Days of Annual Employment of Men Workers-Blockwise.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Block</th>
<th>Wage Employment</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th>(Full Days)</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Agricultural</td>
<td>Non Agricultural</td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>Self-Employment</td>
<td>Average days</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Rampura</td>
<td>159</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>228</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>250</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Madhogarh</td>
<td>157</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>210</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>233</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Kuthond</td>
<td>172</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>219</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>253</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Jalaun</td>
<td>201</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>238</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>260</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Nadigaon</td>
<td>195</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>229</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>247</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Konch</td>
<td>184</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>220</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>247</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Dakor</td>
<td>175</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>218</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>245</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Mahewa</td>
<td>178</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>233</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>254</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Kadaura</td>
<td>204</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>240</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>271</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average for the district</td>
<td>179</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>226</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>251</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
AVERAGE NUMBER OF DAYS OF ANNUAL EMPLOYMENT OF MEN WORKERS - BLOCKWISE

Index

Agricultural Wage Employment
Non-agricultural Wage Employment
Self Employment

Days

Rampura
Madhopur
Kuthbod
Jojina
Nadigovon
Korchi
Dakor
Mahewa
Kadaura
Average (for the district)

Blocks

FIG. 5
The above table indicates that average days of employment were the maximum in Kadaura block (371) and the minimum in Madhogarh block (233). The maximum and minimum days of self-employment were found in Kuthond block and Nadigaon block respectively. These facts have been clearly shown in Fig. 5.

Employment Situation Month-wise:

Employment opportunities of labourers widely differ in different crop seasons and months. In order to have a better idea about the employment situation, we should see the agricultural calendar of the district. The cropping year July through June is divided into seasonal periods of different days. These periods are chosen in view of the sequential performance of tasks throughout the cropping year.

The agricultural calendar of the district is not rigid and the duration for different operations vary slightly according to the nature of the soil and climatic conditions. Farm activities in the district start in the last week of June, when monsoon breaks out. In the months of July, August and September, land preparation activities, weeding of Kharif crops, transplanting of paddy and harvesting of 'Bhadai' crops are undertaken. A casual labourer gets employment for most of the days in the months of April, May, July and the middle of October to the middle of December. These months correspond with the main farm operations like harvesting, threshing, planting of Kharif and sowing of rabi crops respectively.
From the middle of December to the middle of February there is no work on fields and consequently casual labourers are without job during this period. There are also fewer working days in May and June. The days of employment of casual workers get reduced further in the months of August and September due to heavy rains. This does not mean that the workers are inactive during these days. A part of labour time not utilised in agricultural and non-agricultural work is spent in resting and recreational, social and educational activities of all types including attendance at religious and cultural festivals, paying visits to relatives, and attending duties connected with birth, death and marriage.\(^1\) Many of these activities are synchronised with the cycle of agricultural production, and are undertaken mainly during off-seasons. All these facts are indicative of a low degree of average year round utilization of labour.

**Pattern of Employment Operationwise**

Harvesting and ploughing are the main agricultural operations in the district and provide wage employment to AL for the maximum number of days as is evident from Table 4.05.

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### TABLE 4.05: Average Number of Days of Wage Employment in Agricultural Work - Operationwise.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Agricultural Operation</th>
<th>Average Days of Employment</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Ploughing</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>27.93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Sowing</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>13.97</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Transplanting</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>5.59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Weeding</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>8.38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Harvesting and Threshing</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>32.40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Others</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>11.73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>179</strong></td>
<td><strong>100.00</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: The average days of employment for each operation has been rounded up to full days.

More or less, similar results for men all have been shown by the RLE (1974-75) Report as is evident from Table 4.06.

### TABLE 4.06: Average Number of Days in Wage Employment in Different Agricultural Operations - All India (1974-75).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Ploughing</th>
<th>Sowing</th>
<th>Transplanting</th>
<th>Weeding</th>
<th>Harvesting</th>
<th>Others</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Men - All</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>185</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Women - All</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>129</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children - All</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>145</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Employment in Non-Agricultural Work:

Usually, AL get employment in non-agricultural activities in addition to their employment in farm work. Non-agricultural work covers a wide range of activities requiring different extent of time and skill. Since job opportunities in agriculture are limited, AL have to seek employment in one or more of the following non-farm jobs:

(a) Allied agricultural activities such as dairy farming, poultry, fisheries and forestry, etc.,

(b) Agricultural processing activities such as rice mills, sugar mills, tobacco processing, coir making, etc.,

(c) Non-agricultural jobs producing goods and services for the consumption of villagers such as blacksmiths, barbers, tailors, sweepers, cobblers, potters, carpenters and milkmen, etc.

(d) Public-infrastructure-activities such as construction of roads, irrigation projects, construction of buildings, education, health and drinking water projects, electricity and communication, etc.; and

(e) Cottage and small scale industries such as spinning and weaving, handicraft goods, iron works and hand-made paper, etc.

At all India level, the non-farm sector provided wage employment to men AL for 22 days in the year 1974-75. But the wage employment offered by this sector to men AL in Jalaun district is worked out at 47 days which is much higher than the average at national level. Non-agricultural activities are more expandible.

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and more concentrated in the off season in agriculture. Thus there is a negative seasonal relationship between the agricultural and non-agricultural sector in the amounts of labour input at different times in the year. Of course the tendency towards growing dependence of the rural workforce on agricultural activities and a corresponding decline in non-farm activities is unmistakable.

**Self-Employment**

A person was regarded as 'self-employed' in an occupation if he had been working as an employer or own account worker in that occupation. The nature of self-employment is mostly cultivation of land owned and/or leased-in by ALs. Generally, marginal farmers own tiny plots of land and they cultivate their land and supplement their earning by working as hired labour for the major part of the year. Indeed, "the land market in the country is virtually frozen. The claims on land are retained by the households owning small parcels of land but the principal source of livelihood gets shifted from cultivation to wage paid labour." The other sources of self-employment are dairying, poultry, livestock rearing and selling, cottage industries, caste-occupations and petty trade etc. Men AL in the district got self-employment for 25 days. As per the RLE (1974-75) Report, the number of days of self-employment for men AL at all India level was 33 in 1974-75 as against 30 in 1964-65.

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Thus as regards self-employment AL in Jalaun district are placed in a disadvantageous position. Underemployment or disguised unemployment is rampant in case of self-employed workers engaged in cultivating small farms or in operating household occupations.

**Unemployment Situation of AL**: 

The existence of widespread unemployment and underemployment in the rural sector in most of the developing countries of the world including India constitutes one of the serious challenges faced by the present generation today. 'Unfortunately, agriculture in such countries does not provide effective employment to its labour force throughout the year.'\(^1\) Gunnar Myrdal in *Asian Drama* rightly states that the real problems in India are inadequate labour participation, gross underutilisation of labour from the point of view of duration and low level of efficiency of whatever labour is employed.\(^2\) In fact, 'the rural unemployment problem has now assumed alarming proportions in India, proving as it is the biggest social and economic problem.'\(^3\) The Jalaun District is no exception to this trend. Among the rural unemployed, AL are the worst sufferers and are quite large in number.

The heavy pressure of population on land and the inadequate development of non-agricultural sector are two basic causes of

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rural unemployment in the district. Due to lack of adequate job opportunities, a lot of valuable human energy is wasted every year. Obviously, the problem of unemployment is more acute in case of hired AL who remain unemployed for a substantial part of the year.

However, in the very nature of the country's socio-economic situation, it is not possible to make precise estimates of such vital matters as employment and unemployment. In the present study, the term unemployment connotes only those days on which there was no economic activity at all due to non-availability of work, i.e. only days of 'nil intensity' constituted the days of unemployment. The days of partial unemployment were not taken into account for this purpose. This procedure has been followed in the third RLE (1963-65). This is undoubtedly an improvement over the method used in the second ALR (1956-57) in which the number of days, by which the total of days of wage-employment and self-employment fell short of 365, were treated as days of unemployment.¹

The work days lost were further classified according to reasons such as non-availability of work, sickness, inclement weather, ceremonies and rest or holidays, etc. A person may be unemployed either due to want of work or due to not making himself available for work for reasons such as sickness, bad weather, festivals and other social ceremonies, etc., but the absence from work only in the former case has been taken for ascertaining the days of unemployment.

¹. RLE (1963-65) - Final Report, op.cit., p. 16.
The following table shows the average annual days of unemployment of adult male AL according to reasons.

**TABLE 4.07 : Average Annual Days of Unemployment of Men AL by Reasons.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reason for absence</th>
<th>Days of Unemployment</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Non availability of work.</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>77.55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Bad Weather and/or sickness.</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>14.29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Marriage, Festivals, etc.</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>7.14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Other reasons</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Average for the district</strong></td>
<td><strong>98</strong></td>
<td><strong>100.00</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Thus a labourer was unemployed for about 76 days due to want of work and he was not available for work for about 22 days due to illness, bad weather or social ceremonies, etc. For nearly 78 percent of total days of work lost, he remained unemployed due to non-availability of work and the days lost due to other reasons accounted for about 22 percent of the total days not engaged in work. The extent of unemployment varied in different villages due to their varying soil and climatic conditions, cropping pattern and irrigation facilities, etc.

The number of days of unemployment in the district appears to be large but if Sundays (say 52) are allowed as holidays from work, the days of unemployment are reduced to 24 only. Bhattacharjee,  

excluding the days for festivals, religious activities and holidays, estimated 313 days per year available for work (Bihar). Raynaud allowed a minimum of approximately 100 days a year "to carry out necessary religious and social duties and for rest from work." Excluding Sundays and a few holidays in a year, employment for 300 days is usually dubbed as full employment. When seen in the above context, my finding seems to be quite reasonable.

Unemployment in agriculture may be found in different forms such as structural open unemployment, technological unemployment, seasonal unemployment and disguised unemployment. Open unemployment in a predominantly agricultural country may be very small but constitutes a difficult problem. This is the type of unemployment termed as "chronically unemployed" in the Draft Plan (1978-83). The volume of such unemployment as per NSS findings for 1973 was estimated at 4.37 million. Technological unemployment arises on account of introduction of new technology replacing human labour particularly when its availability is abundant.

Seasonal unemployment occurs due to seasonal character of agriculture. In the slack season, most of the hired labourers are rendered jobless. This type of unemployment assumes added significance when alternative avenues of employment are limited. In addition to this, the situation of disguised unemployment or under-employment exists in under-developed and over-populated countries.

The most disquieting feature of unemployment is that the backlog of unemployed has gone up in each successive Five Year Plans as is evident from Table 4.08.

**TABLE 4.08 : Estimated Unemployment in Different Plan Period.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Plan Period</th>
<th>(In Millions)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>----------------------</td>
<td>------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. (a) Backlog of unemployed at the beginning</td>
<td>3.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(b) New entrants</td>
<td>9.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>12.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Additional employment likely to have been generated</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(a) Non-Agricultural Sector</td>
<td>5.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(b) Agricultural Sector</td>
<td>1.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>7.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Backlog of unemployed</td>
<td>5.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Unemployment as percentage of labour-force</td>
<td>2.9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Draft Five Year Plan, 1978-83.
During the Five Year Plan (1978-83), the expected increase in labour force has been estimated at 30 million and the total of unemployed is expected to increase to 59 million. Even if this plan is able to provide 49.26 million jobs the backlog of unemployed would be 9.74. The bulk of unemployed would be in the rural areas. Among the rural unemployed, AL are quite large in number. Raj Krishna estimated the number of unemployed in 1971 at about 21.5 millions - 19.3 millions in the rural areas and 2.2 millions in the urban areas. The Committee of Experts on Unemployment (Bhagwati Committee, 1973) placed the number of unemployed in 1972 at 18.7 million of which 16.1 million persons were estimated to be in rural areas and only 2.6 million in urban areas. The estimated unemployment in March 1978 was placed as equivalent to 20.6 million persons - 16.5 million in the rural areas and 4.1 million in the urban areas.

In terms of percentage, the 27th Round of NSS (1972-73) reported the rate of unemployment in rural areas for All India as 6.4 per cent for males, 10.5 per cent for females and 7.7 per cent for all person. According to Dr. Lakdawala, the rate of rural unemployment on any given day in 1972-73 was about 8 per cent. The

2. See P.T. George, 'Poverty and Unemployment in Rural India', Kurukshetra, 28(13), April 1, 1980, p. 18.
3. Ibid.
NSS data for the first sub-round of the 32nd Round (July-Sept., 1977)\(^1\) provide more recent information on the subject. The results are summarised in the following Table:

**TABLE 4.09 : Unemployment as a Percentage of Persons in Labour force (Age Group 15-59).**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Rural</th>
<th></th>
<th>Urban</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Female</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Daily Activity</td>
<td>7.32</td>
<td>8.89</td>
<td>9.85</td>
<td>16.41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Person-days)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weekly Activity</td>
<td>3.68</td>
<td>3.41</td>
<td>7.41</td>
<td>13.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Person-weeks)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The unemployed in India number about 26 million which comes to about 12 per cent of the total labour force. This ratio is 5.2 per cent in the U.S.A., 3.3 per cent in Great Britain and 1.3 per cent in Japan.\(^2\)

All these estimates are indicative of a high scourge of rural unemployment in India. The incidence of unemployment in rural areas is higher among the 'employee' class, and particularly casual labourers, as compared to self employed. An analysis of NSS data by Visaria indicates that as a class (by usual status) rural employees in Gujarat suffered from almost three times as high an

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2. N.C. Joshi, 'Providing Jobs to the Rural Unemployed', op.cit.,p.16.
incidence of unemployment (in terms of person weeks) as all the other classes of workers employed in the rural areas and the casual labourers fared even worse.¹ Similarly, Parthasarathy finds that, "All states with higher proportion of agricultural labour fall into cells with higher rates of unemployment and vice-versa, the only exception being Karnataka."² Thus the existence of large numbers of unemployed is a tragic waste of human resources and calls for its solution on priority basis.

**Under-employment in Agriculture**

Unemployment in rural India generally does not come to the surface but remains hidden or disguised in the form of under-employment. In fact, the problem of unemployment in rural areas, specially in agricultural sector, is not the problem of unemployment but basically the problem of under-employment. It connotes a state in which labour is wastefully utilised i.e., where labour force is neither fully utilised nor totally unemployed and even if some of the workers are withdrawn to work in other sectors of the economy, the total output will not decline. Sometimes, it is referred to as disguised unemployment. It indicates "a situation in which the withdrawal of a certain quantity of the factor labour to other uses will not appreciably diminish the total output of the sector from

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1. P. Visaria, 'Poverty and Unemployment in India - An Analysis of recent Evidence'. *(Mindep)*

which it is withdrawn."\(^1\) Thus a situation when a worker is visibly employed but his contribution to total production is zero, is referred to as disguised unemployment or hidden unemployment or under-employment.

Underemployment is chiefly found among cultivating workers, small peasants and AL. To quote Tarlok Singh, "Underemployment exists in its acutest forms in the rural areas, those who suffer most from it being agricultural labour, artisans and smaller cultivators."\(^2\) In agricultural sector, the workers are visibly active but do not find adequate job to utilize their labour fully. Most of the workers on family farms and AL in rural sector fall prey to this malaise. This situation is largely due to the fact that "for millions of persons born in rural districts, there is no escape from an agricultural career."\(^3\)

An increase in the supply of labour-force beyond a certain point can find no gainful employment in agriculture. Underemployment is, therefore, basically the result of enormous population pressure without corresponding expansion in the supply of land, capital and other inputs to keep the labour-force in employment continuously. In addition to these, the lack of adequate non-agricultural employment avenues and decline of household and cottage industries contribute much to the problem.\(^4\) Thus, "disguised

4. B.D. Kale and J.B. Hasalkar, op.cit., p. 94.
unemployment will be greater, if the subsistence sector is more important which generally absorbs the excess labour and which serves as shock absorber for cyclical fluctuations of external demand.\(^1\)

A crude estimate of disguised unemployment or underemployment can be made by ascertaining seasonal variations in the number of days the workers could secure employment in a year as well as the number of hours the workers could work on each day of employment. Days of employment in a peak month can be taken as the norm for full employment. By taking 300 days with 8 hours work per day as full employment norm, a rough estimate of underemployment can be made. To estimate the extent of disguised unemployment, "we have to find a difference between the number of labour days being put in on various agricultural operations and the number of days actually required on the farms for the existing total agricultural output."\(^2\)

But since such elaborate data are not available in our country, we must be contended with rough estimates.

In view of difficulties associated with the collection of data on this aspect and their limitations, no fresh attempt has been made to make estimates of disguised unemployment for the district. It would, however, be useful to examine here a few estimates made by the others for different places. Uppal has taken 30-41 man-days as the standard labour input per acre and labour employed over and above the standard labour input is tantamount to

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disguised unemployment. An important study by Majumdar has come to the conclusion that roughly about 71 per cent of the farmers and workers are affected by disguised unemployment. Mathur estimated disguised underemployment at 33.1 per cent of the rural working-force in West Bengal, 4.8 per cent in the Punjab and 8.8 per cent in U.P. A few other estimates will further indicate the acuteness of the problem.

According to ALE (1964-65) Report, the extent of underemployment is on an average 82 days of unemployment in a year for 84 per cent of AL who have some employment during the year. Assuming persons working less than 48 hours a week as underemployed, the NSS has provided some estimates on the extent of underemployment. Persons working less than 28 hours per week were considered severely underemployed and those working between 29 and 42 hours as moderately underemployed. The percentage of employed males and females working for 28 hours or less in Indian agriculture in 1961-62 was 3.96 per cent and 5.83 per cent respectively. The Bhagwati Committee on unemployment (Report submitted in 1973) made reasonably good estimates of underemployment as shown in Table 4.10.

1. Ibid., p. 117.
TABLE 4.10: Estimates of Disguised Unemployment - All India.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hours of Work Per Week</th>
<th>Males</th>
<th>Females</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rural 1-14</td>
<td>4.44</td>
<td>4.02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14-28</td>
<td>12.18</td>
<td>11.38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Urban 1-14</td>
<td>0.78</td>
<td>0.61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14-28</td>
<td>1.83</td>
<td>1.64</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: N.C. Joshi, 'Providing Jobs to the Rural Unemployed', op. cit., p. 17.

From the above figures, it is clear that the underemployed people in India in 1971 having work for less than 14 hours a week were 8.4 million in the rural area and 1.3 million in the urban area of the country. On this reckoning unemployed persons in 1971 were 18.7 million which included 9.0 million who were unemployed and 9.7 million who worked for fewer than 14 hours a week. It means that unemployed and underemployed persons were almost equal in number. And yet, in practice we hardly consider underemployment as any problem for the reason that it is neither visible nor does it pose any degree of threat to the stability of our economy and the Government.

There are some economists who do not consider underemployment as a serious problem. For instance, John W. Mellor and T.V. Moorti, on the basis of their farm business analysis of 30 farms in Sidhekur, a village in Agra District of U.P. during the year 1959, came to the
conclusion that a "substantial increase in yield is possible through
greater and more effective application of labour."\textsuperscript{1} However, it
cannot be denied that the problem of underemployment in the rural
sector remains as intractable as that of unemployment. Thus both
unemployment and underemployment are serious evils and need to be
tackled immediately but the latter is less injurious than the former,
as observed by Radha Sinha: "Since unemployment leads not only to a
lack of earnings but also to frustration and human degradation; more
disguised unemployment spreading limited employment opportunities
evenly among people is preferable to the complete unemployment of
some. In a country that cannot be made prosperous overnight, the
sharing of limited employment opportunities is a social necessity."\textsuperscript{2}

Despite various measures taken during the Five Year Plans to
eradicate poverty and unemployment, "it has not been possible to
expand work opportunities on a scale sufficient to provide for new
entrants to the labour force much less to reduce the backlog of
unemployment or to make a dent on the problem of underemployment."\textsuperscript{3}
Therefore, any strategy to be effective has to be based on the
understanding of the characteristics of various types of unemployment
and their root causes.\textsuperscript{4}

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{1} J.W. Mellor and T.V. Moorti, 'Farm Business Analysis of 30
\item \textsuperscript{2} Radha Sinha, \textit{Food and Poverty}, Ambika Publications, New Delhi,
1976, p. 46.
\item \textsuperscript{3} Tarlok Singh, \textit{India's Development Experience}, op.cit., p. 91.
\item \textsuperscript{4} M.L. Dantwala, 'Rural Employment - Fact and Issues', \textit{EPW},
\end{itemize}
Employment opportunities in the rural areas can be expanded by the development of agriculture and rural sector. Employment in agriculture can be extended by intensive cultivation through the extensive use of new inputs (especially of irrigation facilities) but restraining the labour displacing mechanisation of farm operations. There are ample evidence to show that labour use per ha is higher on the smaller holdings.¹ This may happen either due to higher cropping intensity or more labour intensive cropping pattern on small farms. Obviously, increase in output, if accomplished through a larger contribution from small farms, will make a significant contribution in augmenting employment.² Hence the programme of land redistribution has a vital role to play in augmenting employment avenues and in containing the socio-economic power of the rural elite.

The overall development of rural economy provides a very effective strategy for rural employment. The programmes to be included comprise: the development of productive activities such as animal husbandry, poultry, forestry, fishery, etc., promotion of agro-based industries, development of infrastructure facilities and the growth of village and small scale industries. Integrated Rural Development and Food for Work Programmes are expected to do commendable job in generating employment opportunities in rural

¹ See P. Visaria, 'Size of Land Holdings, Living Standards and Employment in Rural Western India (1972-73)', mimeo. Also see 'Employment Structure and Planning Policy' Perspective Planning Division, Planning Commission, New Delhi, May, 1977.

areas. Thus, "the solution to the problem of low level of labour use in the rural sector will have to be found within the rural sector itself." Further, minimum essential needs should be made available to rural population to prevent exodus from the rural areas to the towns. Therefore, "in the long run the question to be resolved is not only how to provide additional jobs in the rural areas but also how to make life sufficiently attractive so that the incentive to drift to towns is eliminated." Hence measures devised for generating job avenues and for providing amenities of better life in rural areas should be well harmonised.

2. Radha Sinha, Food and Poverty, op.cit., p. 47.