CHAPTER-VIII
RESUME AND CONCLUSION
In the preceding discussions, I have attempted a broad identification of the rural poor with different concepts viz., Green Revolution, Underemployment, Land Distribution including Absolute as well as Relative standards.

In the chapter on 'Absolute Rural Poverty', it was found that nearly 14 percent of the households and 16 percent of the population fell below the poverty line (Rs. 83.68). This shows that the population below the poverty line goes on declining with the passage of time. Secondly, we have found in this chapter that the percentage of population as well as households below the poverty line go on increasing as the size of the family increases till it reaches 'eight'. It was obvious that the cause of poverty is the large size of the family. That is, the poorer families have more members than the richer families. Their income is less and members are more, so their per capita income is less than the poverty line. Thirdly, poverty is lower in developed districts, such as Ludhiana as compared to the backward districts such as Sangrur and Bhatinda. Ludhiana has the lowest incidence of poverty and Bhatinda has the largest incidence of poverty. This also explains that backwardness is one of the causes of poverty.

In the chapter, "Relative Rural Poverty" it was found that income distribution was relatively fairer in the case of Ludhiana district and the worst district was Patiala so far as income inequalities were concerned. This shows that it is not necessary that the district which has the largest inequalities must have the greater extent of poverty. Thus, a negative correlation between inequalities in income and the extent of poverty, can very well exist.

It was found that most of the rural poor belong to:

(i) rural households operating no land i.e. landless labourers, agricultural labourers, artisans etc.
(ii) agricultural labour households with some land i.e. having land less than 2.5 acres.
(iii) small landlords, operating on land more than 2.5 acres but less than 5.0 acres.

The impact of the Green Revolution has been different on these categories. The factor behind the first category is low wages. In this study, we have found that:

(a) The Green Revolution has increased the demand for labour through intensive and extensive cultivation and a multiple cropping pattern.
(b) The wage level in Punjab did not increase adequately due to a large inflow of labour from U.P., Bihar and Orissa. Due to
an increase in the supply of labour in the rural sector, wages tended to remain low, and low wages are the main cause of the poverty of landless labourers.

Considering the daily wage rate for casual male labourers, we see that the weighted average daily wage rate per casual male agricultural labourer has gone up by 89 percent during the period 1960-61 to 1967-68. But on the other hand, the Consumer Price Index for Agricultural Labourers (CPIAL), as prepared by the Labour Bureau of the Government of India, rose by 93 percent during the same period. So the average real wage rates in Punjab do not seem to have gone up.

The small and marginal farmers also did not gain more as individuals than in organised groups. With real power in the hands of the 'elite' as the village institutions, the small and the marginal farmers seldom have access collectively to technical and financial assistance provided by the government.

Notwithstanding the fact the technology may be neutral to scale, the credit and inputs required for cultivation are rarely available to the small farmers from the established financial institutions. The difficulty is more glaring in areas where financial institutions are in a position to help the small farmers, the procedures are cumbersome. This being the state of affairs, a small portion of the non-viable farmers may have to shift to wage employment.
It is evident that the factor behind the small farmers to adopt the new technology is a lack of adequate credit facilities. The shift to the new technology by relatively big farmers had led to a growing polarization in Punjab between the big and rich farmers on one hand, and the small and poor farmers on the other hand. Thus, the rich becomes richer and poor becomes poorer with the adoption of new technology. There is sufficient empirical evidence to show that small farmers are selling their lands to relatively big farmers.

One cannot explain easily the socio-economic forces lying behind the purchase and sale of land in Punjab, but is very clear that the new farm technology associated with the Green Revolution is a major contributing factor to the shift in farm size in Punjab. A portion of the small farmers who are not subsistence farmers cannot adopt new farm technology because of their inability to obtain requisite credit, and, as a result, they are faced with losing competition against the more affluent farmers.

These farmers are left with two alternatives:
(i) Either to sell their land in order to swell the rank of landless labourers, or
(ii) To sell a part of their land holdings in order to become subsistence farmers who produce for family consumption and not for market.
Although the Green Revolution has increased the agricultural output, it has given an impetus to capitalist farming in Punjab. Also, it has widened the regional disparities in income distribution in Punjab State.

The position of small and marginal farmers has been analysed in the chapter, 'Land Distribution and Rural Poverty'. It was found that the percentage of households as well as the population living amidst poverty is much more in the case of small farmers (having land less than 5.0 acres) as compared to big farmers. The percentage of poverty is greater in Bhatinda district and it is least in Ludhiana district. This further proves that backwardness is the cause of regional disparities. We found that income inequalities and land inequalities are highly correlated in each district. That is to say, to reduce inequalities in income, one must first reduce inequalities in land distribution. Finally, it was revealed that to eliminate poverty among farmers, a total of 837 acres of land is required. But the available land after land redistribution (ceiling 20 acres) comes to only 827 acres. Thus, 10 acres of additional land is required to eradicate poverty totally among the farmers if one estimated the percentage of poverty from the point of view of land distribution.

In the chapter, 'Poverty and Underemployment' we have firstly critically examined the concept of underemployment
and then defined underemployment in terms of income criterion as 'a person/household is regarded as underemployed if his per capita per acre income/per acre income falls short of the average per capita per acre/average per acre income in that particular district'. In the second section we have presented the extent of underemployed families and persons in different districts. Finally, we have correlated the extent of underemployment with the extent of poverty on the assumption that a person who is underemployed cannot necessarily be regarded as poor. In fact, in LDCs everybody is underemployed barring a few. We have obtained in our study a negative correlation between these two variables.

In the last chapter, we have given some anti-poverty measures and policies for eradication of poverty and inequality. Poverty can be reduced to some extent with the following measures, such as, (i) Land Reform (ii) Altering the functional distribution of income through policies designed to relative factor prices; (iii) Redistribution of asset ownership; (iv) Reducing income at the upper level through taxes; (v) Increasing the income at the lower level through direct transfer payment;
(vi) Reducing poverty through distribution of earnings;
(vii) Through the introduction of appropriate technology;
(viii) Through the establishment of rural industries;
(ix) Education.

It is possible to reduce poverty through the adoption of these measures. However, complete elimination of poverty is essentially dependent on a number of national and international measures the implementation of which requires a long-run time horizon.