Organising the Agricultural Workers.

Agricultural Labourers are essentially 'have nots' and any organisation of this class is bound to be resisted by the richer class. The Government was facing law and order situation since some of the movements acquired militancy. However, it is viewed that the conditions of agricultural labour can not improve unless they are organised. In recent times, there have been several movements in areas where the semi feudal influence has been pronounced.

The need for organising of the agricultural labour has been emphasised in the Plan documents since the Fifth Plan. It was felt that then organisations of the agricultural labour would be essential to protect them from exploitative forces in the rural scene to improve the bargaining power and also to act as pressure groups for an efficient delivery of the benefits of the developmental programmes. The need for a reception system to gear up the functioning of the delivery system was considered as essential for the successful implementation of the programmes planned for the agricultural labour. It was indicated in the Sixth Plan document that then organisation of the agricultural labour needs to be sponsored by the workers themselves or voluntary organisations including political organisations interested in the welfare of the rural poor. The Govt. may take some measures to facilitate the process. These would include
suitable legislations for conferment of specific rights to the rural poor to set up unions for safe guarding their interests registration of such unions of the rural poor...... training and education of the rural poor. In the context of the implementation of the Integrated Rural Development Programmes for the alleviation of poverty, the need for organising the beneficiary groups was felt by the administration for an effective receptivity of the programme. The evaluation studies of I.R.D.P. also recommended the formation of beneficiary groups.

The Seventh Plan document emphasised the need for organising the rural poor, more specifically in the context of the poverty alleviation programmes and their implementation.

The elites or the rich in rural areas form net works and grab public resources and benefits which are meant for the poor. Credit and marketing facilities are almost completely monopolised by the elite groups. In case of disputes the poor are always on the loosing end, since the rich, by virtue of their good links with the police and legal authorities can escape the consequences. The elite are generally knowledgeable of what the system has to offer and generally, have time and resources to pursue their goals unlike the poor. Creating new opportunities for those who are powerless does nothing in and of itself to negate the influences of the elite groups which are active in decision making. In the light of these revelations it is imperative that the poor must be empowered.
Field experiences have shown that the coercion exerted by political elite through collusion with lower echelon bureaucrats and violation of positions as most damaging aspects of organisation of rural poor. To prevent such acts, there is a greater need for legal and executive support for the organisations of rural poor. The agricultural labour class is unorganised. They can only be organised by co-operative organisations. To liberalise the participation of rural poor in co-operatives, the existing co-operatives laws and rules may be suitably amended and provisions of legal and police protection should be provided to safeguard the interests of the poor. Since marketing and raw material supply in time are essential elements of success of co-operative ventures of income generating projects, the government agencies must come forward to generate marketing net work and supply raw materials to avoid the exploitation of poor by the middle men.

**Involving Voluntary Agencies:**

It is strongly believed that the organising of farm labour should be done by voluntary agencies which can provide a higher level of dedication than the Govt. machinery which is affected by the number oriented target syndrome. The I.L.O. Director General in his 1986 report has noted that the organising and awareness generation campaign must be left to the voluntary agencies and persons committed to the poor and who posses the social and behavioural skills needed to work closely with them.
A good deal of voluntary efforts is already put in especially in the area of organising the rural labour in India. The non-governmental endeavours to organise the agricultural labour include the Unionisation of certain occupational categories of the rural poor such as the farm labour and rural artisans, forming of co-operatives of the rural workers and the formation of the village level associations through the efforts of voluntary organisations.

Among the many farms of organising rural poor, the following are commonly practiced in many states (i) organising rural poor into homogeneous groups as associations of poor Sangams; (2) Unionising (3) Organising productive groups of beneficiaries of Government Programme and (4) Co-operativisation. The first category is a combined approach where some aspects of Unionising and some aspects of co-operativisation are integrated in its functioning. This is widely practised by the voluntary organisations while productive groups and co-operativisation are largely promoted by the Government. Unionism is promoted by the political parties.

The Unionisation of farm labour is intended to promote and strengthen their bargaining power for better wages and working conditions and for a more effective implementation of the social legislations, such as Minimum Wages Act, Equal Remuneration Act etc. However the Unionisation of farm labour has excepting in one or two states been very insignificant in terms of membership strength. Such type of efforts have not been in the practice in the areas of
Bundelkhand Region which is the subject matter of the present study. Several factors have been indentified for this very low degree of unionisation of farm workers in the country. As instanced in the field survey of the study, it was found that the farm workers are still dependence on the landlords. Besides the scattered nature orf the workers schemes among themselves, poor implementation of social legislations and the non-availability of outside leadership for organising the farm labour as is the case with the industrial workers, are identified as the major factors unfavourable to the growth and spread of unionisation of the farm workers. It is also sometimes questioned as to whether the model of unionisation applicable to the workers in industrial situations, can strike roots in the rural enviroment and be applicable to farm workers. In few places, co-operatives for forest labour, contract labour to execute works have been tried with mixed success also in the District of Jhansi but it is not popular in other areas. In the villages where the field survey of the present study has been conducted these activities are still absent and there is nobody who can talk about.

**Promoting People's Participation.**

People's participation is usually recognised as a pivotal elements in the rural development process. Although the American Congress has declared in its Foreign Assistance Act in 1973 itself to extend full assistance for projects
which aim at people's involvement in planning implementation and sharing of benefits, it took many years to operationalise this concept in the developing countries where the rural poor constitute a majority and an abundant resource.

The concept of people's participation meant different things for different people. For project administrators participation in implementation was important, while political scientists concern was to involve people in decision making, on the other hand economists have given much emphasis on participation programmes. There is a consensus now that all these components are essential for effective operationalisation of the concept.

Broadly speaking, People's participation is understood as the involvement of a significant number of persons in situations or actions which enhance their well-being (Mishra-1984). In the contexting development, participation is interpreted in two ways, an input to development and empowering the rural poor to play an effective role in rural development (Ghai in Dak leg and Marsden - 1985). Participation is thus recognised as an intrinsic part in the process of development rather than being merely a facilitation.

Participation in a modern viable theory of democracy is described as the process of increasing the value of his freedom to the individual by enabling him to be (and remain) his own master. (Rousseau, dited in Carole 1970:26) Participatory process ensures that all the individuals are
equally subject to the law. It enables collective decisions to be more easily accepted by the individuals. Participation so far as the majority are concerned, in participation in the choice of decision makers. (Carole 1970:14) Its functions are to protect the individual from arbitrary decisions of elected leader and also to protect his private interests.

**Participation and Human Resource Development:**

The policy implications of the human resource development strategy have a bearing on participation of the poor. Aristotle analysed the administration of Greek city likely contributed to human development and the good life. According to his finding Participation in the affairs of the state as a citizen was essential to the development and fulfillment of the human personality. Wide spread education and equitable distribution of wealth were recognised as the conditions for human resource development. Human Resource development is based on faith in the potential inherent is every human being. The human resource strategy recognises the abundant labour resource which can be utilized for production and infra structure creation. This can happen only where poor are guaranted certain minimum control over the means of production and decision making in public affairs. The exclusion of people from development and civic politics meant that "One did not develop fully the faculty of reason" a sense of responsibility for other's welfare, while participation did not unfairly produce such virtues in all persons its denial contributed to ignorance and selfishness (Aristotle cited in Mishra 1984:4)
People's participation in development is an educational process. It is to create a sense of awareness, a sense of involvement, a sense of belongingness and a sense of possession or ownership. It is to develop self reliance, self-confidence, competence and managerial capacity. It is to enable them to discover their innate potential, increase their aspiration level and mobilize their resources for productive purposes. Participation is to activise people from possessiveness to be thinkers decision makers, doers and implementors (Selty, 1985:76).

To summarise, it can be said that participation has three roles, educative, integrative and empowering. Participatory process educates a person in social responsibility for himself and for the community. In the widest sense, it includes both psychological aspects and the gaining of practice in democratic skills and procedures. Participation enables an individual to increase the feeling of belongingness and thus derives integration. It may faster a sense of competence at the local level which then spreads to the National level. Through participation a transformation is expected to take place from 'Superiority - subordination', to one of co-operation and equality. The objective is essentially ensuring fullest self-expression of all the members. Self expression involves self government which means full participation of people in a common direction in the affairs of a community. In essence, the whole purpose and process of participation is Human Resource Development -
intellectual technological entrepreneurial and even moral with stimulus and support external to the community.

Participation can occur at various levels and it is of various kinds and modes. The programmer by their nature determine or limit the scope, shape and manner of people's participation. Participation at the village level depends upon the social structure, power structure and class composition. In most decisions that concern the total community, the poor and the less influential and generally ignored. Sometimes, the participation, mostly in terms of labour, material or money, is done under coercion or social pressure. (Selty 1985:78). The composition of rural community is extremely broad and it does not allow one to differentiate between those who are being impoverished or enriched within such a category. The composition of the poor is variously described. They are dynamic and fragmented in majority or the village communities. It is extremely important to know the existence of a web of relationships and their disabilities to find solutions for their increased participation in development.

While no statement on poor can have a universal application, the following encapsulates the major elements of the poor as the target group -- (that section of the rural population whose basic minimum needs for life, and existence with human dignity, are not fulfilled. Such a condition of poverty is characterised by low incomes, widely associated with various forms of oppression under social structures
through which dominant social groups are able to dictate the conditions of life of the latter's labour and often also the material assets the latter may initially possess. (1) The present study is related to the section of population which remains attached in dependent wages to those who have control over land and capital.

From the literature on conditions of rural and on the basis of experience of field survey the following may be gleaned (1) They lack power resources such as education, land, wealth social status, inheritance, skills (2) They lack access to and information about resources for development. (3) They are dependent to a large extent on local money lenders and rich land lords. (4) They lack aspirations and believe in fatalism and (5) They are characterised by the air of despondency and despair. 2

Literature on their plight and poverty despite 'Poverty Alleviation' programmes reveals that a major obstacle has been in actually reaching the poorest of the poor. Although some impact in terms of relief of a temporary nature seems to have been felt, the poverty alleviation programmes have not been beneficial to the poorest of the poor. 3 The rural elite, formal and informal leaders and middlemen groups have more to say in decision - making or sharing of benefits in rural communities, while the poor are seldom involved in policy-makers and decision-making.

1. Rahman - 1981 - 3
2. Oak by and Marsden 1985:11
While analysing and meagering the extent of participation of the poor it is necessary to examine their involvement in various aspects of the development projects - decision making, implementation, benefits sharing and evaluation. Decision making includes (1) activities such as generation of ideas, formulation of opinions (2) activities such as prioritising and formulation of plans and operational of benefits. Implementation includes resource mobilization or contribution, administration and co-ordination and benefits sharing. Benefits may be grouped into three categories (1) material land livestock, implements, machines (2) Social services and amenities such as education health, housing, water supply, roads and (3) personal self esteem political power efficacy etc. Evaluation concerns with questions such as whether the initiative comes from above or below, whether inducements are voluntary or coerced, whether the structures and channels of participation for decision - making are conducive or not, whether continuous or intermit-tent and how much capacity people have obtained from their involvement empowerment.

Keeping these aspects in mind if the whole village projects are analysed, it can be said that the participation of the agricultural labour or rural poor is almost nil or pseudo in nature. It has been found in the field survey that this class of people are ignorant and are kept aloof from the projects which are framed for their benefits. The participation of the rural poor is affected by various

factors, social political, cultural, economic, physical historical and even psychological. Ignorance and lack of motivation aspiration for immediate tangible benefits group rivalry and functionalism, centralised power structure, bad records and lack of communication facilities etc. are all factors which can affect the participation of rural poor. 3.

Leadership Development and Community work.

In the context of community development people's participation became an imperative aspect to implement various programmes and plans of the local administration. It became extremely difficult for the extension officials of various departments to influence the rural masses without the help and support of the rural leaders. Traditional rural leaders were reluctant to respond to new ideas and diffuse them into the community. Planners and other officials have decided to introduce the democratic decentralisation system to augment people's participation and new leadership to correspond the progressive realisation of a decentralised order. These organisational innovation was sought to bring about fundamental change in the organisation of rural poor power structures. The three tier Panchayati Raj system was the result. It invited common man for peaceful reconstruction, but in reality. Only the higher ups of the traditional power pyramid could effectively make adent in the completion for power positions. The leaders of the lower strataof rural society are still struggling for their identification and acceptance.

However, the Panchayati Raj System gave tremendous upsurge to a generation of new leaders who are found to be relatively younger, better educated and more receptive to innovations. The three tier organisational set up along with innumerable number of different types of co-operatives in rural areas became training grounds for the new generation of leadership to aspire for higher positions in the political echelons of power. The green revolution on one side, manipulation of power positions and development funds on the other gave a fillip for personal ambitions of these leaders. This kind of ambition to wield power and authority with which one can strengthen ones position and move to the higher levels of the power structure, became the motive force. Interestingly, their political behaviour changed from service-cum-development orientation to power orientation in which control over distribution goods and services became crucial to leadership. This has generated many repercussions on implementation of development programmes in rural areas.

There has been many empirical studies on rural leadership in various states claiming to be micro studies. Many studies were carried out by sociologists and anthropologist on village level leadership by adopting the technique of participant, observation. Political Scientists have entered this field of enquiry much later, mainly after the introduction of Panchayati Raj System in rural areas. This is perhaps because of the tremendous upsurge that was generated and the rising aspirations among the new generation making a new shift in the political process and the challenges to the rural leadership. There after growth of number of leaders emerging at various political levels in rural areas was noticed. Such a situation has stimulated the political scientists to go in to the detailed study not of aspects like, socio economic conditions of the leaders, the development of leadership from one level to another level, the relationship between the leader and the led etc.
To concept of Rural Leadership.

The concept of Leadership is different from that of a 'Leader' but a few authors have used them interchangeably. Leadership is an abstract term. A comprehensive definition by Ram Reddy and Sheshadari conveys thus: "Leadership manifesto itself in the total process of the rise of a leader, the influence he wields on his followers, and the ways by which he not only ensures and gathers power around him and seeks to ascend still further on the range of the leadership ladder, but also tries to perpetuate his achieved position. Thus leadership is a process and not a person, involving a leader, followers and their situations." 4

The term 'Rural Leadership' is hard to define. The studies related to rural leadership have not defined the term precisely. However, the implied meaning is that the rural leaders are those who are elected from the rural areas to political positions in the three tier Panchayati Raj System. Some of the authors have also considered traditional village leaders as rural leaders. A few have considered officials such as village level Development Officer, B.D.O. Extension Officers etc. who have constant interaction in the rural masses as rural leaders, since they also have influence over the rural masses. However, most of the authors have viewed rural leaders as those persons who have been elected as members and presidents for the three tier Panchayati Raj System which includes village level taluk.

level, and district level leaders. These three levels of leadership is considered to be the rural leadership since the leaders are said to have constant interaction with rural masses.

The rural leaders are often referred to as the 'linkman' and 'support leaders'. Since they have face to face contact with rural masses, they become indispensable for the higher level leaders. Sarsikar considers them as the critical mass in nation building political development, modernisation and creation of egalitarian society.

The findings in the field survey have been that the communities which have strong bonds of patron-client relationship tend to possess concentrated power structures. While breakdown in patron - client ties indicates the dispersion of power resulting in pluralistic power structure. Besides the change in patron - client relationship occur also with the movement of charge from traditional society to mobilized or mass society. 'Mass society' implies among other attributes universalization of suffrage, a greater concern for the welfare of each citizen, a wide expansion of activities of the Govt. as well as the spreading of culture which was confined to a narrow circle at the centre over a far greater radius. In general the following elements are noted as reasons for breakdown of the traditional pattern of clientelism in communities. (1) The size of growing communities, their increasing complexity and differentiation of roles and functions.

tend to make it difficult to maintain intimate relationship. (2) Great bureau rationalisation in the face of commercial and industrial growth the impressive expansion of relationship with the societies also tend to destroy the traditional and personalistic qualities of clientelism. (3) The development of electrol politics and political parties create new structures and patronage and transform the old pattern of relations and (4) introduction of policies and programmes of planned changed (such as land reforms) invariably alter the traditional patron-client relationship.\textsuperscript{7}.

The ambitious and dynamic local level leaders by virtue of his economic status his capacity for forging link with their neighbour leaders and higher level leaders and also satisfying the followers whom he is influencing could work for higher positions of power. In their capacity as leaders and brokers they act as linkman between the villagers who need help and the officials or the higher level leaders; they take care to extend their net work of contacts with most influential official and non-officials. For binding up such contacts, leaders again should have certain provision like a good house for the halt of visiting officials, must be economically sound and of a high caste to offer tea/meals, must have enough time to attend to these officials patronize the leaders for their support and co-operation\textsuperscript{8}.

\textsuperscript{6}G.N. Reddy - The Rural Poor P. 86

\textsuperscript{8}Gupta (1985) has brought out a clear picture of such relationship between the officials and the village leader. He has also explored another important point, that is the village political leaders influence the administration as well as the higher level politicians. A publicman, leaders, can harm the officials by complaining against them to the minister and higher officials but they can not be easily retaliated.
In other aspect of interest is about the interaction of community organisers and activities in the context of variations in power structure, an intervening viable. Successful social action of community organisers and programme implementors depend to a large extent, on the appropriate involvement of different types of leaders in a community. If an organiser has to follow the approach of working though powerful elite group in a community, he would find it difficult to reach all sections of the people. In a community, where a group of dominant leaders unitedly possess control over all the community affairs, the organiser will find it difficult to work with an emergent leadership, since he encounters strong opposition and disapproval from the top leadership. On the other hand, in a community where power is dispersed and affected by factionalism, there is every chance that an organiser may become party to one of the factors and the work may assume dangerous proportions.

Empirical evidences reveal that in the villages where power is dispersed and factionalism is rife, people feel need of some body's intervention. Where the existing leadership is non-committal, when there is no one to take initiative when there is chaos everywhere the situation necessitates the community organiser's intervention to mobilize people. However the extent of community organisers involvement with the people, depends on the field dynamics

and the resources at his disposal, such as the support from people, co-operation from the officials concerned and a high level of political linkages etc. It is neither possible to define the boundaries of the organiser's involvement, nor is it possible to estimate the resources that he can manage to mobilize in a community and there is a large extent depend on the field dynamics.

**Legal Aid.**

Legal aid is undoubtedly one of the most important devices by which the benefits of the Rule of Law can be made available to the weaker sections of people. The legal system must mean the same thing to the poor that it means to the rich. The availability of legal services to the poor does help the society itself by the greater stability achieved through providing an outlet other than violence for their real and supposed grievances. Thus legal aid to the poor, specially for agriculture labour, is in a sense vital to the very survival of our democratic system and its denial implies a failure of the rule of law.

In the course of field survey it has been found that the legal aid services are still available to a few persons of village economy. Though the officials claim that the Minimum wages Act, Trade Union Act, the Migrant Labour Act and the prevention of Land Alienation Acts are already in practice. It has been found in practice that no even a single agricultural labour family is aware of the legal aid available to them. Besides, they have not shown any dare to
go in the court to seek the various help to protect their rights, they have expressed their helplessness on the economic ground. The findings of the present survey have been that due to their weak and deprived position and due to lack of assertiveness and being oppressed for long years would not dare to go to the legal aid office in order to oppose a powerful opponent.

Besides the findings of the field survey of the present study the inadequacy and unsatisfactory state of legal aid services to the poor were pointed out by the number of evaluation reports and studies conducted by the social scientists. In reality the legal aid services have been limited to individual lawyers or bar associations in their scope.10. There are loop holes in laws lack of data on the legal problems of the poor, the socio economic deprivations which prevent poor to take advantage of their legal rights, resource constraints and organisation inadequacy lack of committed personnel and lack of political will to make legal aid services as a national comprehensive programme.

The legal aid programme in order to be successful must become a community-wide concern and not merely the concern of legal profession or the government Legal Aid. The legal and service programme is a social entitlement programme one can not view. Those in need of services as mere beneficiaries, but must secure their participation so themselves.”

The best method of making legal aid services, a people's programme is to involve voluntary organisations and social action groups. These organisations which work amongst the deprived and vulnerable sections of the community have intimate and living contact with the poor and are best in a position to know their problem and difficulties and can easily inspire confidence in them and instruct and educate them effectively without encountering barriers. The voluntary organisation when involved in Legal aid services, should be free from government control or direction or supervision. They should be totally free from any political or administrative pressures in order to be effective in delivering their service to the rural poor.

In conclusion it may be said that legal aid services programme which has come to stay through judicial creativity needs to be accorded statutory recognition at the earliest so as to make the radicalism in slogans into practical and useful welfare programme in the country. It is suggested that legal reforms, research on legal problems of poor, instilling social commitment to the functionaries of judiciary and law and order systems, spreading legal literacy through the organisations of rural poor, and the involvement of public spirited individuals, voluntary organisation and action groups would go a long way towards the success of the legal aid programme in the country.