CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

The Problem, the Field and the Methodology

I. The Problem:

Contemporary globalization has posed several new sets of challenges to villages in India. There has been talk of 'vanishing villages' with the land and agriculture being increasingly seen as unproductive, untenable and with no future. A recent report from Punjab, the hub of green revolution in India, for instance, concludes that every ninth farmer in the state has quit agriculture over the past 25 years.¹ According to census reports (2001) from Panjab nearly 2 lakh marginal and small farmers left the occupation between 1991 and 2001. Studies with similar concerns have been reported from else where as well.² The factors which are being considered responsible for this disenchantment from rural sector include the phenomenon of diminishing returns on land owing to fragmentation of land.

Besides, the ecological costs and socio-economic imbalances in agriculture today have drawn sharp comments. The concern for food security that promoted the technology of breeding high yielding varieties that is supposed to have ushered in what is popularly known as the green revolution, has created severe regional imbalances. A large tract of arable land remained untapped as the new technology concentrated on selected irrigated areas to increasing the production of food grains. To redress the balance, some
agriculture experts recommend diversification through the introduction of new crops such as medicinal and aromatic plants, horticulture and floriculture. They argue that sector and region specific mapping of agricultural zones should be undertaken to cultivate zone-specific cash crops to tap the market potential, both domestic and overseas. Innovation, investment and market-interface are projected as offering a panacea for the decline of the village and of agriculture. Promotion of entrepreneurship is being seen as the key element in any debate about strategies towards revival of agriculture and the villages.

Entrepreneurship has traditionally been associated with a set of dynamic, risk taking and innovative enterprise. However, the one element which is the most basic characteristic of an entrepreneur is his ability to “carry out new combinations of modes of production” and to transcend the “accustomed circular flow of business” (Schumpeter 1949). Schumpeter actually makes a distinction between a capitalist and an entrepreneur and argues that a businessman doing his established business and making profit in a routine of a circular flow may be a capitalist but he is not an entrepreneur. It is imperative for an entrepreneur to have the quality to carry out the new combinations over and above other characteristics. As he rightly points out: “furthermore, the ordinary characterization of the entrepreneur type by such expressions as “initiative”, “authority”, or “foresight” points entirely in our direction. For there is little scope for such qualities within the routine of the circular flow” (ibid, 75). There has been no dearth of innovators and individual initiatives in all times in all areas of productive milieu. The domain of agriculture, however, remain an all together different proposition given the fact
that agriculture has always been an unpredictable terrain (especially when it is compared with industrial entrepreneurship where factors and means of production and resources are easy to maneuver based on rational-logical assessment), deeply embedded in socio-cultural milieu and prone to status-quoism. The culture of agriculture shows tendency towards conservatism as it banks on inherited knowledge system based on social conventions. The proximity of agriculture to nature and culture adds to its unpredictability quotient and makes the possibility of innovation and change rather difficult. The production and productivity here has been a social and a moral concept encompassing the obligation to share and donate (Greenough 1983). In other words traditionally agriculture has been a domain where productive activities have been enmeshed with the cultural and symbolic meanings making it difficult to be guided by purely utilitarian or economic orientations. The culture of innovation therefore was not as much part of the traditional agricultural world view.

However advances in modern agriculture in India with its emphasis on technology and innovation have made enormous strides. Profit-orientation has gained primacy which is fully reflected in the way a new class of individuals has cropped up in the countryside, ever willing to try newer seeds and adopt new technology for better returns. A new term ‘agripreneur’, in currencies these days in agribusiness management literature, makes sense to describe those who are willing to take risk and possess the ability to carry out what Schumpeter calls, the new combinations of means of production in the area of agriculture as an economic activity. Agripreneurs are entrepreneurs but of a different variant. They are innovators in a field where unpredictability rules.
and innovation is more often than not likened to deviance and invite social and cultural forces of resistance from what James Scott referred to as 'moral economy' (Scott 1976). Moreover, if agriculture was about collectivism and an ethos which represented the whole rather than the unit, the world of agripreneurs is individualized and represented a disaggregate collectivism, if at all.

The present study attempts to explore and investigate: firstly, and primarily, the socio-cultural dynamics associated with agribusiness activities in a few villages as represented by the agripreneur families (floriculturists) in the terai region of the state of Uttarakhand. With its chequered history and people with diverse ethnic and cultural backgrounds, the area comes across as an interesting as well as challenging landscape for social and cultural investigation. The study focuses on the floriculturists' families and tries to understand the constraints within which they work, the socio-cultural pressure which determines the choice making, such as shift from food grain to flower, the ethnic and cultural background of the peasants which play a decisive role in any such break from the convention. This exploratory study investigates these 'pockets of prosperity' as represented by the enterprising floriculturists in a village and tries to understand and analyze the reasons behind the indifference to any change and innovation as exhibited by the neighborhood of these flower growers. The study adds to the hypothesis that 'once a agriculturist, always a agriculturist' by observing that it seems more likely for a community with a background in agriculture to make a transition towards agribusiness but the same can not be said about a community, such as paharis (people of hills) in this case, for whom agriculture has been a marginal
activity traditionally. The study tries to comprehend the dynamics responsible for varying degrees of responses towards an economically lucrative proposition amongst peasants of different ethnic and cultural background and the factors which influence the flow or trajectory of agri-business currents in a family and in a village.

Secondly, the study also simultaneously, in the process of its primary investigation, maps the transformations in rural India and its villages, there by interrogating the merit in some of the concerns raised of late, such as the 'vanishing village'-hypothesis, for instance and its related prognosis.

The transition from 'agriculture to agribusiness' or from 'grain to gain', as has been paraphrased in this study to denote a particular trend towards commercialization and artha-orientation of the peasants should be seen as ideal types and does not connote the complete exclusivity of the terms. The 'Grain' period, for instance, essentially symbolizes the primacy of food in the discourse of agriculture, the religio-sacred context assigned to factors of production such as seed, land and humans. In contrast there has been loosening of the forces of moral economy (Betteille 1980, Appadurai 1989) in the contemporary rural India, as reflected in the breakdown of jajmani system, transition from hierarchy to some form of equality etc. and the idea of 'Gain' or rational economic pursuit getting precedence. This phenomenon is more pronounced among the agripreneurs.

II. The Field:

UTTARAKHAND: History, Society and Culture

Uttarakhand as the 27th state of the Republic of India came into existence on
9th November 2000. It was carved out of the state of Uttar Pradesh after a long struggle of the people of this hilly region. Uttarakhand lies in the Northern part of India amidst the magnificent Himalayas and dense forests. The state is bordering Himachal Pradesh in the North-West and Uttar Pradesh in the south and has international borders with Nepal and China (Tibet).

Before the creation of a separate state, a major part of the region was made up of eight Himalayan districts of Uttar Pradesh and was referred to as the Uttarakhand region. The region consisted of two main divisions, namely Kumaon and Garhwal. The Garhwal division included five western districts of Dehradun, Tehri, Uttarkashi, Chamoli and Pauri while the Kumaon zone consisted of three eastern districts of Pithoragarh, Almora and Nainital. In 1997, the new district of Udham Singh Nagar was carved out of the district of Nainital. With the formation of the state new units were created in the Kumaon division viz. Bageshwar and Champawat- roughly corresponding to the former tehsils with the same name in districts of Almora and Pithoragarh respectively. In Garhwal division also the former tehsil of Rudraprayag in district Chamoli came to be known as district Rudraprayag while the former Haridwar tehsil falling within the district of Saharanpur was included in the state of Uttaranchal and made a separate district retaining the same name.

Thus the state of Uttarakhand is presently made up of total 13 districts- 7 in Garhwal and 6 in Kumaon divisions.

THE PAST: MYSTERY, MYTHS AND DIVINITY

The region has variously been referred to as Uttaranchal, U.P. Himalaya or the central Himalaya and now as Uttarakhand. The Indian classical tradition,
particularly the Puranic ones, is replete with eulogistic cognomens for the region of Uttarakhand. Ancient texts describe this region as Kedarkhand and Kurmanchal. The history of this region is older than that of the Ramayana and the Mahabharata. It is a land of popular myths, like that of Lord Shiva appearing as kirat, of Urvashi, Shakuntala, as well as the Kauravs and Pandavas. Of the two component cultural units, Garhwal was known as Kedarkhand, and Kumaon as Kurmanchal, the land of Kurmavtar. According to the associated tradition, Lord Vishnu incarnated here near Lohaghat as kurma (tortoise) to support the Mount Mandara (Mandarachal). The tradition might have given rise to the legend in the Skanda Purana to name this region as Kurmavana or Kumaravana. Later Kumaravana changed in to Kurmanchal and then to Kumaon. However none of these names were known until the twelfth century when this term Kurmachi was found for the first time in the chand dynastic records.

There is enough evidence from the pre-historic period of human habitation in these parts of the Himalayas. These include rock paintings, rock shelters, paleoliths and megaliths. The scriptural texts mention a number of tribes that inhabited the region such as the sakas, kol-mundas, the nagas, khasas, hunas, kirats, gujars and Aryans. After the kols and the kirats, the khasas were the dominant race in the Garhwal and Kumaon Himalayas till the advent of the Rajputs and Brahmmins from the plains. With the coming of the Aryans and the establishment of later Vedic culture, most of these people were absorbed into the caste system. Today's Uttarakhand and its culture is the sum total of these people's experiences as mountain dweller with a unique insight into life derived from the belief in the divinity of the land they live in.
The *rishis* and *munis* made it a cradle of Indo–Aryan culture. The archaeological remains bare out the existence of early Vedic practices in the region.

The history of Uttarakhand state can be better understood through the history of Garhwal and Kumaon divisions separately because they maintained independent identity except the period of Nepali aggression.

How and when the term 'Garhwal' came into use for the western part of Uttarakhand is precisely not known. Internal circumstantial evidences indicate that an inevitable process of disintegration had set in the Katyuri kingdom in the tenth century. The period of four centuries—between the tenth and the fourteenth—was the most chaotic spell in the history of Uttarakhand. During that period the recalcitrant local khashia chiefs of the kingdom, known as the mawis or the mawanas, asserted their independence by throwing off the katyuri yoke. In order to defend themselves against possible invasion the mawis built defensive citadels in their territories. The number of such rebellious chiefs might have been fifty-two; hence the expression baoni-garh came in to use to define them. It was perhaps after that baoni-garh that this region came to be known as 'Garhwal', i.e., the land of forts. It also finds mention in the 7th century travelogue of Huen Tsang. However it is with Adi Shankaracharya that the name of Garhwal will always be linked, for the great 8th century spiritual reformer visited the remote, snow-laden heights of Garhwal, established a math (joshimath) and restored some of the most sacred shrines, including Badrinath and Kedarnath. The history of Garhwal as one unified whole began in the 15th century, when king Ajay Pal merged the 52 separate principalities, each with its own fortress. For 300 years Garhwal...
remained one kingdom, with its capital at Srinagar. Then Pauri and Dehradun were perforce ceded to the crown as payment for British help, rendered to the Garhwalis during the Gurkha invasion in the early 19th century.

Evidences of Stone Age settlements have been found in the Kumaon region, particularly the rock shelter at Lakhu Udyar. The paintings here date back to the Mesolithic period. The early medieval history of Kumaon is the history of the Katyuri dynasty. The Katyuri kings ruled from the seventh to the eleventh century, holding sway at the peak of their powers over large areas of Kumaon, Garhwal, and western Nepal. After an interregnum of a couple of centuries the Chands of Pithhoragarh became the dominant dynasty. In fact the word 'kurmachal' is found for the first time in the Chand dynastic records.

Terai area is the foothill plain zone of Uttarakhand which is a melting pot of Kumaoni, Garhwali, tribals and other ethnic communities who came here as settlers. The Siwalik foothills, which run almost parallel to the great Himalayan range, demarcate a natural boundary between the hilly region of Uttarakhand and the Gangetic plains of Uttar Pradesh. This terai area was once the densely forested and the marshy wild wasteland infested with deadly mosquitoes and wild animals. During the medieval times, it served as a refuge to the outlaws and the brigands and fugitives from the neighboring areas. Now it is considered among one of the most prosperous and promising agricultural belts of India.

The term Terai and Bhabhar in Kumaon region is applied to the broad belt of foothill country at the northern margin of the plains. This terrain is of recent origin and is composed largely of the detritus washed away by swift flowing streams from the southern face of the adjoining Siwalik Hills. There is an
abrupt change of gradient at Bhabhar on the upper rim of Terai, which leads to a vast deposition of coarse material, i.e., boulders and shingles by the swift flowing streams in Bhabhar, while the finer material—sand and clay—is carried forward and has been responsible for creating the Terai region. The submontane zone thus comprises a characteristic post tertiary depositional phenomenon along the foothills distinguishable into the sub-regions of Terai and Bhabhar. About Terai E.T. Atkinson has commented that, “it comprises a long and narrow strip of country running for about 145 km. It is bound on the north by Bhabhar, on the south by Pilibhit, Bareilly, and Moradabad and Rampur district, on the east by the Sharda River and on the west by the Bijnor district.” (As quoted in Rawat, Ajay S. 1998, Forests on Fire, Ecology and Politics in the Himalayan Tarai, Cosmo Publications, India).

THE HISTORY OF HABITATION IN TERAI

Prior to the reign of Mughal king Akbar, i.e., during the latter half of the 16th century, the history of Kumaon in connection with its lowland possession, Bhabhar and Tarai, is not recorded and hence shrouded in oblivion. However tradition has it that during the epic period this area was the abode of famous sages. Existence ruins near Kashipur indicate that this area was populated in the remote past. The Chinese traveler Huen Tsang who came to India during the seventh century has referred to Kashipur as ‘Govisana’. During the Gupta period, the Terai and Bhabhar area formed an integral part of the Kumaon kingdom which was then being ruled by the Katyuris.

However with the end of the golden period of Gupta dynasty, especially after Harsha of Kannauj, a sordid political confusion gripped the land. Perhaps an adverse climatic change attended by some natural calamity worsened the
situation and the Terai was led to desolation. Gradually decay set in, farms and field were deserted and the region relapsed in to dark jungle by A.D.1100 (Rawat: 1998).

With the advent of Muslim rulers in North India, they started encroaching upon this territory. Soon it became a scene of perpetual struggle between the kumaon rajas and the neighboring Muslim ruler. It is believed that the Tharus and the Buxas who are considered to be the indigenous races of Terai migrated to this region during this period. During the Mughal period the Terai formed a part of their kingdom. ‘Ain-i-Akbari’ records 21 mahals in the Terai. Kumaon was being ruled by the Chand dynasty during Akbar’s reign and Raja Rudra Chand (1567-96), a scion of this family was Akbar’s contemporary. The Kumaonis under Raja Rudra Chand distinguished themselves in an expedition against Nagor and in recognition of this victory and bravery; Akbar conferred a grant on Raja Rudra chand. The portion of the terai that came in to possession of the king through this grant was called ‘chaurasi mal’ referring to the length of the area which was ‘84 kos’. The period that followed saw the region embroiled in one or the other struggle for territorial occupation involving Kumaoni and Garhwali rulers and the powerful Rohillas and later the invasion of the Gurkhas in the year 1781. Proper administration and development of this area as agricultural tract, however, could be possible only with the commencement of the British rule in Rohilkhand since 1802. With the occupation of Kumaon by the British in 1815 the process gained momentum. This triggered a steady growth of settlers in the Terai and Bhabhar area which continued and intensified around the partition period when India got freedom in 1947. In between, however, there were times when the influx of population
dwindled owing to epidemics like influenza and cholera as in 1918 and 1920 and because of the fact that the region became hub of anti-social elements, bandits and robbers.

As the Second World War drew to an end, the scarcity of food caused by it compelled the central and provincial governments to take up urgent and immediate measures to increase the production of staple food grains. Consequently Herculean efforts were initiated in the Terai and Bhabhar region of Nainital district. The government was trying to cope up with this situation when India attained freedom but along with the pangs of partition. Thus in and after 1947 waves after waves of refugees from Panjab and East Pakistan came to settle down in Terai and Bhabhar and with these new settlers began the era of permanent settlement in Terai.

Among the diverse groups of people that have settled in the Terai region at least the following 15 categories of migrants can be broadly identified (Rawat: 1998).

- Tribal settlers, mostly Tharus and Buxas.
- Hill people
- Panjabi settlers who came before 1947.
- Panjabi refugee settlers.
- Subsequent Panjabi settlers as a consequence of chain migration (they are not necessarily refugees but relations of the first wave of Panjabi migrants).
- Bengali refugee settlers who had come from East Pakistan after 1947.
• Bengali refugees from East Pakistan who came during 1963-64 owing to political disturbances.

• Repatriate from Burma.

• Ex-servicemen.

• Agricultural graduates.

• Political sufferers and freedom fighters that were given land by the government (mostly from Eastern U.P.).

• Bengali refugee settlers who came from Bangladesh after 1971.

• Absentee landlords, including politicians, film stars, high officials, business-men and industrialists who managed to purchase land in the newly developed region.

• Jat settlers.

• Rai Sikhs

These settlements have changed the face of the region. Massive deforestation followed. The region which was once fraught with dangerous animals, killer mosquitoes, dreaded bandits and extremely inhospitable climate emerged as the most 'livable' place with its moisture and humus rich Terai land turning in to granary now. One can safely say that this region with its heterogeneity in terms of its demographic constituents, especially their diverse cultural roots, history and social set up makes for a case of ethnic melting pot where the inter-community discontent in varying degrees keeps it politically charged all the time. The phenomenal rise of some communities,
especially the Panjabi migrants with their super entrepreneurial temperament have added to the inter-community rivalry. It has already been established that the coming of the new settlers have made the life of the original settlers of this place, e.g. Tharus and the Buxas miserable. As Rawat points out, 'the new comers have by hook or crook deprived the tribals of their extensive land and has compelled them to make their living by working as labourers.' (Rawat: 1998).

The discontentment had already been brewing between these nauve-rich settlers, mostly from Panjab, and the people from the hills. The formation of the new state of Uttarakhand as 'hill state' has exacerbated the rift. This was amply evident in course of the field work for the present study as well. The people from the hills would rue the fact that the 'outsiders' have hijacked prime land which 'naturally' belonged to the people from the hills. There will be perpetual complain as to how much these new settlers or the refugees, the term they would continuously invoke to show their contempt, have misused their land for their own benefit. The vicious inter-community rivalry as it exists in the population which is divided between the 'outsiders' and 'insiders' and its chain reactions seem to have far deeper impact.

CULTURE OF AGRICULTURE IN TERAI

Terai region of Uttarakhand is essentially defined by its agriculture. This is unlike the situation in the hill region of the state where agriculture is a marginal activity. Owing to geographical constraints and difficult topography in the hills the agriculture remains a subsistence-level economic activity (appendix-I). As Sekhar Pathak of the Kumaon University, Nainital based historian who hails from the region rightly points out about the place that
agriculture occupies in the life of the Kumaoni, 'while most of the fertile land in kumaon is in the Tarai-Bhabar region, a few such tracts are to be found in the mountaineous zone as well. Except in these regions agriculture is a mere formality. During the last 30-40 years the Tarai-Bhabar region has emerged as the major producers of food grains. However, it is the paucity of agriculture and other supplementary activities associated with agriculture that forced many people to migrate from the region in search of employment opportunities. The geographical environment of this land has an enormous bearing on the mental-physical make-up of its inhabitants.' (Pathak: 93).

Mountain areas have always posed enormous challenges for human habitation. The vertical dimension manifests in the constraints of altitude and relief and impose limits to agriculture, land use pattern and human settlements. The choice of productive activities is restricted by variations in slope aspect, soil depth, difference in thermal regime, water availability and precipitation. Barriers of altitude and relief hinder transportation and overcoming these barriers entails enormous costs. Also isolation made mountains peripheral to centers of innovation. Hence many people argue that agriculture would make sense in these hilly areas only when there is shift from subsistence to market-oriented production and from subsistence based activity to an enterprise based production pattern. This however would mean expansion of transport and communication networks. But here again mountain areas will continue to be disadvantaged because of the limitations imposed by the terrain and environmental considerations. Also, technology, access to energy, and modern inputs and services are limited in supply in this area. Besides such shifts from food production to cash crop related production in
these areas brings in the issue of food security given that people in these areas are not very well connected to food-surplus areas or at least many a time remain inaccessible to areas in the plain from where food items in emergency can be channeled through.

Over all, it seems, the culture of agriculture in the hills has always been family-based, subsistence and tradition and nature bound (see Berreman 1963). Universe of agriculture is intertwined with the socio-cultural and religious ethos of the community around. Berreman recounts the preponderance of supernatural in the lives of the paharis of this region, as he says: ‘difficulty of any kind- crop failure, ailing animals, economic reversal, mysterious loss of property, persistent family troubles, disease, sterility, still birth, hysteria, death- is attributed ultimately to fate and more immediately to the machination of one or another of a host of supernatural beings’ (Berreman 1963: 83). The hill society has been largely insulated, self sufficient and its agriculture has been mainly for household consumption, thereby creating what Scott (1976) referred to as ‘subsistence-ethos’. The agricultural land has been traditionally monopolized by the upper caste Brahmins and Rajputs. Only the low quality stony land was in the hands of the lower castes. Innovation towards cash-oriented agriculture or issues such as exploring possibilities for more lucrative options from the land were alien as the primacy was on food security of the family. With the emergence of ‘plains’ as a reference model to emulate, the urge to leave the hills for better life has been very strong in the hill people, especially amongst its land owning upper castes (Berreman 1963:135). No wonder investment in agriculture and land was never a priority here except for ensuring staple grains for the family.
Understandably such cultural contexts have not been quite favorably disposed to any innovation, upgradation or adoption of new farm technology. That the traditional caste hierarchy among the paharis does not have any indigenous trading caste (Vaisya) further shows society’s insularity and lack of business ethos. Ramachandra Guha in his book ‘The Unquiet Woods’ underlines the relatively less pronounced class composition in the hill societies and refers to the natural limitations associated with the Uttarakhand agriculture: ‘the absence of sharp class cleavages within village society, however, clearly owes its origins to the ecological characteristics of mountain society. Where as the possibility of ‘extensive’ agriculture were limited by the extent of culturable land and the paucity of irrigation, ‘intensive’ agriculture for the market was severely hampered by the fragility of the soils and poor communications. There have always existed major ecological constraints to the generation of surplus and consequently to the emergence of social classes in hill societies’ (Guha 2005: 27-28). In the background of the natural ecological limitations, in the hill society of Uttarakhand the primary emphasis was on subsistence of individual households and the propensity towards collectivism came automatically. As Guha mentions, ‘in its democratic characteristics and reliance on natural resources Uttarakhand is representative of mountain societies in general, in which ecological constraints to the intensification and expansion of agriculture have historically resulted in an emphasis on the close regulation of the common property resources so crucial for the subsistence of individual households’ (ibid.,33). In other words, agriculture in the socio-cultural universe of Uttarakhand society was part of a larger organic whole meant to preserve and conserve rather
than to explore and innovate for material advancement or for profit. Naturally therefore the element of entrepreneurship, especially agripreneurship, was simply incongruous with the kind of symbiotic relationship the people of the hills shared with its limited natural resources. The ecological degradation, lesser rain fall, drying irrigation channels and heavy deforestation over the years has further marginalized the hill agriculture as all these changes have affected the already scarce quality arable land in the hills.

In sharp contrast, the terai area of Uttarakhand is known for its agriculture. Agriculture occupies a central place in the social and cultural discourse of the people in this area. And a large part of the credit for this goes to the culture that the new settlers from Panjab and jats of western Uttar Pradesh carried to their newly adopted land. These settlers with their agrarian background and the spirit of fighting the odds as refugees were more favorably disposed as far as agripreneurship goes. As Rawat (1998) points out, 'the big farmers are located mostly in terai area. The majority of them are Jat Sikhs who have migrated from west Punjab, now in Pakistan...The Jat Sikhs are more hard working and progressive as compared to other farmers as they came from agricultural families and have been successful in colonizing this region in to a prosperous agricultural belt... some hill people like the Raja Sahib of Kashipur also have large holdings but they are not as progressive and receptive to new ideas as Jat Sikhs are to the changes in agricultural technology' (Rawat 98: 127).
III. THE METHODOLOGY:

The present study followed the reflexive tradition of qualitative social science research, namely ethnography. Ethnographic data includes general descriptions of behavior, descriptions of physical layout, intimate analysis of thoughts, feelings, emotions and anecdotes to bring alive the subjects/informants into full bodied persons from the research field. The research used extensive case study methods supported by apt illustrations and thick descriptions of the ‘subjects’, using the tools of participant observation as a ‘reflexive’ mode of investigation. Max Gluckman (as in Epstein 1967) introduced the extended case study method as a fieldwork technique. In this method the researcher follows ‘cases’ from one setting to another over an extended periods of time, so as to be privy to various contexts, changes, events, dramas and crises that may arise over time and place.

The terai in Uttarakhand is a vast landscape with its villages scattered far and wide from each other. Since the focus of the study was to understand the phenomenon of innovation and entrepreneurship in agriculture as reflected through the floriculturists in the area, preliminary field work was all about identifying the floriculturist families of different standing and background so that it provided the whole gamut of socio-economic context. Given the fact that the focus of study was also on understanding an instance of shift in the culture of agriculture and the reaction of the non-adopters thereof, as observed through the experiences and the life narratives of the farmers who were growing floriculture, the approach had to be farm-centric. It is germane to mention at this point that floriculture was consciously selected as it
represented the most innovative and risk taking instance of choice making in the villages of terai with more or less no background in floriculture. Cultivation of flower itself represented a 'response', triggered by newly emerging market opportunities and subsequent rise in the culture of consumerism (See Fig. 1 and 2).

Figure: 1

![Diagram of export trend of floriculture]

**EXPORT TREND OF FLORICULTURE**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Value in Rs. Crores</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1996-97</td>
<td>63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1997-98</td>
<td>81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1998-99</td>
<td>97</td>
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<tr>
<td>1999-00</td>
<td>105</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000-01</td>
<td>123</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2001-02</td>
<td>115</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**MAJOR DESTINATION:** U.S.A., Japan, Netherland, U.K., Italy, France

**SOURCE:** INDIAN HORTICULTURE DATABASE -2003

So even though sugarcane has been one of the major cash-crops of this area which has been cultivated here on a large scale for many years and it has almost become part of the traditional agricultural domain, the choice of floriculture signifies a transition in more than one way. Firstly the notion of 'deviance' is far more pronounced with the flower growing activity in the villages. People in buses, at far flung villages in other districts, in village markets, in women's gossip circles in the villages and at other significant and
not so significant place of interaction floriculturists are discussed, big players with awe and appreciation while smaller and marginal farmers as those hell bent on committing hara-kiri. The initiative of a marginal farmer towards a non-food venture was considered too audacious as it compromised with their food security. Hence the option of floriculture symbolizes a departure from the conventional, secure and 'tried and tested' domain and understanding about agriculture to a far more market-oriented, money and interest driven economic activity.

Figure: 2

![PRODUCTIN TREND OF FLOWERS IN INDIA](image)

**SOURCE:** INDIAN HORTICULTURE DATABASE -2003

Understandably, it was not to be a conventional field work where the researcher goes with a set of pre-determined questions looking for quantifiable indicators of change. Utmost care was taken and substantial time...
devoted on first locating the villages with different compositions, in terms of its location, demography and community configurations, and then zero in on those families involved in flower growing. For instance, the first village Bari (chapter 3) is significant as it was here that the cultivation of flowers first started in the region. The account of the trajectory and fluctuations of floriculture in Bari throw light on the complex set of factors, both social and economic, which determines the sustenance of such innovative practices. The second village Chakaluwa (chapter 4) has a zone of intense modern agribusiness activity owned by a Panjabi settler and surrounded by a majority of pahari community. This is a situation which provides rare insights into inter-ethnic competition in agriculture and how issues such as identity formation and differing economic rationalities define community life. The third village Kunderswari (chapter 5) is a village which is very close to a bustling town called Kashipur and has all the possible infrastructural opportunity conducive for modern agriculture but here again settlers of non-pahari origin show more positive inclination towards floriculture. The fourth and the last village Dinanagar (chapter 6) is about a few marginal Sikh farmers in a remote village growing flowers and making economic sense of it despite all odds staked against them. The last village Dinanagar therefore serves as an indicator of possibilities for rural India which is where majority lives in marginal conditions. What if these marginal forces co operate and forge an alliance in pursuing modern agribusiness? Can this be treated as a model for the transformation of village India? Dinanagar sheds some light on this.

Therefore all these four villages represent varied conditions, locale and contexts. Once these villages were selected the next step of the research
was to familiarize with the family engaged in flower growing, frequent meetings with the local stake holders, non-growers, landless dalit labourers, big land owning farmers but reluctant to try new crops and migrant labourers to capture the nuances of multilayered social and cultural processes at work.

The methodology applied in the field work was participant observation which included for example long informal conversations with the farmers, their family members, laborers on the field and also visiting their basti in the evening to place the observations and impressions collected in the morning on the farm within their larger community perspective. That is, the idea was to see things in its entirety and not in isolation. So if a landless laborer talked about the positive fall out of floriculture for them as it provided them round the season wage opportunities then it was important to visit them in their mohalla and talk to other people, the community leaders, the women to cross check the impressions.

Essentially the idea was to understand the processes at work through the experiences of the farmers and other stake holders. It was then simultaneously followed by meticulous diary writing of every significant interaction, observation and comments at the end of every field visit on a day to day basis. Mostly my night stay in a gurudwara or a nearby dharamshala or a hotel would be my time to recapture the experiences of my day-long visits to the villages and also work on questions and strategies for the next day. I also used my hobby for photography during my field work in the villages and on the farm houses to capture the situations I thought would be difficult to describe in words, an approach which is also referred to as photo-ethnography these days.