CHAPTER-II

METHODOLOGY
DEFINITION OF THE PROBLEM AND OBJECTIVES:

A popularly accepted definition of health is the one given by WHO--'a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not just absence of disease and ill-
ness'. But it is conceded that health is an outcome of interacting social, economic, political and ensuing cultural forces. It is, therefore, a dynamic concept which changes with time and place. There are two dimensions of health, the operational side when interventions are made and status measured; secondly, the social dimension which focuses more on environment that creates or destroys health. Our study focuses on the latter and looks at the health of the agricultural labourers as a product of their living and working conditions. It attempts to focus on both these determinants of health wherein it delineates certain key variables in both these aspects of agricultural labourers' life. For example, in the working conditions the key determinants that are studied are; duration of employment over a year, the wages, forms of non-wage working relationship in agriculture, the freedom to shift work and availability of work outside agriculture. In the living conditions the study
focuses on food, clothing, housing and other amenities.

Apart from studying the working and living conditions and assessing their possible impact on health, the study recognises the need to assess the proportion of total population who live under vulnerable conditions. This is specially critical for area such as Baleshwar district where agricultural development is limited and large chunk of population continue to survive under extreme conditions of deprivation. Though there is sufficient anthropological literature that highlights the importance of culture in determining health, our basic theoretical understanding is that cultures are products of historical, social and economic forces. Any variation in culture is, therefore, rooted in varying socio-economic conditions, and under extreme conditions of poverty variation in culture becomes an insignificant factor for a given population. We, therefore, focus on economic aspects and social structures as these are the most critical under conditions of extreme poverty. Our study is exploratory in nature and attempts to identify the exact point of intervention of socio-economic factors for health or ill-health.

The objective of the study, therefore, is to estimate the vulnerable population of agricultural labourers in
Baleshwar district and to study their working and living conditions with a view to highlight their implications for health.

The overall objective can be broken into the following sub-objectives:

1) A study of the socio-economic structure of the study population.

2) To focus on the terms and conditions of work of agricultural labourers.

3) To study the living conditions of the agricultural labourers.

4) To highlight the social processes at work which constrain achievement of physical well-being.

5) To study agricultural labourers' perception of the causes of their ill-health.

AREA OF THE STUDY:

In India, M.N. Srinivas (1966) is one of the first to move into the now familiar study of one's own society. To him "Own Society" means primarily the segment of the society to which the sociologist belongs; at the same time Srinivas stresses the desirability of studying others as well. As he says, "...the field study of an alien society, or of a.
different segment of his own society, prepares the sociologist for the more sophisticated task of studying his own society or that segment of it to which he belongs. Though he still remains a member of his society, he is able to look at it to some extent as an outsider. His position is again similar to that of a novelist who manages to observe his fellow man as well as participate in the life around him. Unlike the novelist, however, the sociologist is primarily interested in a theoretical explanation of human/social behaviour, and in generalizations rather than the development of concrete particularization”. (pp.157-158)

Taking a clue from Srinivas, Baleshwar district of the State of Orissa has been chosen for the present study. We have selected Baleshwar for two reasons (a) in an Oriya-speaking area there would be no problem of communication for the researcher who would be able to deal directly with the villagers; (b) it could be classified as an average district with respect to agricultural development. Baleshwar was one among the average within the State in 1981 (Daspattanayak, 1987:109-115). This is evident from Table 2.1
Table 2.1: Distribution of Districts in various Categories of Composite Indices for Agriculture

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>High</th>
<th>Year - 1981</th>
<th>Medium</th>
<th>Low</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mayurbhanj</td>
<td>Sambalpur</td>
<td>Kalahandi</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ganjam</td>
<td>Baleshwar</td>
<td>Sundergarh</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cuttack</td>
<td>Bolangir</td>
<td>Dhenkanal</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Puri</td>
<td>Keonjhar</td>
<td>Boudhkhandmals</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Koraput</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Based on the table prepared by Daspattanayak (1987: 114).

To articulate agricultural development, eight indicators viz. 1) Land Productivity, 2) Labour Productivity, 3) Per cent area cultivated, 4) Per cent area irrigated, 5) Cropping intensity, 6) Growth in irrigated area, 7) Fertilizer consumption in K.G. per one thousand hectare, 8) Growth in agricultural output were taken (see Daspattanayak, 1987:109).

It is important to make it clear that 'Balasore' and 'Baleshwar' are differently spelt names of one and the same district. While Census of India, Government of India, spells it as 'Baleshwar' (in 1981 and 1991) which is more in tune with the native accent, the District Statistical Handbook as well as different official departments continue to spell it as 'Balasore', as a continuation of the British
SELECTED BLOCKS
(BALESHWAR DISTRICT)

Source: Outline map based on District-Statistical Handbook, Balasore/Baleswar, 1993
Directorate of Economics & Statistics, Govt. of Orissa, Bhubaneswar.

Map No. 1
STUDY VILLAGES
(BALESHWAR DISTRICT)

LEGEND

DISTRICT HEADQUARTER
TEHSIL HEADQUARTERS
RAILWAY LINE (BROAD GAUGE)
ROADS

NOTE: A new district named Bhadrak has been created consisting of some Taluks in the north of old Baleshwar district after 1991.
rendering. However, in the present study the name of the district has been spelt as 'Baleshwar'.

In 1993, as some new districts were created in the State, Baleshwar was divided into two. Our study has been carried out in the new Baleshwar district which was formed on 3rd April 1993 (information collected from the District Statistical Office, Balasore/Baleshwar). Baleshwar is the north-eastern most coastal district of Orissa. It is bounded on the north as well as the west by the district of Mayurbhanj, on the north-east by the State of West Bengal, on the east by the Bay of Bengal and on the south by Bhadrak district (as emerged from the old Baleshwar). It shares a small portion of its boundary with the Keonjhar district on the south-west. The district is drained by many rivers. Among them, the Subarnarekha is the most important (see Map-I and Map-II).

The district has strategic importance for it houses the Interim Test Range (ITR) at Chandipur on the sea, which is about 10 kilometres from the district headquarter. The coastal climate of the area is conducive to the highly profitable prawn culture which has invited entrepreneurs from outside the district as well as the state to invest heavily on it by tempting the farmers to sell off their
lands at a relatively higher bidding. Moreover, the land under prawn culture is usually rendered infertile which is a serious environmental issue currently under discussion within the state.

Baleshwar covers an area of 3705.8 sq. kms., which is 2.38 per cent of the total area of the state. As per 1991 census there are 1,696,583 persons residing in this district which form 5.36 per cent of the total population of the state (District Statistical Handbook, 1993, Balasore/Baleshwar). The district shows a high density of 458 persons per sq. kms. as against the state's 203 per sq. kms. Of the 1,696,583 persons in the district only 154,152 persons live in urban areas which form less than 10 per cent (9.09 per cent) of the district's population. The district is relatively less urbanised compared to most of the other coastal districts though there has been a boom in the industrial sector.

The district consists of 2 subdivisions, 6 tahasils, 18 police stations, 12 community development blocks, 4 towns, 1 municipality, 3 NACs (Notified Area Councils) and 256 grama panchayats. There are 2,971 villages of which 2,586 are inhabited and 385 uninhabited.
Of the total population, there are 315,042 Scheduled Castes (SCs) and 179,289 Scheduled Tribes (STs) which constitute 18.57 per cent and 10.57 per cent of the district's total population respectively. The number of main workers is 473,255. There are 126,723 agricultural labourers which is 26.78 per cent of the total main workers.

For the present study it is important to discuss about the structure of health system and the staffing pattern of the health institutions in the blocks. The lowest government-sponsored health institution is a 'sub-centre' serving about 5,000 population. The service is provided by one ANM (Auxiliary Nurse Midwife) and one male health worker. Above the sub-centres there are few 'Additional Primary Health Centres' (add. PHCs) or 'Primary Health Centres' (PHCs), covering roughly 30,000 population. So far as staffing pattern is concerned there is one MO (Medical Officer), one pharmacist, one ANM and two class IV employees in a PHC (an additional PHC). The highest government health institution is the Block Primary Health Centre (BPHC) or the Community Health Centre (CHC) or the Upgraded Primary Health Centre (UPGPHC). However, there is a variation in the staffing pattern among these. While there are two MOs in a BPHC, there are four MOs in a CHC and six MOs in a UPGHC. In addition to MOs there are one pharmacist, one Block Extenden-
sion Educator (BEE), one computer, one Lady Health Visitor (LHV), one Laboratory Technician (for Malaria Parasite Slides), two ANMs and one health worker male, six class IV employees, one driver for a vehicle. The information regarding health service system, number-of health institutions and their staffing pattern is obtained from the office of the Chief District Medical Officer (CDMO), Baleshwar, in November 1993.

SELECTION OF THE STUDY POPULATION:

For the selection of the study population, a multi-staged selection process has been used.

Selection of the Blocks: As mentioned earlier there are twelve blocks in Baleshwar district. Of these, three have been included in the study, (see Map-I). Selection of these three blocks is based on their relative level of agricultural development. We have selected the following few indicators expected to reflect the level of agricultural development. These are:

(i) Cropping intensity i.e., gross cropped area as percentage of net area sown;
(ii) Yield per hectare;
(iii) Per cent area irrigated.
To arrive at these indicators we have collected the block-wise data for the year 1992-93 (October 1992 to September 1993 including the crop seasons) relating to:

i) gross cropped area;

ii) net area sown;

iii) per hectare yield of major crops during both rabi (Winter crop) and kharif (Summer) seasons;

iv) total area irrigated during rabi.

These data are obtained from the Office of Deputy Director of Agriculture, Baleshwar.

- Using the gross cropped area and net area sown we have derived the cropping intensity.

- For yield per hectare we have taken data for each major crop.

The major crops in the district are 'normal paddy' and HYV (High Yielding Variety) paddy during kharif, and mung, biri (both pulses), mustard (oilseeds), groundnuts, potato, chilli and HYV paddy during rabi. Each crop has been given equal weightage. For each crop we have arranged the blocks according to yield per hectare and have given them a rank. All the ranks for each crop are then added to get the final
yield rank which is cumulative yield rank. The similar ranking system has been used for all the three indicators. These are given in Table 2.2.

**Table 2.2: Blockwise Ranking of Indicators of Agricultural Development**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>RANK</th>
<th>Yield (Cumulative Yield Rank)</th>
<th>RANK</th>
<th>Cropping Intensity</th>
<th>RANK</th>
<th>Per cent Area Irrigated (During rabi)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Bhograi (2.22)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Bhograi (198.29)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Bhograi (46.67)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Baliapal (3.89)</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Basta (184.46)</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Basta (27.54)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Jaleswar (5.22)</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Baliapal (183.70)</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Basta (19.39)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Khaira (5.33)</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Jaleswar (180.30)</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Basta (19.23)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Simulia (6.22)</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Remuna (179.90)</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Remuna (15.98)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Soro (6.89)</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>Baleshwar Sadar (164.64)</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>Simulia (12.25)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Oupada (7.22)</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>Oupada (153.76)</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>Khaira (10.24)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Remuna (7.89)</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>Nilagiri (147.97)</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>Soro (10.0)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Nilagiri (7.89)</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>Bahanaga (147.44)</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>Baleshwar Sadar (9.10)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Bahanaga (8.00)</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>Simulia (137.89)</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>Nilagiri (8.92)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Basta (8.33)</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>Soro (134.87)</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>Bahanaga (8.87)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Baleshwar Sadar (8.89)</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>Khaira (129.35)</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>Oupada (7.22)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Cumulative Yield Rank = Total Rank divided by number of crops

Cropping Intensity = Gross cropped area divided by net area sown and multiplied by 100

Per cent area irrigated = Total area irrigated divided by area sown and multiplied by 100.
A final rank of agricultural development is then arrived at by adding the ranks of all the three indicators of each block (Table 2.3). Since the rank is derived by simple addition as the number ranks go down the cumulative numbers increase. The smaller number reflects higher ranks.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of the Blocks and their Cumulative Rank</th>
<th>Rank</th>
<th>Category of the Blocks</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bhograi (3)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Advanced</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Baliapal (8)</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jaleswar (11)</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Basta (14)</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Remuna (18)</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Simulia (21)</td>
<td>6</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Khaira (23)</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>Average</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Soro (25)</td>
<td>8</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Baleshwar (26)</td>
<td>9</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sadar</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>Backward</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oupada (26)</td>
<td>9</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nilagiri (26)</td>
<td>9</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bahanaga (29)</td>
<td>10</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Cumulative Rank = Total ranks.

After ranking them, the four blocks from the top are categorised as 'advanced'; the four blocks at the bottom are classified as 'backward' and the remaining four in the middle are grouped together as 'average'. The ranking method used here does have certain limitations. Firstly, by
giving equal weightage to all crops we have not differentiated between their cash value. Secondly, the cut off points are to an extent arbitrary. However, for our purpose the contrast between the first and the last category is sufficient to compare. Thirdly, we have not used any additional criteria to distinguish between blocks which have equal rank points as in the case of the three blocks of the backward category. In spite of these limitations, the ranking helped grouping the blocks in three categories each reflecting a different level of agricultural development.

The selected three blocks are: Jaleswar from the 'advanced', Remuna from the 'average' and Oupada from the 'backward' category. From each category, one block has been selected on the following criteria:

a) accessibility through road;
b) absence of industrial units;
c) PHCs are among the better staffed;
d) closer to the district headquarter.

Our selection therefore was purposive to ensure easy access to study-population and adequate proportions of agricultural labour population.
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Selection of the Study Villages: The following table (Table 2.4) presents the number of the sub-centre villages along with the names of PHCs (Primary Health Centres) and BPHCs (Block Primary Health Centres) in the respective blocks.

### Table 2.4: Villages with Health Institutions in the Selected Blocks

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of the blocks and the category they belong to</th>
<th>Name of the BPHC/CHC</th>
<th>Name of the PHCs</th>
<th>No. of the Sub-centres</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Advanced: Jaleswar</td>
<td>Hatigarh</td>
<td>Jamalpur, Chhamauza</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average: Remuna</td>
<td>Remuna</td>
<td>Sergarh, Tikirapal, Srijanga</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Backward: Oupada</td>
<td>Iswarpur</td>
<td>Oupada</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The selection of the study villages is based on the following criteria:

a) the study villages have government sponsored health institutions either within the village or in the adjacent village;

b) accessibility through roads;

c) sub-centres are among the best performing ones;
d) absence of industrial units so as to ensure the availability of agricultural labour population;
e) adequate population of agricultural labour as indicated by lower level government officials, extension workers and health personnals.

Using these criteria we have selected five villages. Our selection therefore is purposive and not statistically random. Efforts have been made to ensure that we get adequate population of agricultural labourers in the selected villages which permits us to study them as a group. Secondly, we have ensured that, to the extent possible, health services are within the reach of the study population. Our study, hence, is not representative of the district, but it definitely is indicative of the state of development in the district and the conditions of agricultural labour.

The best performing sub-centres, in terms of performance of different programmes, e.g., Family Planning and Universal Immunisation Programme (UIP)---of Hatigarh BPHC are Khuard, Paikasada, Lakshmannath and Rayaramachandrapur. From Remuna BPHC, Kuruda, Bhuinpara, Srijanga, Dahapada and Balia are considered to be the best. The best performing
sub-centres of Iswarpur BPHC are Santaragadra, Mareigaon, Chasakhand and Kandagaradi.

The selected five villages are Lakshmannath and Rayaramchandrapur (hereafter mentioned as RRpur) from the advanced block, Bhuinpara from the average and Bankipada and Chasakhand from the backward block. All the study villages except Bankipada are sub-centre villages (which are also best performing ones). Bankipada is the adjacent village of Ishwarpur BPHC. RRpur in addition to being a sub-centre, is very close to Jamalpur PHC as it is one of the adjacent villages. The study villages are revenue villages as well as functional entities in the blocks, (see Map-II).

**Selection of the Unit of the Study:** Our unit of the study is an agricultural labour household. A single household, therefore, may have more than one agricultural labourer.

A total population survey has been conducted to assess landlords, sharecropping, wage-labour, both agricultural and non-agricultural etc. This base line survey is discussed later in detail. This survey helped us to identify the agricultural labour households as well the total number of agricultural labourers in all five villages. On the basis of the survey we have estimated the proportion of the agri-
cultural labourers to the main workers. This survey raised many issues of definition of agricultural labourer itself as well as definitions of agricultural labour household. In the following paragraphs we have given the definitions used in the study.

1. Household. Following the Census of India and the NSS (National Sample Survey), household is defined as a group of persons normally living together (and normally belonging to the same family) and eating food from a common kitchen.

2. Agricultural Labourer. An agricultural labourer is a person who works mainly as a wage labour primarily in agricultural sector. This definition needs to be further clarified as it is necessary to separate agricultural labourers from the larger pool of manual labourers in the village. Our agricultural labourer's definition fulfil both the criteria for wage labour: an income criterion (the major portion of their income comes from hired labour) as well as a work-time criterion (the major portion of their working time is spent as hired labourers). It differs from other manual labour in its essential nature only as it is mainly agricultural based.

3. Agricultural Labour Household. An agricultural labour household is a household whose earnings are mainly or exclu-
sively from agricultural labour.

4. Main Workers. Main workers are those who have worked for the major part of the year preceding the date of enumeration i.e., those who have been engaged in any economically productive activity for 183 days or six months or more during the year.

5. Marginal Workers. Marginal workers are those who have worked any time at all in the year preceding the enumeration but have not worked for a major part of the year i.e., those who have worked for less than 183 days or six months.

6. Non-Workers. Non-workers are those who have not worked any time at all in the year preceding the enumeration.

It became an extremely difficult task to obtain a correct enumeration of marginal workers in our study villages. We have had to classify some section of population, especially, among women and children, as non-workers who had actually worked for at least sometime in the previous year of our enumeration but this was not reported to us in some case. It can be said so because of our cross-checking with others in the villages. This problem of non-reporting however, limited to marginal workers. Since it was not possible on our part to cross-check each and every household
in our study villages, we have restricted the coverage of our estimation of workers to the main workers only. The landless agricultural workers under study belonged to this category only. Of the definitions used only those for 'agricultural labourer' and 'agricultural labour household' are derived from review of literature and the data collected at the block level during the pilot study. All other definitions have been derived from the Census 1981 and 1991.

DATA COLLECTION:

The proposed study has been accomplished in broadly three phases which are as follows—

a) Pilot study,

b) Baseline survey,

c) Indepth study.

Pilot Study: The first phase of study required the collection of information at the district level and subsequently at the block level for the final selection of the block and then the selection of the villages. It also required spending time at the selected villages. After identifying the study villages, Bhuinpara of the average block has been selected for the pilot study. This means spending time in the village to identify the agricultural labourers and to
understand the conditions of their work and their problems. On the basis of this understanding a schedule has been developed for the base line survey. It has been pretested in the nearby village.

**Base Line Survey:** In the second phase, a base line survey has been conducted in all the five villages. The main purpose of the baseline survey is to identify agricultural labourers, their households and the basic terms and conditions of work. This required that we obtain detailed information from the wage labourers on the nature of work, number of days/months they work, type of employment, their earnings from different sources, particularly from agricultural labour, so as to separate those who are wage labourers mainly, from the last section of poor peasantry. Nevertheless, from the initial survey we get a census of total population, total households, family size, their caste, occupation, and literacy. In addition, we identify the nature of agrarian structure and agrarian relations--pattern of land holding, land and caste, and land lease and tenancy.

**Indepth Study:** An indepth study of agricultural labour households from two villages, namely, Bankipada (of the backward block) and RRpur (of the advanced block) has been carried out in the third phase. This study required quali-
tative data collection on a wide range of variables including the following:

a) Occupation;
- work availability
- migration
- relationship with the employer
- perquisites
- hours of work etc.

b) Housing;
- type of house
- maintenance
- availability of latrine, garbage-dumps
- electricity connection
- source of drinking water (availability and non-accessibility)
- location of house (whether connected with road to other.

c) Food;
- degree of hunger satisfaction
- type of food taken, especially oil use and pulses taken
- quantum of special food (veg/non-veg)
- coping up with price hike.

d) Clothing and bed;
- how much, how many times
- sufficiency during winter
- availability of cot and other necessary items.

e) Indebtedness;
- when and what purpose
- how much and rate of interest
- regarding the money lender (relationship with him)
- any financial help from the government

f) Knowledge about various officials and accessibility to those services;

- their experience and their perception.

g) Management during crisis/ceremony;

h) Illness;

- type of illness, when and how much spent (how they managed), whom to consult
- what usually they do
- any home remedies
- immunization, family planning
- their experience during the illness
- their perception of causation of the illness
- their perception of illness
- their knowledge about minor illness and major illness etc.

Though the focus of our study is on agricultural labourers, other members in the village have also been covered i.e., landlords, money lenders, cultivators and some non-agricultural households. This has helped to know the nature of relationship between agricultural labourers and other groups of the village population.

TOOLS USED:

We have attempted to use tools which help combine qualitative and quantitative methods to give an assessment of the size of agricultural labour population and its
conditions of work as well as insights into their life processes.

The tools used are the following:

1. Records of the district and block level. These included all data used for ranking blocks for agricultural development.

2. Other secondary literature as Census of India (1981 & 1991), Govt. of India; District Census Hand Book (1981); District Statistical Hand Book (1990-91 & 1993), Govt. of Orissa; Official Report on Agricultural Strategy of Balasore District (1992-1993), Deputy Director of Agriculture, Balasore; Field Studies etc.

3. Interview schedule for base line survey (see appendix).

4. Interviews with agricultural labourers, their employers, families and other key informants among the villagers.

5. Group discussions: wherever possible we initiated group discussions which often helped cross-check findings. These discussions were free and moved from one aspect to another.

6. Focused group discussions on subjects such as work and its implications for health, terms and conditions of
work, wages. We have attempted to sit with specific groups of agricultural labourers and conducted deep probing open ended discussions.

7. Case reports: among agricultural labour families where ever an event or special events could be followed it has been used to illustrate the process at work.

8. Observation: apart from peoples' version of events and life the researcher collected his own observations as well.

A special effort has been made to include women workers who often tend to retreat to the background. Particular care has been taken by the researcher to avoid getting identified with the upper classes of the village population by declining offers of help from them, particularly in the form of boarding and lodging facilities. This, in fact, added to the problems of the researcher who had to work under harsh conditions and often walk long distances to reach the agricultural labourers' households which were in no position to offer living space. Food was not very wholesome, leaving the quality and hygiene aside. Answering calls of nature in the open paddy field or on the river bank was not always easy when it was very hot or raining. I feel it is an important point to pen down because the problems of researchers' biases manifest themselves in these as well.
These experiences were a part of the realisation of the problems and hardships poor people face which most researchers remain unaware of.

Establishing rapport with the village population was another critically important and very difficult exercise for the researcher despite his knowledge of the language. The researcher had to make special efforts to overcome the communication barriers between him and the study population. The researcher did not permit himself to collect data till he could acquire 'minimum permissible' rapport with the village population as a whole. For this, apart from visiting their houses, agricultural labourers were met at their work place, at tea shops and in their leisure time which was a rarity. The researcher also met key persons like the community leaders and the village elders to explain the purpose of his study. Often children became a means of breaking the ice and introduced the researcher to their families. Women agricultural labourers were specially contacted and helped to feel at ease and confident to talk.

PHASING:

Field work has been completed in one and half years. Within this period, a preliminary study was conducted. It
took about three months. Information on blocks and classifying them in terms of their levels of agricultural development, information on the rural health services and selection of the study villages were done. During this period, first of all, three selected villages were visited and explored for feasibility of work. Then one village was selected for an exploratory study (pilot study) which took about a month to get a first hand feel of the agricultural labourers and their problems. This was used to develop the interview schedule for the base line survey. Base line survey took almost eight months to complete. The qualitative study has been carried out all through this period and in the following six months. Analysis and report writing took over an year. For the analysis of quantitative data, computer facilities were used. This required coding and using the lotus programme.