SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

Agriculture plays a vital role in Indian economy. It continues to be a main source of livelihood of majority of the population in India and it constitutes the most significant and major part of the Indian economy. It accounts for 33 per cent GNP. More than 70 per cent of the population is engaged in agriculture. Landless agricultural labourers constitute very important section of Indian rural society. The base of Indian social pyramid comprises the landless agricultural labourers. Despite the spectacular progress achieved in agricultural production in the country during the past two decades, the landless agricultural labourers continue to form the weakest link in the rural economy. The data shows the constant rising and in number of agricultural labourers. Available evidence suggests that their living and working conditions are deteriorating at very fast pace. The problems of low wages, indebtedness, unemployment and low standard of living are on rise.

In order to appreciate and alleviate the problems of agricultural labourers, there is need to understand the personal, social, psychological factors that have resulted in failure of their development. There is need to enrich the quality of their life. Therefore, the present study, "Socio-Personal Conditions of Agricultural Labourers in Haryana State" is proposed to undertake the personal characteristics & demographic profile of agricultural labourers, their working and living conditions including their nutritional status. It is expected that this study will yield many micro
sel conclusions for practical use of planners, social workers and social
welfare personnel for the consideration of future labour welfare and
plementation of rural action programmes in the agricultural field. The
jectives of the study were as follows:

To study the personal characteristics and demographic profile of
agricultural labourers in Haryana.
To work out the employment status and working conditions of the
agricultural labourers.
To assess the knowledge and opinion of agricultural labourers about
Labour Laws and Welfare Schemes of the Government for
agricultural labourers.
To analyse the nutritional status of agricultural labourers' households.
To enlist problems and constrains faced by agricultural labourers.

following hypothesis were put to test:
The nutritional status of family has no relationship with their
educational status.
There is no relationship in between knowledge of welfare
programmes and schemes and educational status of agricultural
labourers.
Employment status and working conditions have no relationship.
Employment status and communication behavior have no
relationship.
Family income and nutritional status have no relationship.
The State of Haryana was purposively selected as locale of the study since the researcher has long professional career working as extension scientist in the State. Therefore she not only had the geographical insight of the area but also was well conversant with the socio-economic and technological profile of the rural areas and rural population of the State. Operational convenience was also a criterion for selecting the locale purposively.

A multistage random sampling procedure was adopted to select the villages. In the first stage, three districts were selected randomly. In the second stage, one block was identified on random basis from each of the three districts. In third stage two villages were selected on random basis from each of the block. In all, study was confined to six villages of three blocks and three districts of the State of Haryana.

All heads, working member male/female of farm labour household of the six selected villages constituted the respondent’s population for the purpose of the present study. The list of the working male and female labour respondents was prepared with the help of respective village officials/leaders. Fifty agricultural labour respondents were selected randomly from each of selected villages. The whole process resulted in selection of 300 labour respondents for the present study.
List of variables along with the instruments for measuring them are given below:

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An interview schedule appropriate to the study was developed by incorporating the questions concerning all variables under study. All the respondents were contacted in person for collecting data.

Data was coded, tabulated and statistical tools like frequencies, averages, ranks and $\chi^2$ test were used for analysis and drawing inferences.
The following are the main findings of the study:

**Personal Characteristics of agricultural labourers**

Majority of agricultural labourers were male and belonged to younger age group of less than 35 years of age, having medium family size of 6-10 members. The family education and the level of their own education were found low.

Almost all, i.e., 98.7 per cent the respondents belonged to SC/ST or backward castes. Their economic level was found to be very low. Majority of the respondents were having income only upto Rs.2000/- per month.

The majority, i.e., 88.6 per cent had low socio-economic status, belonging to hierarchically low castes, landless, with prevalent illiteracy, having poor living conditions and lacked assets and durable goods.

 Nearly two third of the sampled respondents were reported under debt.

Majority, i.e., 89.3 per cent were reported not member of any social organization. Those who were members were mostly associated with caste or religious groups.

Psychologically majority had low self esteem (32.7%), medium levels of aspiration (66.3%) and were fatalistic (66.0%). Their major aspiration was noticed to have sufficient food and clothing.

It was interesting to note that migrant labourer’s had more exposure to communication sources as compared to native labour. Nearly half
of the respondents had medium levels of use of available communication sources viz. interpersonal cosmopolite, interpersonal localite and mass media. The majority of female respondents never visited a town. The major purpose of visiting a town was observed as domestic to buy household necessities followed by health and employment.

Mographic Profile of Agricultural Labourers

It was found that migration of agricultural labour in the study area is a regular feature. Labour is usually hired by farmers for harvesting of wheat, paddy sowing and post harvest handling.

Large majority of the migrated labourer’s hailed from Bihar (70 %). The data also reveals that since last five years the number of migrant labour is on the rise.

The most compelling reason for migration as reported by migrated respondents was the unemployment (54.66%) followed by low wages and more work in their native places (25.3%).

The data revealed that majority of respondents' fathers (81.3 %) and Grandfathers (85.3%) were also Agricultural Labourers.

Employment Status of Agricultural Labourers

The low employment status of the majority might have been due to the fact that underemployment is prevalent among agricultural labourers because of seasonal nature of agriculture.

It was found that 45.4 per cent were getting daily wages from Rs.41-60 and majority comprising three forth of the respondents were paid daily wages in cash.
It was interesting to note that a substantial percentage, i.e., 41.3 per cent was satisfied with their existing level of income. Though 58.7 per cent respondents expressed dissatisfaction with their income.

In farm related activities respondents were involved mainly in sowing, intercultural operations, weeding, harvesting and threshing. In majority cases, women workers were employed for intercultural operations and weeding. The major activities involving milk animals were confined to the collection, preparation and feeding of animals.

Respondents did not have any specific preference for work. Whatever job they get, they were ready to do and earn. This lack of choice for work is a clear indication of desperation of the respondents to earn daily income by doing whatever they can get. This also reflects lack of opportunities for this class of unskilled, uneducated and unorganized group of people. Similarly majority of them did not consider any job given to them in terms of difficult or easy.

None of the respondents had any written document for their contractual job. Ninety per cent of respondents were working with more than one landlord. A large majority of respondents 88.7 per cent were personally called by employers.

**Working Conditions of Agricultural Labourers**

It was found that majority of respondents rated their working conditions from average (52 %) to poor (10.7 %).
In large number of cases 43.3 per cent respondents were employed for 2 to 4 months and in 39.3 per cent cases for 5 to 8 months in a year.

Majority of the respondents were not working with one employer and they found great difficulty in finding the jobs. The employers largely decided number of working hours and rest periods. Women labourers usually get fewer wages because of nature of work they do and usually they get employed for half a day job.

The major reason for perceived satisfaction with their working conditions was that they were able to earn something. However, those dissatisfied with their working conditions were largely due to underemployment as they expressed 'unable to earn enough' (29) and 'do not get enough work' (16).

The most common reason for those who wanted to continue as agricultural labour was that they felt that they did not possess any other skill or knowledge (45.3%).

Amongst those who wanted to discontinue with their present occupation of agricultural labour and looked for change, the main reason was economic in nature, i.e., low wages they earn (21.3%) and delayed payments (17.3%).

On testing null hypothesis it was found that there appears to be some association between employment status and use of communication sources while there was no relationship between employment status and working conditions.
Knowledge and Opinion about Welfare Programmes

Respondents had good knowledge about the welfare programmes as large majority (62.7 %) had high knowledge and about one third (29.3 %) of respondents had medium level of knowledge and only 8 per cent had very low level of knowledge about welfare programmes.

Except for minimum wage programme, majority of respondents had knowledge about the various welfare programmes.

Large number of respondents in general considered these programmes as not useful for them. In case of the nine programmes under present study for welfare of labour, 40.3 to 70.6 per cent of respondents had negative opinion.

There appears to be some association between knowledge of welfare programmes and educational status.

Nutritional Status of Agricultural Labourers

Except iron, very few respondents were nutritionally sufficient. Only 2 per cent of the respondents had sufficient energy intake to meet their daily requirements.

It was found that large majority (88.7 %) of respondents had intake less than 80 per cent of RDI in terms of energy. In case of protein intake of respondents, 61.3 per cent had less than 80 per cent of RDI of which 19.3 per cent of respondents had daily protein consumption less than half of RDI. Nearly half of the respondents (47.3 %) had Vitamin C intake less than 30 percent of RDI which is extremely low and often a cause for the labour falling prey to infections and loss of
resistance to diseases like TB and Malaria. 38.6 per cent of respondents had daily Calcium intake less than 50 per cent of RDI.

There is no significant difference between nutritional intake amongst labourers with different educational and income levels.

**Problems of Agricultural Labourers**

Problems experienced by the labourers in their day to day life were studied in terms of physical, sociological and economical conditions. Respondents were asked to enlist such problems and these problems were categorized under the following heads: Agricultural, Economic, household, Health and Sanitation and Family Education.

As regards the problems related to agriculture, nine problems of the respondents were identified. Biggest problem (Rank I) faced by 26.3 per cent of the respondents was bad behaviour of employer. The second most (Rank II) impinging problem reported by 22.7 per cent respondents was pertained to the long distance between their residence and farm, the third ranked problem was lack of shelter on farm was expressed by 21.3 per cent. Absence of any protective shelter is naturally disturbing for them and hence they expressed this as the third most important problem.

In all twelve problems were identified under this head. The major problem (Rank I) was related to ‘insufficient work’ (underemployment) and it was expressed by 94.0 per cent of the respondents. The economic problems perceived at Rank II, III and IV were delayed payment of wages, low wages and indebtedness, revealed by 74.3, 70.0, and 48.7 per cent of the respondents respectively.
As regards to living conditions, the main problem of the respondents was condition of their house and their surroundings. A large number of respondents comprising 41.3 per cent (Rank I) reportedly were unable to build/repair their houses. This can be attributed largely to poor economic condition of the respondents. The second problem (Rank II) was the unhygienic surroundings in their neighbourhood and was felt by 31.3 per cent of respondents. The third major problem felt by 18 per cent of the respondents was lack of ownership of the house.

Among the problems perceived by the respondents related to health and sanitation, the majority of the respondents, i.e., 66.7 per cent (Rank I) felt the lack of nutritious food as their prime problem related to health and sanitation. Fifty eight per cent of the respondents felt the problem of drinking water (Rank II) and 37.3 per cent reported lack of medical facilities in their villages (Rank III).

The respondents reported five problems related to family education. The major problem related to education as perceived by 62.0 per cent respondents was more expenditure in their children's education (Rank I) followed by lack of facilities school and vocational education which was at rank II &III reported by 15.3 and 14.0 per cent of respondents respectively.

Implications of the Study

On the basis of findings it may be concluded that majority of the agricultural labourers live in extreme poverty. They are often deprived of adequate food, water supply, shelter and sanitation. Undernourishment due to poor diet coupled with poor sanitary conditions of their surroundings often lead to diseases such as malaria, tuberculosis, gastro-
intestinal disorders, anemia, etc. A vicious cycle of poor health, reduced working capacity and low productivity were observed to be the typical symptoms. In addition, the physical stress of the labour job was observed to hasten their energy much before the age a person can work effectively, thus may be the reason majority of the respondents were younger in age, below 35 years.

The diets of the respondents of the present study were found deficient in all the major nutrients studied in addition to their low energy take. It is therefore very important to improve their nutritional intake to make them healthy and efficient all through their life. The problem of malnutrition has to be tackled through improved public distribution stem, improved dietary patterns, improved nutrition and health related knowledge, better health care and family welfare services. Innovative local efforts can go a long way in improving the nutritional security especially in poor segment of the population living in rural areas. Besides training programmes on inexpensive nutritious diets, health awareness and small family norms need to be popularized through organized programmes in labour dominated areas.

Lack of employment opportunities, underemployment, delayed payment of wages and unequal wages of male and female labourers were found to be the major economic problems. The proper enforcement of equitable labour legislation to protect them against irregular and low-wage employment, low wages, lack of social justice, safety and health regulations is important for overall improvement in socio-economic conditions of agricultural labourers. Rural employers, cooperatives and farmers’ associations can all be instrumental in implementing such legislations. There is need to create infrastructure for rural industry in backward areas of the country. This will not only create job opportunities
but also reduce migration of rural labourers to different parts of the country.

Majority of agricultural labourers were illiterate and unskilled. Policy makers should think of strategies that would make the illiterates attend adult literacy programme despite being hard pressed for time and other resources. This would mean dovetailing various income generating and vocational skill development/enhancement programmes with literacy. Besides, credit facilities, raw material and marketing outlet would have to be provided. Once they gain skill and other facilities are provided to them, their migration to distant places/states in search of employment would also be reduced and they would be more comfortable as they reportedly found it difficult to continue their labour jobs at places away from their home.

To enhance the educational level of children of agriculture labourers, it is essential that facilities of quality education in government run schools should be provided. Systematic mobilisation and participation of the community are essential pre-requisites for the achievement of universal education. There is need for value based education to the children which should highlight the dignity of labour.

Besides problem of formal education, other problem associated with family education expressed was lack of facilities related to vocational education. It is suggested that the curriculum of formal education should incorporate vocational education. To implement vocational education, KVs, NGOs, Farmers organisations and co-operatives work in tandem and these organisations may also be networked with professional institutes to keep abreast with technological developments.
rawn can be generalized to a greater extent that is warranted from the resent study.

There is need to study how the existing resources and services can be utilized for the betterment of the agricultural labourers through action search made by organizing labourers in select regions.

It would be useful to study the impediments in effective nplementation of Government's programmes and enacted legislations rgeted at agricultural labourers.
Extension efforts need to be directed towards employers of the farm labourers for motivating and sensitizing them to be humane and empathetic towards the needs and feelings of the poor agricultural labourers. Shelters around agricultural farm for the rest periods and during bad weather are the basic requirement for any worker. The absence of such rest areas make them very uncomfortable. The village panchayat needs to be motivated to build permanent shelters, close to the farms, using village development funds for the benefit and comfort of the farm labourers.

The agricultural labour was found totally unorganized sector. They are not in a position to bargain and usually get untimely payment of wages. This problem can be solved if some active institution or organization is formed where agricultural labour can enroll themselves and this organization works in the interest of the labour. Such organized institution would be useful in coordinating and making available these basic essentials for the labourers. Due to lack of any organized institution or the labour force, the government initiated programmes often do not reach them. The respondents of the present study also revealed this. The negative opinion of the respondents about the government run programmes were attributed to their being kept away from their legitimate rights. Hence the role of labour organizations that are managed by the labour representatives is important, as through these organizations, agricultural labour will have information and access to welfare schemes.

Suggestions for Future Research

The present investigation was confined to one State. The study needs to be replicated on larger sample covering larger area, so that inferences