ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

It is an immense pleasure to express my heartfelt thanks and deep sense of gratitude to Dr. Ummed Singh, Internal Supervisor, Reader, Department of Agricultural Extension, J.V. College, Baraut, CCS University, Meerut for his expert guidance, moral support, constant encouragement, constructive criticism and invaluable suggestion throughout the course of my research.

I am highly grateful to Dr. (Mrs) Anita Chautani External Supervisor and Principal Scientist, Division of Agricultural Extension, Indian Agricultural Research Institute, Pusa, New Delhi for her keen interest, guidance and motivation during this period.

My sincere thanks are due to Dr. Kastar Singh, In-charge, CATAT for his keen interest, constant encouragement and constructive suggestions.

Thanks are due Dr. J.P.S. Dabas, Dr. Rajiv Singh, Sh. Mahinder Singh Sh. Rahul of IARI, Dr. Vijay Pal Yadav, KVK Faridabad (FAU) and Sh. K.S. Yadav KVK Shikhopur for their cooperation and help at times of need.

To all my friends I owe a special debt of gratitude for their unstinted support.

I owe my debt to my loving parents, elders and all my well wishers for their affection and constant love.

Finally on a personal note, I express my deep gratitude to my husband Rakesh Sharma and Son & Daughter, Udayan & Vasundhara and for their warm affection, encouragement, motivation and every type of support always available without demand.

September, 2004

(Nishi Sharma)
According to V.V. Giri National Labour Institute (2000) conclusions on incidence of indebtedness among agricultural labourers households' majority of the agricultural labourers took loan to meet their survival needs. This clearly indicates the fact that agricultural labourers in our country are not paid minimum wages as prescribed by the State. Non payment of minimum wages and rising prices in the market have made the life of casual workers miserable. Agricultural labourers do not get work round the year, because in agriculture the work period stretches to four months. To meet both ends labourers enter into debt bondage. This ultimately leads to their oppression and exploitation.

Srinivas (2000) on enactment of welfare schemes and laws commented that despite as many as 12 legislation and 14 welfare schemes operating in the country, the plight of agricultural labourers is pitiful. The legislation, unless strongly backed by workers organisations on issue basis, is never enforced. In fact, Union Ministry of labour while analysing the effectiveness of existing Acts and Welfare Schemes in its annual report for the year 1999-2000 pointed out that the existing Acts and Welfare Schemes have not adequately protected the interest of the agricultural workers. The Ministry has envisaged alternative strategies such as creating 'welfare fund' by enacting yet another 'comprehensive' legislation for agricultural workers. Sadly, preparation is continuing but never tabled in Parliament. An Agricultural Workers bill was prepared in 1997 but kept in the files. The workers went on Dharma in 1998 to pressurise the Government to table the Bill. The then Cabinet Committee just passed the bill and nothing has happened since then. In 1999 another modified version of the bill was prepared and the story of negligence continues.