Awadh was a region of the Mughal Empire which is greatly in need of a special monograph to itself. Its subsequent history as a state under the subsidiary system, down to the annexation (1856) makes it additionally interesting, since its administration and internal conditions are continuously illumined by the reports of British officials and others. Its agrarian system - particularly the institution of 'ta'alluqadarî tenures' - came into light with the Mutiny and Canning's proclamation. And yet, a continuous history of pre-British agrarian system in Awadh from the time of the Ain-i Akbari to the annexation is lacking despite the rich documentary material preserved at various research libraries and archives.

The earliest possible initial point for any agrarian history of Awadh can only be the statistical and topographical information contained in Abul Faal's Ain-i Akbari (completed 1598). In the chapters entitled, Ain-i Nezdahsālā, first we get the crop-wise revenue rates from 6th R.Y. to 24th R.Y. of Akbar for the province; and then in the Ain-i Dahsālā, there are final rates for each locality (dastūr-circle) within the suṣba. In yet another chapter, 'Account of the Twelve suṣba', there is not only a geographical description of the province, but in a separate statistical table information is provided for measured area (ārāzi).
estimated revenue (nāqdi/jamā'), suyurghāl (amount alienated in grants) caste of the zamindārs and the number of their retainers (infantry and cavalry separately stated). The Ain stands unique for in the Mughal period at least it had no successor.

Subsequent to Ain, we have a number at Dastūr-ul 'amalā, prepared during the 17th and early 18th centuries providing summary statistics and seldom give pargana-wise revenue and area figures.

The printed Persian chronicles of the Mughal period such as Aḥūl Fazl's Akbarnāma or Lāhorī's Badshāh-nāma or Kāzim's 'Alām-gīr-nāma provide only sporadic information about Awadh, referring to some appointments or to rebellions or expeditions. Similar facts can be extracted from the Akbārāt-e Darbār-Mu'allā of Aurangzeb's reign. These sources help in identification of a number of officials referred in various Inshā' collections and other documents.

Another class of sources consists of collections of letters (inshā') such as the Inshā'-e Roshan Kalām, Mansūr-ul Maktūbāt and Ausaf-i ʿĀsaf. Their evidence relate to the zamindār's rebellion, conditions of Law and order, relations of the zamindār with the jāgīrdār, with some occasional references to the working of the jāgīr system and collection of land-revenue.
The historical accounts of nawabi Awadh are fewer in number and with some exceptions, they are loaded with political history, and little useful information could be exacted for the purpose of agrarian history. The typical representative of this class in Ghulam Ali Naqi’s ‘Imādus-Salādat.

A valuable account of the administration of Awadh kingdom exists in the Mirāt-ul Auzā, having been penned down by a court Wadā‘-nigār Lalji during the decade of annexation. Since the author felt that the details of administration which might lead to the ruin of the kingdom might not be well received, he kept it secret. Valuable information pertaining to the revenue system, methods of realization and the armed power of the ta‘āllugadārs is provided.

The most important sources of information lie in archival material consisting of farmāns, parwānas, sanads, mahzars (statement of the facts) chaknāmās (land demarcation papers), sale-deeds, judicial decisions etc. Most of them relate to the 17th and 18th centuries, and a few to the 16th. The repositories of these collections are the Research Library, Centre of Advanced Study in History, AMU; the Central Record Office Allahabad; National Archives of India, New Delhi; and Tagore Library, Lucknow University.
The printed works in English, are indispensable for any study of the agrarian life of Awadh during the first half of the 19th century. The outstanding source for us is the important survey by Donald Butter of the Southern parts of Awadh. Though Butter does not explicitly refer to use of official documents of the Awadh government, his detailed survey was hardly possible without some cooperation by local officials. His account appears a little biased against the Awadh government and he offers severe comments, which are not always well grounded. We find him sharing the views of other British officials, that if Awadh was annexed to the British dominions, the people would be better off. Butter, however, offers valuable details of crops, agricultural production, implements, towns, markets and topographical informations.

Charles Elliott's Chronicles of Oonao, deals exclusively with the history of the zamindar families of Unao, particularly the Bias clan, down to 1861. The author consulted large numbers of documents in the hands of leading zamindar families and local traditions. It contains useful informations about the revenue farming and the financial administration of the district. But surprisingly he shows

1. Butter, pp. 50-1.
little concern with purely economic matters such as the
state of agriculture, crop pattern and trade etc.

Among the travellers' accounts, the most important
are those of Heber and Sleeman. Bishop Reginald Heber
visited Awadh in 1824, and had some pre-conceived notions,
but he revised these after he made his personal observation
and also appears to have acquired some sympathy with the
naibati regime. Indeed he blames the non-cooperative atti-
tude of the company's officials for the anarchy and misrule
of the kingdom. His judgement about the peoples is the
opposite of that of Butler, "they prefer to be governed by
their native nawabs rather than to be placed under the rule
of the company.

W.H. Sleeman's diary of the tour of Awadh which he
made from December 1849 to February 1850 in now a celebrated
historical text. He was then Resident at Lucknow, and the
tour was made to supplement the report which he had presented
earlier to Lord Dalhousie. To him the basic fault in the

1. "We have heard much of the mis-governed and desolate
2. "I have been pleased, however and surprised, after all
which I have heard of Oude, to find the country so comp-
letely under plough, since were the oppression regret-
as is sometimes stated, I can not think that we should
witness so considerable population," Ibid., p. 49.
3. Ibid., pp. 85-6.
4. Ibid., pp. 82-3, p. 90.
5. F.D. Reeves (ed.) Sleeman in Oudh, Cambridge, 1971, See
   introduction, p. 13.
political set-up of the kingdom lay 'in the lack of effective Central government and the 'maladministration' which followed from it.' Some of Sleeman's observations must be judged in the context of this explicit bias.

Whatever the reasons behind the compilation of Sleeman's diary, it still stands as a treasure, house of facts relating to crops, agriculture, local administration etc. zamindārs, ta'āllugadārs and chakledārs find frequent mention in diary, and this help us to form an idea of their power and importance.

1. Ibid.