INTRODUCTION

One of the most important problems facing the country is the increasing pressure of population on land. In order to increase food production, agriculture has to be put on scientific lines and more land suitable for cultivation has to be brought under the plough. The ancient methods of cultivation with old-fashioned farm implements can not keep pace with the food requirements of the growing population. Under-developed agriculture, low productivity of the land, and the subsistence economy are related to the low economic level and poor food of the villagers. Further, their habitual residence in poor houses or huts under insanitary conditions coupled with the malnutrition have paved the way for several diseases in rural population.

In accordance with various local, physical, economic and social conditions, each region has its own problems with regard to its agriculture, socio-economic conditions and the nutritional level of the people. It is, therefore, necessary to undertake local rural surveys for a possible planning for agricultural and social improvement and for the betterment of nutritional standard of the people.

Budaun and Shahjahanpur districts extend between the parallels of 27° 28' and 28° 29' North and the meridians of 78° 16' and 80° 23' East.

The western and southwestern side is well-defined by the river Ganga while the northern, eastern and southeastern borders are the political boundaries of the districts Moradabad, Rampur, Bareilly, Filibhit, Lakhimpur and Hardoi. In the west of the Ganga, are the

1. Formerly known as the Ganges.
The area possesses a simple physical landscape consisting of alluvial plain formed by the Ganga river system. It has a gentle slope from northwest to southeast in the western half of the area and from north to south in the eastern half, following the direction of the rivers. The chief rivers are the Ganga, Ramganga, Khannaut, Garra and Gomati with numerous tributaries like Mahawa, Sot, Aril and Baghul. The Aril, Ramganga and Garra are associated with a number of conspicuous meanders. Many ox-bow-lakes are also seen near the Mahawa, Aril, Kadwara, Baghul and Garra rivers. Besides, numerous seasonal and permanent lakes have various sizes and shapes; their water collected during the rainy season remains almost stagnant after the rainy season. The seasonal lakes being shallow dry up during the hot-weather season. During the season of rains they attain a huge size and sometimes they are connected with each other or with a river due to overflow and produce flood causing much distress to the rural population. The problem of poor drainage in the central low land in particular is paramount and affects adversely the agricultural land use and necessitates a careful study of the area.

The total area of Budaun and Shahjahanpur districts is 9,909 sq. kilometres which includes 9,857 sq. kilometres of the rural area. The

1. Formerly known as Farrukhabad.
rural area comprises 3,866 inhabited villages and 642 uninhabited villages. The villages of over 5,000 population are only 8. The total average cultivated land is 61 to 83 per cent of the total area. The irrigated land varies from 7 to 40 per cent of the total cultivated area; the double cropped land varies from 5 to 25 per cent of the cultivated land. The 17 to 19 per cent of the whole area of the two districts is occupied by settlements, roads, water bodies, waste lands, forests, cemetery and crematory. A considerable proportion of land formerly under pasturage has been tilled on account of increasing pressure of population. The acute pressure of population is seen by the fact that the population increased by 37.6 and 20.3 per cent in 1961 as compared to that of 1901 in Budaun and Shahjahanpur districts; the increase of rural population in the two districts since 1901 is 40.8 and 18.8 per cent respectively. The population increased during last ten years is 12.8 and 12.5 per cent while the increase in rural population is 16.9 and 13.9 per cent in the two respective districts.

The total population of the two districts is 2,541,913 which includes 2,265,158 of rural population. The density of rural population (which is 91.6 and 85.1 per cent of the total population in the two districts) is 309 and 266 persons per sq. kilometer respectively.

The adequate food supply with regard to well-balanced nutrition for such a growing population needs the maximum exploitation of cultivable lands; reclamation of waste lands through scientific measures is also a necessity. This requires a careful study of every type of land. The
agrarian reforms to establish a balance among several uses of rural lands, i.e., agriculture, pasturage, forestry, means of irrigation, means of transport and human habitation, need a detailed geographical study of the area; to this end an intensive survey of agricultural land use is essential. A correct knowledge of current use of agricultural lands, their yield-rates, potential production units and, in consequence, a true picture of per head per day intake of calories and essential nutrient elements suffice to ascertain actual nutritional standard of the rural population, nutritional deficiencies in their ordinary diet and the consequent diseases among, at least, a section of poor villagers. And the correlation of rural land use and health problems may point out the need for an overall improvement of agriculture in order to improve nutritional and living standard of rural population.