The question of the rehabilitation of the landless agricultural labourers did not receive much attention till recently for two reasons. There was not enough information about either their actual number or their social and economic condition. The other, more important reason for their neglect was that both at the Centre and State levels, we far from anxious to do much for reconstructing and developing rural life in India. This situation has changed during the last few years. The report of the Agricultural Labour Enquiry Committee has provided the background information. And independence has provided the will to reform. The purpose of this Chapter is to analyse critically a few of the important schemes launched or suggestions put forward for rehabilitating this section of the rural society. In the recent past, a few steps have also been taken by the Government of Uttar Pradesh in the Agricultural sphere, whose impact is likely to be profound on the landless labourers. We will also study these schemes in relation to agricultural labourers. Such a study will help in formulation of a scheme for the rehabilitation of this section of the society.

ACHARYA VINOBHA BHAVE

Acharya Vinoba Bhave, the saint follower of Mahatma Gandhi, launched a country-wide movement in 1951 to rehabilitate the landless agricultural labourers on the land itself. It is, therefore, in the fitness of things to examine closely this movement, and estimate its real impact on the landless agricultural labourers for whose welfare it has been launched.
The landless labourers have several problems, the outstanding among them being the scarcity of employment opportunities, especially for perennial employment. Vinobaji set out to collect 50 million acres through donations from the landowners because "there are 300 million acres of land in India and an average family has five members. Vinobaji felt that every family could give away one sixth of its land holdings, accepting the poor landless man as the sixth member of the family." This would enable us to rehabilitate all the "149 lakhs of cultivating labourers who form 21 percent of all persons who derive their livelihood from the land," and provide them with sufficient work and income for the whole year.

Till May, 1955, i.e. in a period of four years, Vinobaji and his disciples could collect only 3.75 million acres of land. Considering that the number of landless labourers and the rate at which they are increasing (the rate of increase according to our survey is more than 2.8% per annum) the pace of land collections appears to be slow. So, it can be safely said that it is doubtful whether Vinobaji will be able to provide even one acre of land, which is his aim, to each landless agricultural labourer. A survey of 24 villages of the district of Aligarh showed that not a single acre of land was donated to Vinoba Bhave from these villages though there are landless labourers and they are multiplying (at a rate of 2.8 per cent per annum).

Even if, for the sake of argument, it is granted that Vinobaji will be able to collect sufficient land for all the landless agricultural labourers, this would not be enough. Land will have to be secured in all the different regions, in

2. Ibid, P.31.
4. Ibid, P.41.
all the villages even, sufficient for the requirement of each region, each village. Equal success for Vinoba's mission in the different parts of this country would be a very optimistic hope; it is not at all likely that the charm will work equally well everywhere. The present survey of the 24 villages is a pointer in as much as it was noticed that not a inch of land could be collected by Bhoodan workers from these villages, inhabited by quite a large number of landless labourers. Not only this, the survey also revealed that additional land could not be secured for these labourers even from the adjoining villages. Hence, the only alternative seems to be that such landless labourers should be persuaded to migrate from their home villages to those villages, whether far or near where Vinobaji and his followers are able to collect surplus land. But the study of human mobility goes to show that man is the most difficult commodity to move. It can, therefore, be said that Vinobaji's Bhoodan Tarna can rehabilitate only a fraction of the landless population.

QUALITY OF LAND

Experience so far reveals another shortcoming of the Tarna as a device for the rehabilitation of the landless labourers. It has been pointed out that 40% of the land collected in donations is, either unfit for cultivation or is so poor that it will never be an economically sound proposition to reclaim it, Vinobaji seems to be aware of this fact, as he himself admitted once: "To my mind, no land can be called useless. I will make full use of even the poorest quality of land, even the rocke, tracts and the hills." Again, he said: "It is interesting to know that most of the poor quality of land

5. Vinoba & His Mission, 'Suresh Rama Bhai', p.15.
has been donated not by the poor but by the rich. It is a curious phenomenon, that God has made the hearts of the poor rich and of the rich poor. So, even if the required land is collected, it is not feasible to rehabilitate properly all the landless labourers.

Now the question is whether even those lucky landless labourers, who are able to get land with the help of Bhooana Yagna, will be able to start cultivation. This doubt arises because these labourers have neither money, nor agricultural implements, nor other resources. Vinobaji seems to be conscious of this problem for he has started demanding a number of new Dana such as Dhan Dana (Money), Koop-Dana (Wells), Bail Dana (Bullocks); and even Buddhi Dana (Advice). Naturally in this materialistic world, where love for earthly things is growing daily, to collect all the necessary implements and money for such a large number of agricultural labourers is neither possible nor very desirable, as it will involve giant efforts by thousands of workers for years together. All this energy, enthusiasm and money is used for providing alternative and better means of employment such as crafts, the agricultural workers can be rehabilitated more speedily and the country will also derive greater benefit.

ECONOMIC EFFECT

The economic effect on the landless labourers, who will be given land by Vinobaji, is another question to be studied. Unfortunately, in the 24 villages covered by the survey, not a single person could be found who was given land and all the necessary help - Bullocks, plough, seeds, money etc. - by Bhooana Yagna. So, it is not possible to study this aspect very scientifically. However, a guess can be made in this direction.

6. Ibid.
The All India Agricultural Labour Enquiry Committee report of 1951 tells us that, on an average, landless agricultural labourers in Western U.P. are employed for 273 days, 251 days in agriculture and 22 days in non-agricultural labour. Will the landless labourer, after becoming owner of one acre of land, be able to remain gainfully employed for a greater number of days than at present? This appears to be doubtful because of several facts. Firstly, the cultivation of one acre of land, when the methods and resources of cultivation remain almost the same as of other farmers, not keep its owner busy for 251 days in a year. Men who know rural conditions aver that cultivation of one acre of land will hardly keep a person busy for 100 days. Secondly, the new owner of the land will be busy on his own land when he will be required by others. So, neither will he be in a position to take up another farmer's work nor will the other farmers be enthusiastic in engaging such a person. Thirdly, the psychology of the new land owner will undergo a change. He probably, he will not like to work as hired labourer due to his raised social status. All this is likely to keep the new land owner gainfully employed for a lesser number of days than when he was employed as a landless labourer.

What will happen to the income of the new land-owner?

On the basis of estimates provided by a number of landowners and others of the 24 villages surveyed, it can be said that one acre of land, where irrigation facilities are available, with some luck can yield anything between Rs.800/- to 1000/- as income, and where no such facilities are available, the income will range between Rs.400/- and Rs.600/-. Assuming that the income
The Agricultural Labour Enquiry Committee Report tells us that, on an average, the annual income in Western U.P. of a casual labourer family, is Rs.530, of attached labour family Rs.624 and of all families Rs.550/-. It would appear therefore, that the income of the landless labourers' families who get land, will increase and so their standard of living will also go up. But it will be noticed that income from land alone - especially where irrigation facilities are not available - will not substantially improve the lot of the landless labourers.

Agricultural labourers have several problems other than employment and income. For example the Jiri Committee tells us that the consumption pattern of the labourers is not ideal that the problem of child and woman labour needs proper tackling, that credit facilities are to be improved, and so on. Vinoba, it appears, has not given any thought to these problems. So to expect that Bhoodan Yagna will solve the problem of the landless agricultural labourers, is to pitch one's expectations very high.

So much for those who are lucky and get land under the Bhoodan movement. What will be the impact of the scheme on those who do not get land. The villages we studied do not provide an answer to this question. It stands to reason, however, that the demand for and the supply of the landless

8. Ibid, p.25.
labourers will be influenced by Bhoodan Yagna. And both the factors are bound to influence the employment level. For example, if land is being donated to Vinobaji by those farmers who were engaging labourers for getting their land cultivated, the demand for labourers is bound to go down. At the same time the supply of labourers will also decrease as those landless labourers who will get gifts may not probably like to serve at all or to the same extent as were doing before. Again if the land was donated by those farmers who were not engaging labourers, then the demand for labourers will remain the same but the supply of them will go down. It can therefore, be said that Bhoodan Yagna will influence the employment opportunities available for the landless labourer this will depend upon: (a) the economic status of the person who have donated the land and (b) whether the new land owner are willing to work as hired labourers.

POOR FARMERS

Vinobaji and his disciples have repeatedly stated that "God has made the heart of the rich poor and of the poor rich" implying thereby that bulk of land gifts received are from poor farmers. Probably, it was because of this reason that Vinobaji decided not to accept gifts from very poor farmers. If this is so, it can be inferred that Bhoodan Yagna will not reduce the demand for labourers to a great extent while it will decrease the supply of labourers sufficiently. The result will be that the employment opportunities available for landless labourers will go up and with them, the wage rate will also record a change for better. If this surmise is correct, the yagna will help in improving the condition of the remaining landless labourers who have not succeeded in getting land.
in conclusion, it can be said that (a) Bhoodan 
Yagga will not be able to rehabilitate all the landless 
labourers; (b) those who get land will continue to be under 
employed but their total family income will go up, and (c) 
those who will not be able to get land might also gain 
because employment opportunities and wage rate may go up. 
But it will be good to remember that there are other prob-
lem of the landless labourers to which the yagga pays no 
attention whatsoever - the problem of child and woman 
labour, the problem of the supply of capital and credit 
facilities etc. Even in respect to the problem to which 
the movement specially addresses itself - the provision of 
land, the expectations should not be pitched too high. 

(2)

FIXING OF MINIMUM WAGES AND THE AGRICULTURAL WORKERS

The makers of the First Five Year Plan recommended that 
minimum wages in agriculture should be fixed. They observed 
"The enforcement of minimum wages for agricultural workers 
should be regarded as an important aspect of the programme 
for improving the conditions of agricultural workers and 
should receive high priority." in accordance with this 
the state Governments were required to fix minimum rates 
of wage for agricultural labour by the end of 1953. However 
this could not be done. For example "during the first five 
year Plan minimum wages have been fixed over the entire 
territories in the States of Punjab, Rajasthan, Bihar, Coorg 
Delhi, Himachal Pradesh, Kutch and Tripura. In Assam, Bihar 
Bombay, Uttar Pradesh, West Bengal, Mysore and Vindhy Pradesh 
minimum wages have been fixed for certain specified areas 
which represented low wage pockets. In a number of other 

9. The First Five Year Plan, P.206.
States minimum wage legislation has not yet been implem-

In Uttar Pradesh, minimum wages have been fixed, as a
experiment. "for farms over 50 acres in only twelve distr
of Eastern U.P. where agricultural wages were low and the
economic condition of the labourers miserable. Hence, it
is not possible to find out, on the basis of a survey, the
impact of this legislation on the condition of agricultural
labourers in the district of Aligarh. Even then, a theo-
retical discussion will be helpful.

It can be said, on the basis of the arguments mentions
below, that it is not feasible to enforce minimum wages
in agriculture at present.

The present survey has shown that "the landless agri-
cultural labourers are 15.05% of the total rural population
comprising 22.01% of the total rural families," and the
entire rural population is "rising at the rate of 2.5% per
annum." It has also shown that "on an average a
casual male worker gets employment for 282 days, 259 days
in agricultural work and 23 days in non-agricultural work."
All this goes to show that sufficient employement opportu-
ity do not exist in the 24 sample villages of the district of
Aligarh and quite a large section of the rural population
remains under employed, as well as unemployed. The planners
also agree with this view. They observed that "in rural are
there is no sharp distinction between unemployment and under
employment. 12 Further, "on certain assumptions, one fourth
to one third of the existing labour force in agriculture may
be surplus to its requirements." 13 Under the circumstances

10. The Second Five Year Plan, p.320.
11. The First Five Year Plan, P.206.
12. The Second Five Year Plan, p.315.
if minimum wages are fixed, they are bound to be ineffective as an unemployed or underemployed worker will be eager to work on any wage rather than to insist on getting the minimum wage and, most probably, remain unemployed.

The difficulty in enforcing the minimum wages at present is due to one more reason. It has been observed that now more and more women are coming out of their homes and are anxious to take up agricultural work due to economic necessity and the impact of urban life. Naturally, this will increase the total supply of agricultural workers in all the agricultural operations except a few where due to physical limitations, women are unable to participate in work. With the supply of labourers increasing and the demand for them remaining almost the same, the competition to get employed will become keener and consequently the chances of enforcing the minimum wages will become still smaller.

The number of attached labourers in agriculture is almost negligible. Moreover, they are widely scattered. Under the circumstances, it is not possible for them to organise themselves into a strong trade union and compel their employers to give them minimum wages which are prescribed by the law.

The prevailing illiteracy in the rural sector coupled with the lack of means of transport and communications will be another hindrance in the enforcement of the law. Most of the illiterate labourers will not be knowing what is the minimum wages prescribed by the law. This will provide opportunities for all sorts of corrupt practices without improving the lot of the labourers.
For the enforcement of minimum wages Act in agriculture, another difficulty will be felt. In some operations the payment is made in crops, in others in cash and in the remaining ones partly in cash and partly in crops. The payment in crops is made on the basis of one's work without much consideration to the price level. For example, if the practice is to give one-fifth of the crop harvested in wages, then it will be given even when prices rise or fall or wheat or gram or barley is harvested. Obviously, under the complex pattern of payment, no authority, however competent it may be, will be able to enforce the Minimum Wages Act.

The fixing of Minimum wages presupposes that Government has adequate data at its command, that wages fixed will be revised from time to time, and the Government has a machinery which will continue supplying it with the suitable consumer price indices for rural areas and enforcing the fixed wages. However, it is a well known fact that the Government has neither complete data in its possession, nor there is any competent machinery at present which is preparing the consumer price indices for rural areas which can enforce these wages. Till this is done, the Minimum Wages Act will remain more or less confined in the Statute Books.

Not only in present but also in near future it will not be possible for the Government to enforce effectively the minimum wages in agriculture. The tendency of big farm owners to adopt the labour-saving devices and the intention of the Government to carry out the various schemes of agrarian reforms such as fixing of ceiling on
land, consolidating the land holdings, encouraging cooperative farming etc. will reduce the demand for labour in agriculture without providing them with alternative means of employment. This will naturally result in greater competition among labourers and consequently they will be even prepared to work on the lower wages than the existing ones, what to say of the minimum wages fixed by the Government.

It would perhaps be fair to conclude that the impact of minimum wage legislation on the Agricultural Labour is not going to be noticeable in the near future. As has been shown, the pre-requisites for the successful implementation of such legislation such as machinery for fixation and enforcement of wages and the collection of necessary data do not exist. It would appear that the States Government are not too keen to burden themselves with this additional responsibility.

(3)

IMPOSITION OF CEILINGS AND THE AGRICULTURAL WORKERS

OBJECT OF FIXING THE CEILING

In the first as well as Second Five Year Plan, the planners were of the opinion that ceilings on land should be imposed so that (a) some land may become available for resettlement of the landless labourers. In their own words: "with the imposition of ceiling some land will become available for resettlement. It has been proposed... that in each State after data relating to the census of land holdings and cultivation have been studied and the areas likely to become available assessed, detailed scheme for the resettlement on land of landless workers should be drawn,"\textsuperscript{14} and (b) total national good may be promoted.\textsuperscript{15}

\textsuperscript{14} The Second Five Year Plan, p.319.
\textsuperscript{15} The First Five Year Plan. P.187-88.
In other words, the aim of imposing ceilings is two fold: (a) to increase the efficiency of agriculture and (b) to bridge the gulf between the 'have' and 'have-nots'.

Efficiency is the relation of output to the input complex of labour, equipment and the like that we refer to it as the efficiency ratio. Greater output per unit of input is another way of defining increased efficiency. The efficiency is said to have increased if factors of production are utilised in a better way.

A recent study in the village Sakhoti Tanda (Meerut) of U.P. showed that though the efficiency increases with the increase in size, it does so to a certain limit only. The following figures bear testimony to it.

**TABLE NO. 72**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>Size of Holding (in Acres)</th>
<th>Cost of Cultivation (in Rs.)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>Upto 5</td>
<td>440</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>5-8</td>
<td>355</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>8-12</td>
<td>321</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>12-15 (15-20)</td>
<td>280</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E</td>
<td>12-15 (15-20)</td>
<td>316</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>20-30</td>
<td>288</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G</td>
<td>Above 30</td>
<td>287</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The table shows that the cost of cultivation varies inversely with the size of holdings up to a certain limit and thereafter the cost starts rising with the increase in size of holdings. In other words, there is a certain limit where the efficiency is maximum. Though this limit varies from region to region, in no case can it be highest where area is very large. Hence from the viewpoint of efficiency a limit to size of holdings is necessary.

In the present agricultural situation in the
country though the smaller holdings have a predominance
yet there are holdings which are bigger than the average
size. The following table shows the gap between the lar
and small holdings in various states:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>STATES</th>
<th>Holding from 0 - 5 Acres</th>
<th>Holding above 10 Acres</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Percent of Holding</td>
<td>Percent of Area</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uttar Pradesh</td>
<td>81.2 31.8</td>
<td>0.4 3.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bombay</td>
<td>15.3 14.0</td>
<td>0.59 10.45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Madhya Pradesh</td>
<td>51.5 10.0</td>
<td>0.94 16.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Orissa</td>
<td>74.2 30.2</td>
<td>0.1 5.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mysore</td>
<td>66.2 25.3</td>
<td>0.3 5.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E.P.R.S.U.</td>
<td>45.4 8.2</td>
<td>3.4 12.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coorg</td>
<td>76.0 30.0</td>
<td>1.9 27.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Madras</td>
<td>82.2 41.2</td>
<td>0.3 7.8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The above table reveals a very interesting picture.
The percentage of holdings in 0-5 acre group is much large
than the percentage of area in that group in every State.
But in the other group of above 100 acres, the case is jus
opposite. In other words, in the former case there are
surplus men or labourers wherein in the latter case it is
area which is the predominant factor. This disparity shoul
be removed from the viewpoint of "Social Justice". And
this can only be done by imposing a ceiling on land.

**PRINCIPLES OF ESTABLISHMENT OF CEILINGS**

One of the principles generally adopted in determining
the ceiling is that a holding should not be much bigger

than what a family can cultivate with the help of the family labour. For example, the Act of 1946 in Japan provided a maximum of 7.5 acres unless a family proved that it had sufficient family labour to cultivate a larger size. Similarly, the land Nationalization Act of 1948 of Burma provided that the land in excess of ceiling would be taken up by the Government and would be redistributed to the peasants on the general basis of the area that could be cultivated by one ox of cattle per family. 18

The second principle is that ceilings should be so firm that the existing production may not fall. For this purpose the farms which are even bigger than the limit are exempted provided they are likely to lose the production rate if reduced in size. For example, in the people's Republic of China the Agrarian Reforms Law of 1950 was amended to provide that the land belonging to rich peasants was not to be redistributed. The Act of 1946 of Japan also exempted from ceiling those holdings the sub-division of which would result in decreased production. 19

Because of the special nature of management of plantation estates, they are also excluded from the role of ceilings. Burma and Mexico provide examples of this practice. 2

PLANNERS VIEW

The principle that there should be an absolute limit to the amount of land which an individual may hold was endorsed in the First Five Year Plan. In the Second Five Year Plan the broad principles have been laid down for the guidance of the State Governments. These principles can be summarized as below:

19. Ibid.
20. Ibid.
1. The maximum size of land holdings should be three to six times the family holding depending on local conditions. A family holding is at least a plough unit giving a net yearly income of Rs.1200/- or gross income of Rs.16. Efficiently managed farms, where break up would lead to fall in production, specialised animal husbandary farms, compact orchards and plantations (Tea, Coffee and Rubber) may be exempted.

3. Account should be taken of malafide transfer made during the past two or three years.

**U.P. Government**

The U.P. Government has not so far taken any steps towards fixing the ceilings. However, it has imposed two conditions on the land-owners. Firstly, a ceiling of 30 acres has been fixed up on future acquisition of land. Secondly, the limit of 8 acres for resumption to holdings, where land is held by tenant, has been fixed. The Government, however, has still to fix the limit on the existing land-holdings.

**The Impact on the Agricultural Workings**

The following impact of the policy of fixing the ceiling on land will be felt on the landless labourers:—

1. U.P. Government has fixed a limit of 8 acres on the resumption of holdings. Obviously, this will mean that quite a large number of tenants will be ousted from land and forced to seek employment elsewhere. Under the existing conditions, many will not be in a position to migrate to cities and get gainfully employed there. So, large numbers will be forced to join the ranks of the landless labourers. Obviously, this will reduce
the duration of employment available at present to the
landless labourers and may also adversely affect their
wage-rate. The planners also agree with this view point
for they observed that "in the settlement of lands acquired
in consequence of the application of ceilings, tenants dis­
placed as a result of resumption of land for personal
cultivation ..... should receive preference."

2. The U.P. Government has fixed the limit of 30 acres for
the future acquisition of land. The land may be acquired
either by ousting some existing landowners or reclaiming
new tracts of lands. If these lands are acquired after
ousting the existing cultivators, the number of labourers
will increase and adversely affect their economic condition.
On the other hand if they are acquired by reclaiming the so
far uncultivated tracts of lands, the demand for labourers
will go up and help them in getting employment for more
days and probably on better wages also. But since the
scope of reclamation of lands is very small, it will not ha
any appreciable impact on the condition of the land-less
labourers.

The second point to be considered in this connection
is, who will acquire these land? Most of the rich persons,
who wanted to enter the agricultural sphere for profit motto
will be now less inclined to do so. So in most of the case
the land will be acquired by those rich land owners who are
able to make the maximum use of their machines. The
better utilisation of the existing machinery will indeed
increase the efficiency of agriculture but it will certainly
adversely affect the employment position of the land-less
labourers. However, if the lands are acquired by "new to
agriculture" or by those land-owners, who were not using
21 The Second Five Year Plan, 1.197.
machines, the demand for labourers will go up as it will not be possible for them to invest money in getting machines. So the labourers will be benefitted in this case.

The total land secured due to the fixation of ceiling will not be very great as the size of landholdings is generally below 25 acres in U.P. and it will not be in the interest of agricultural production and efficiency to fix the ceilings very low. Even this small quantity of land will be claimed by several sections of the rural population. Farmers have said that "in the settlement of lands acquired in consequence of the application of ceilings, tenants displaced as a result of resumption of land for personal cultivation, farmers with uneconomic holdings, and landless workers should receive preference." Further, "if it were the sole object of the policy to reduce the holdings of the larger owners with a view to providing for the landless... the facts at present available suggest that these aims are not likely to be achieved in any substantial measure. So it can be said that many landless labourers will not be able to get land due to the policy of fixing the ceilings on land.

Even those landless labourers who will be fortunate enough to get land will not be placed in a very happy position, because it can be expected that they will not get sufficient land. Moreover, it is an open fact that this section of the rural society is worst off and its creditworthiness is almost zero. Hence, after becoming the landowners, they may find it difficult to cultivate the land due to the dearth of capital, agricultural implements and managerial skill. The Second Five Year Plan anticipated

22. The Second Five Year Plan, p.197.
23. The First Five Year Plan, p.197.
this difficulty and, therefore suggested the implementation of "Resettlement Schemes under which it was laid down that settlement should be made as far as possible on cooperative lines. Further, "It has been pointed out that while special personnel for organising the settlement of landless workers will be required, the resources needed for development should be provided from agriculture, national extension and community development, village industry and other programmes for which provision exists in the Plan." 25

5. The fixation of ceilings will reduce the size of big farms, and consequently the scope of using tractors and other agricultural machinery will be greatly reduced. When these labour saving devices will be used in lesser quantity, then the present demand for the agricultural labourers will go up and exert a favourable influence on the economic condition of the labourers. Together with it, it will also assure that in future too, the demand for the labourers will remain the same, as the greater use of machines will remain unprofitable due to the smaller size of farms.

6. It stands to reason that all the surplus lands acquired after fixing the ceilings will not be at one place. Moreover the plots acquired will also not be big in size. So the difficulty of disposing them off will arise. It is quite possible that the adjoining landowners may not be in a position to purchase the acquired lands due to their own poverty and the rich landowners or 'New to Land' may not feel interested in purchasing them due to the small size of the plots. Under the circumstances quite a large number of the acquired plots may remain uncultivated. And

25. Ibid., p.319-
if it happens, it will not only reduce the agricultural production but also adversely effect the demand for labours as the land owners who have been deprived of these plots will require lesser labour force and since the plots will remain idle, the demand for labour at other places will not increase.

7. All the landless labourers, for obvious reasons, are not equally efficient farmers. It is, therefore, desirable that only those landless labourers should be given land who are most efficient. However, there is no scientific method available to measure the efficiency of the labourers before giving them the land which has been acquired after the enforcement of ceilings. So it is likely that a few inefficient labourers may be able to secure land while the efficient ones may be deprived of the benefit. This will create tension among the efficient labourers who are unable to get land and inefficient ones, who are lucky in securing land. Not only this. Soon it will be found out that the inefficient labourer is unable to profitably cultivate the land which was given to him and he has stopped cultivating it. This will be a great national loss.

In conclusion, therefore, it can be said that fixing of ceilings on land will not materially improve the condition of the landless labourers. On the other hand, the chances are that their employment opportunities and wage-rate may fall.

IRRIGATION PROJECTS

As the First Five Year Plan has pointed out, "the economic condition of the agricultural workers depends upon the state of prosperity in the agricultural economy."
The programmes under the Five Year Plan aim at increasing agricultural production substantially. Extension of irrigation, intensive cultivation and improvement in agricultural practices will increase rural employment and thus afford greater opportunity to agricultural workers.26 It was with this view in mind that the irrigation by canals, tube-wells and masonry wells was increased in the district of Aligarh, as at other places. The length of canals was increased from 870 miles 1 furlong and 17 yards in 1951 to 947 miles, 1 furlong and 115 yards by 1955. More increase is not contemplated for the reason that no increase in the supply of water is expected.27 The number of tube-wells was increased by 178 in the same period and it is planned to increase their number by another 150 during the Second Plan Period.28 1122 wells have also been constructed with the help of Taqavi loans given in the First Five Year Plan period.29 1780 Persian Wheels will be added till the end of second plan.30

The increase in area under irrigation will affect the landless agricultural labourers in several ways. Firstly, it will provide them with the opportunities of getting employment for longer durations, because with more irrigation facilities it will become possible for the farmers to grow more than one crop on those lands which were giving only one crop before. Hence, labourers will be hired now not only for one crop but for more than one crop.

Secondly, with increase in irrigation facilities it will become possible for farmers to switch over to the

26. The First Five Year Plan, p.205
28. Ibid.
29. Ibid.
30. Ibid.
cultivation of those crops which were not grown so far due to shortage of water such as sugar-cane, vegetables etc. Such crops, generally, need more care. So, the demand for hired labourers is bound to increase.

Thirdly, these irrigation projects will open new avenues of employment for the landless labourers. For example, when a new canal is dug, the local labourers are employed under the supervision of trained staff. Besides this, the maintenance of a canal or a tubewell needs the services of a few labourers permanently. It is, of course, true that the increase in permanent employment opportunities will be small and may not directly help the landless labourers.

Lastly, these irrigation projects will help in changing the outlook of villagers. For example, if a number of tubewells, both Government and private, owned spring up in a particular area, it may make villagers more machine minded and bring them in closer touch with city life and city people. This growing intercourse with cities may help alter the primitive outlook of the villagers and make them more pro active and imaginative and thereby help in migration of population from villages to cities. To the extent the landless labourers migrate cities, the pressure on land may decrease.

In conclusion, it can be said that these irrigation projects will not only provide more employment in landless labourers on land for longer durations but will also open new avenues of employment for them and help in revolutionizing their very outlook. However, it is not possible to illustrate the above mentioned influences of new irrigation
facilities on the landless labourers with the help of the survey of 24 villages because no data of employment exist. Even if a survey in this respect had been undertaken it would be difficult to separate the influences of increase irrigation facilities on increased employment easily, as this is not the only factor that may help increase employment opportunities.

IMPACT OF THE COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT AND NATIONAL EXTENSION SCHEMES ON THE LANDLESS AGRICULTURAL LABOURERS

To improve all aspects of rural life the schemes of community development and National Extension Service were formulated in the First Five Year Plan. On the basis of the experience gained, it was expected that this programme "through the operation of land reform, attention to the needs of the landless and the disadvantage section of the population, strengthening of the village organization and the building up of local leadership, and the growth of cooperative movement" will "become a positive force for bringing about both an integrated rural society and an expanding rural economy." Obviously an integrated social and expanding rural economy will have a profound influence on the economic condition of the landless labourers. The purpose of this section is to find out how much the landless agricultural labourers have been benefitted by this scheme.

THE DISTRICT OF ALIGARH

The District of Aligarh started the first block at Tappal, on 26th January, 1954 and since then upto 30th Oct.

31. The Second Five Year Plan, P. 236
32. Ibid.
1958 ten more blocks have been started. The date of the starting of the different blocks and their population is presented in a tabular form below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S.No.</th>
<th>Name of the Block</th>
<th>Population on 1.4.56</th>
<th>Number of Gomu Sabha starting the block</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Tappal</td>
<td>89758</td>
<td>77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Hasayan</td>
<td>93324</td>
<td>79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Janvra</td>
<td>79420</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Ilas</td>
<td>85140</td>
<td>106</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>Atrauli</td>
<td>87282</td>
<td>89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>Hathras</td>
<td>82000</td>
<td>83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>Khair</td>
<td>86205</td>
<td>89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.</td>
<td>Sikandra Rao</td>
<td>71744</td>
<td>59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.</td>
<td>Lotha</td>
<td>78300</td>
<td>105</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.</td>
<td>Gonda</td>
<td>85670</td>
<td>83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11.</td>
<td>Gangiri</td>
<td>112350</td>
<td>86</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Efforts by this investigation to find out the physical targets achieved by these different Blocks were not particularly successful neither from the District Planning Office nor the District Information Office. Even Block Head Cks, when tapped, refused to oblige as the offices seem to feel that research students are "dangerous elements". 

There was one exception: the Block Officer of Javan gave the physical achievements of his block. In the light of this information an attempt can be made to think out the possible consequences of these schemes for the landless labourers.

33. The Second Five Year Plan, Aligarh Planning Deptt. U. 60
THE JANVA BLOCK

The important physical targets achieved by the Janva block upto Nov., 1958, i.e. in about three years of its life, are presented in a tabular form below:

TABLE NO 75

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Development Activities</th>
<th>Achievements</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Fertilizers distributed</td>
<td>12156.50 Mds.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Distribution of Seeds</td>
<td>28534.25 Mds.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Tubewells constructed</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Implements supplied</td>
<td>371</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>Demonstrations held</td>
<td>4504</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>Pucca Road Constructed</td>
<td>6 Pucca, 106</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>Kachcha Road constructed</td>
<td>119 Miles 6 Pucca</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.</td>
<td>Culverts constructed</td>
<td>69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.</td>
<td>New Cooperative Societies started</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11.</td>
<td>New Members enrolled in cooperative societies</td>
<td>3607</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12.</td>
<td>New Primary Schools opened</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13.</td>
<td>Adults educated</td>
<td>803 Persons</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14.</td>
<td>Library and Reading Rooms opened</td>
<td>62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14.</td>
<td>Inoculation etc.</td>
<td>10578 Persons</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

AN ANALYSIS

The analysis of the above mentioned physical achievements will help us in assessing the impact of the Janva block on the villagers in general and on landless labourers in particular.
Government distributed 12,156.50 maunds of fertilizers in 3 years in 111 villages which have a population of 79,420. It means that on an average 36.50 mds of fertilizers were distributed in each village every year. In another words 18.25 mds of fertilizers were given for every crop—Kharif and Rabi.

The total cultivated area of the Janwa Block is 50,241 acres. It means that on an average a village has 452.7 acres of cultivated area. For this, only 18.25 mds. of fertilizers were distributed. In a village having 452 acres of land 18.25 mds. of fertilizers will, it is obvious, neither be able to increase agricultural production to any appreciable extent, nor will they be able to favourably influence the employment level.

This investigator's personal observations indicated that (a) the fertilizers were distributed only in a few villages of the Block area and they were given only to those selected farmers who could either purchase them or were not in need of them. The reasons for this favour were two, viz. the friendship of the recipients of fertilizers with Gram Sevakas and other Officers of the Block or their political influence, (b) the fertilizers distributed in some cases, were either not of the genuine quality or were such that they were not needed by the lands for which they were meant, and (c) some of the fertilizers were even sold to the farmers. This would seem to indicate that the advantages of this sort of Government assistance will take very long to reach the landless labourers.

35. Ibid.
2. SEEDS

28534.25 maunds of improved type of seeds were distributed. It means that 9511.41 maunds seeds were distributed every year in the Block consisting of 111 villages. It is an admitted fact that on an average 400 maunds of seeds are required in a village per year. Hence, the quantity of seeds distributed (89.6 Maunds) seeing to the demand for them is very insufficient.

The personal observations and questions asked from different villagers showed that mostly good variety seeds were not distributed. Generally, they went under-ground. Even when they were distributed, they did not give desired results as they were either not accompanied by the proper instructions of using them, or they were of such variety that they could not give good results, due to the type of soil for which they were meant. The District Planners seems to be aware of this fact as they have said: "Improved varieties of Bajra and Jwar are not distinctly better than the local varieties - improved variety of maize (T.41) takes longer duration for ripening.... and so is not popular with the tenants."

3. IRRIGATION

Two tubewells were constructed in the Block area. Obviously, they cannot increase the area under double crops or help in growing better type of crops in many villages of the Block. So, their impact on improving the economic condition of villagers, specially the landless labourers, is very limited.

One tube well was not in working condition due to some defect with the machinery and the other one was not working.
to the maximum capacity as proper drainage were not constructed and the location of the Tubewell was not at an ideal place. This was due to the local political influence coupled with material consideration. All this reduced the advantages of these tubewells.

4. LAND IMPROVEMENT ACTIVITIES

On an average, 1.1 implements per village per year were distributed. Mainly these implements consist of better plough. Obviously the work done is negligible. Besides this, we are not told that how many of these distributed better implements are being actually used and with what results.

4604 Demonstrations were given in the Block area during the three years period. It means that on an average 13.8 demonstrations were given in every village every year. This in itself is not a bad achievement. However, we do not know, and it appears that no one knows, what was the effect of these demonstrations. Enquiries not on the spot reveal that either demonstrations were not given at all or were arranged in such a way that an illiterate farmer found it difficult to follow it. This is the reason that we do not find any change in the methods of cultivation inspite of these demonstrations.

5. COMMUNICATIONS.

6 Furlong 106 yards pacc and 119 miles 6 furlong Kac roads were constructed. It means that on an average 1.2 yards Pacc and 1 mile 120 yards Kachcha roads per village per year were made. Normal, the villages are scattered and not properly connected with State or National highways. Hence, the construction of 1 mile 121.2 yards road per
village is insufficient and cannot leave any influence on the economy of the village.

Investigations revealed two important things. Firstly, even the old roads, after slight repairs, were shown as newly constructed ones. Secondly, the newly constructed roads were not properly maintained. It was observed that most of the Kachcha roads were washed away in the rainy seasons and no care has been taken to repair them afterwards.

69 culverts were constructed. This was good work but without the properly maintained roads on either side of the culverts, their utility is much reduced, especially in the rainy season.

It can be said that though efforts were made to improve the communications but due to lack of maintenance much has been lost. It has hardly improved the transport conditions and as such the impact on the rural economy in the Block area is negligible. Even then, some landless labourers have been benefitted temporarily as they were hired for short durations.

6. COOPERATION

38 cooperative societies were opened during the three years period and 3607 new members were enrolled. The progress is praise-worthy and it is very likely that its impact will be very shortly felt on the rural economy. However, it can be said that the landless agricultural labourers will not be benefitted by them as they cover only the land owners.

7. EDUCATION

7 Primary Schools were started in 111 villages.
Obviously, the work cannot be said to be satisfactory. The worst aspect of it is that the inspection of a school showed that (a) not many students were on the rolls, (b) most of the children were of land-owners families, (c) only 5 girls were studying, (d) the school had neither proper building nor equipment nor qualified teachers and (e) the schools pursue the same course of studies which are prescribed in urban schools and observed almost the same time scheduled without keeping in mind the special requirements of agriculture.

During my stay in the village, I came to know of a very sad view. Most of the land-owners were anxious to give education to their sons so that they may be able to get more dowry in marriages. I also met such farmers who disliked education as they felt, and probably rightly too, that after getting education, their sons will not return to agriculture and they will be put to lot of difficulties.

The landless labourers can neither afford education to their children nor it will be enable them to get dowry as the custom is that the father of the girl gives the dowry.
803 adults were given the education in three H's. This was not a creditable performance as the entire population of 111 villages (covered by the Block) is 79420 and about 40% of them are probably adults.

In conclusion it can be said that the educational programme has not benefited the landless labourers or their children.

HEALTH

In three years 1206 yards long drains were constructed and 10578 persons were inoculated against small-pox etc. This indicates that sufficient efforts were not made to improve the surroundings of the villages and the health of the people.

The personal observations have shown that (a) the habits of the people have not changed with the result that drains remain dirty, (b) drains are not maintained and are fast decaying, (c) inoculation has not been able to prevent the diseases because either the genuine medicine were not used or sufficient number of villagers were left out.

Under the conditions health drive has not brought much good to the villagers, specially the backward sections of the society.

CONCLUSION

The above discussions clearly establish that returns, if any, from the expenditure on C.D. project are not commensurate with the huge investments. This is apparent when one fails to see living symptoms of rural ageing and regeneration on a casual visit to a village.
fourth report of Programme Evaluation Organization of the Planning Commission on C.P. and N.E.S. Blocks says, "the least successful items of the programme have been those involving changes in social attitude." Again "in fact there has not taken place an equally strong sentiment of self-reliant and initiative, whether individual or cooperative." Explaining this phenomenon the report says, "Gram Sevaks were not visiting villages and if they did so, were confining their efforts to people whom they knew well. They were also getting 'OFFICIAL'. in a country like India no extension worker could hope to get the confidence of the people unless he attains what the village feel are their most immediate need and unless he makes himself useful to them in the manner in which they want."

(VI)

THE ABOLITION OF ZAMINdARI AND THE LANDLESS LABOURERS.

"Land tenure and tenancy have a vital bearing on the conditions of agricultural workers. The volume of employment and earnings of agricultural workers ultimately depend upon the economic conditions of the peasantry. Under-employment, though common to all classes in the agricultural hierarchy, has its ultimate incidence on an intensified on agricultural workers since the cumulative effect of all the economic disabilities of cultivating classes results in depressed wages and a further decline in the seasonable and intermittent agricultural employment. It is necessary for this reason to study the economic conditions of agricultural workers in the context of the tenancy position.

obtaining in the western districts of U.P.

In India, three principal land systems were in vogue viz. Zamindari, Ryotwari and Mahalwari. Out of these Western U.P. had mainly the Zamindari system. Under it the Zaminds who was the settlement holder, enjoyed the sole right to hold or manage the entire land settled with him but his right to occupy and cultivate it was limited, usually to a small portion of the area which was known as "SIR" or private land. The bulk of the occupied area settled with Zamindars was held by occupants under the Zamindars. They were generally known as tenants in-chief or ryots. Usually, two types of Zamindari settlements existed: (a) Permanent settlement where the land revenue payable by the Zamindars remained unchanged but the rent payable by the actual occupants changed, (b) Temporary settlement - where the land revenue was revised periodically.

To abolish the old feudal order and establish direct relationship between the State and the tillers of the soil "The Zamindari Abolition and Land Reforms Bill" was introduced in the U.P. State Legislative Assembly on July 17, 1951 and ultimately passed on January 13, 1951. The Act has been divided into two parts, each consisting of six chapters. Part I lays down provisions relating to the abolition of old feudal order and part II gives birth to the new order. x x x

The first impact of the Act is the ejection of the tenants from the land as the prudent and far-sighted Zamindars tried to get around the law. Even during the period of discussions on the Bill in the State Legislature, this process of ejection continued with the help of village officers. This process was at its peak in the then States of
Banaras, Hampur, Tehri-Garhwal etc. and a few other parts of the Uttar Pradesh as the Act was not applicable to these territories without a special Government notification.\textsuperscript{38}

The ejection of cultivating tenants from the lands of zamindars meant that either they would migrate from the lands to other professions, which were difficult to secure or seek employment in agriculture as labourers, which was of generally short duration, carrying low remuneration. Thus, on the one hand, the condition of ejected cultivating tenants deteriorated and, on the other hand, the number of landless agricultural labourers increased. This becomes crystal clear when the percentage of landless agricultural labourers in the total rural families in 1951 is compared with the similar percentage in 1958. The General Family Survey of 1951 found out that 7.14 rural families consisted of landless agricultural families\textsuperscript{39} and the present survey of 24 villages of the district of Aligarh puts the figure at 22.01%. This great increase in seven years is mainly due to cultivating tenants joining the ranks of landless agricultural labourers.

Ejection of the cultivating tenants from land not only increased the supply of landless labourers but also affected the demand for labourers, both casual and attached. The following brief discussion will, it is hoped, bring this clearly.

\textsuperscript{38} Vide Section 2 of the Act.

\textsuperscript{39} Agricultural Labour Enquiry Committee Report Vol. I.
The lands secured by Zamindars after ejecting their tenants were either (i) sold out to existing cultivators, (ii) sold out to those rich and probably educated people who wanted to take to agriculture for purely profit considerations or (iii) retained by themselves.

The selling of lands to the existing cultivators meant an increase in the size of their land holdings and consequently better and more employment, both seasonal and permanent, for them and or probably for their labourers - attached and casual.

If, however, the lands were secured by the "new to land", then the demand for attached and casual labourers increased as these rich and probably educated people would not cultivate the lands themselves but got them tilled by their hired labourers.

In case the Zamindars decided to cultivate the lands themselves, then generally they engaged the labourers to carry on the agricultural operations as they were neither physically fit nor socially permitted to lay their hands on the plough. So, the demand for landless labourers, both casual and permanent, increased.

The Zamindari Abolition Act has affected the demand for and supply of landless labourers in another way also. Some of the progressive and well to do Zamindars who were either getting some land tilled before the passage of the Act or started cultivating it afterwards, took to mechanised farming in order to maximise their profits and thereby to make good the loss sustained by the abolition of Zaminds. This switch over to mechanised farming has undoubtedly affected the landless agricultural labourers in several
The introduction of mechanised farming by the Zamindars on the lands already under their cultivation leads to decrease in demand for landless agricultural labourers, both attached and casual. On the other hand, if mechanisation were started on hitherto uncultivated lands, the demand for casual and attached labourers increases. Similarly, if mechanisation were started on lands so far cultivated by the tenants of the Zamindars, then the demand for casual and attached labourers increases but at the same time the supply of labourers goes up as most of the cultivating tenants, in the absence of alternative employments join the family of landless-agricultural labourers. This tendency towards the proletarianisation of peasants has been a feature of Zamindari Abolition.

The demand for agricultural labourers has been affected by the Act in one way more. The new land tenure system provides that none of the tenure holders can let their land out. It means that most of those persons who have a share in the land but are not cultivating it themselves, (may be because they have gone out to cities in search of better employment), and have left it to be cultivated by their relations, friends or servants, now return back to their land in order to save it from being lost. Due to remigration to villages, the demand for landless labour has immediately decreased as those formerly employed on lands of these persons are no longer required in the same number.

40- Sec.23.
The Act has permitted the zamindars to retain possession of trees, grove lands, homes, private wells etc. The result of this favour has been that the zamindars dispose of the trees and grove lands either for the purpose of disposing it off or for cultivating it themselves. They also try to secure grazing lands with the help of village officers and rename them as grove lands under trees. This reclamation of grove lands as grazing lands, besides affecting the climate, rainfall, animals, fertility of the land etc. also affects the demand for the landless labourers in several ways. For example if these lands were sold out to the cultivators it would give them and their labourers, both casual and attached, more employment and better income. If these lands were sold to "new to the land" the besides increasing the chance of mechanisation in agriculture, it would also increase the demand for attached and casual labour. Again, if these reclaimed lands were retained by the zamindars themselves, then the demand for, both attached and Casual labourer would increase as these zamindars, brought up in luxury, are not accustomed to till their lands themselves.

The supply of landless labourers remains unaffected in all the cases as these lands are not under cultivation and so none is ousted from the lands.

The Act has also affected the supply of labourers in another way. It is an indisputable fact that the zamindars and village sadhukars, who were almost on the same financial level, were the only moneyed class 41. sec.9.

41. Study of Khatas Khatonia and maps of the villages clearly established this point.
possessing some intelligence and knowledge. After the passage of the Zamindari Abolition Act, these people find themselves to be without income and fast losing respect and prestige in the village, which for generations they have been enjoying as their birth right. This has resulted in forcing most of them to migrate to cities in search of other avenues of employment. This again means that people in their service – Karindas, domestic servants etc. (all non-agriculturists) are thrown out of employment. The alternatives left to these retrenched servants of the Ex-Zamindars, therefore, are either (1) to migrate to towns or (2) to switch over to non-agricultural activities or (3) to work as landless labourers. Switching over to non-agricultural activities is not very easy as it requires money as well as technical knowledge – which most of them lack. Migration to towns demands courage and initiative, which are also lacking in villagers. Hence, most of the retrenched people have no other alternative to become landless labourers. This has been responsible for the increasing number of the landless labourers during the last seven years (1951-58) as has been shown by the present survey.

On the basis of the above discussions, it can be asked that the Abolition of Zamindari has (1) increased the supply of labourers, (2) increased the demand for labour at one place and decreased it at another and (3) increased the demand for attached labourers in those areas where mechanised farming has been introduced, or the “New to I Lands” have acquired lands, or the ex-zamindars have increased the size of their self-cultivated lands.
All these changes have not been able to affect the wage-rate and the employment level to any appreciable extent because still the unemployment of all types prevails in an acute form in the villages. However, due to the increase in the demand for attached labourers in certain areas, the consequence may follow after sometime:

(a) It may become possible for the attached labour to organise themselves into a trade union and fight for their economic rights. But this will become possible only when their number becomes respectable, they become irreplaceable by casual labourers due to their special experience or training and some one from outside persuades them to organise themselves into a trade union but all this will take time.

(b) It may become possible for the Government to effectively introduce the minimum wages in agriculture for the attached labourers and frame other service rules.

---

* It is not possible to substantiate the inclusion of the following pages with the actual illustrations:
(a) No figures of the previous years are available
(b) The present study was not directed to find it due to several obvious reasons, (c) Villagers are not ready to disclose any material information due to the fear of legal consequences.