Agriculture has always occupied a place of importance in our national economy. Even today when the country is being rapidly industrialised, it is the backbone of our economy. This may be seen from the fact that it is by far the largest single industry in the country and is the main occupation of the population. It gives direct employment to about 70 per cent of the total population of the country and of the rural population nearly 90 per cent is directly or indirectly connected with it. Besides being the main source of food for the vast and growing population, it is also the premier source of our national income. The future prosperity of the population and a stable self-sufficient economy is, therefore, largely based on the development of agriculture on scientific lines.

Although agriculture plays such a significant role in the life and economy of the country, its efficiency is almost the lowest in the world which is indicated by the extremely low yield of crops. The low agricultural productivity is related to the low economic level of the people and in general the living standard of the population residing in the countryside is far from satisfactory.

As the various socio-economic problems related to agriculture are so closely inter-linked and are characteristic of all parts of the country that it is not possible to suggest any single plan for their solution. There is such a variety of
local, physical and social conditions that a plan suitable for one area may prove unsuitable for another. Each region has its own unique personality and as such its problems should be studied in relation to its local environment. It is out of these considerations that a land use study in the Central Ganga Yamuna Doab, comprising the districts of Aligarh, Etah and Mainpuri, becomes useful since it analyses the influence of local environment on agricultural land use and studies its problems in the correct perspective of the local setting.

1 Central Ganga Yamuna Doab stretches between the parallels of 28°53′ and 29°11′N, and the meridians of 77°29′ and 79°26′E. It is bounded on the north by the district of Bulandshahr and on the northeast by the river Ganga which separates it from the district Budaun. To the south and southeast lie the districts of Etawah and Fatehgarh, while to the west lie the districts of Agra and Mathura. A small portion of the extreme northwestern boundary, however, coexists with river Yamuna which separates this area from the Gurgaon district of Panjab.

Physiographically the whole area consists of one vast plain and possesses no natural inequality of the surface except for the several depressions in the north near Aligarh which have been formed by the river valleys and natural drainage lines.

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1. Central Ganga-Yamuna Doab, taken as a whole, comprises the districts of Aligarh, Etah and Mainpuri and parts of the Mathura and Agra districts lying to the east of the river Yamuna. In the present study the writer has omitted the Doab parts of the Agra and Mathura districts and only the three administrative districts namely, Aligarh, Etah and Mainpuri have been taken into consideration. Doab: Land between two rivers (do=two, ab=water).
The whole area has been formed by the alluvium brought down and deposited by the Himalayan rivers and slopes gently from north to south and southeast. Besides the two big rivers, the Yamuna and the Ganga, which flow to the west and to the east of the region respectively, the area is drained by several smaller streams such as Karon, Sengar, Rind, Isan and Kali. All these streams run almost parallel to one another and follow the general gradient of the land. Except Ganga, Yamuna and Kali rivers all the others are ephemeral in character and dry up during the hot weather season.

Central Doab covers an area of about 5,335 square miles of which approximately 70 per cent is devoted to agriculture. Important crops which are commonly grown in the kharif season are maize, millet, 
\textit{arhar}, rice and sugarcane. In the rabi season wheat, barley, gram and peas are most common. The total population is 4,245,943 and more than nine-tenths of the rural population is directly or indirectly engaged in agriculture. The heavy pressure of population on land has resulted in an encroachment on land which is needed for fodder and pastures. All over the area under review a small portion of the arable land is devoted to cash crops or such crops which provide raw material to the industry, and the land is given mostly to grain crops in order to meet the food requirement of the population.

The planning for an adequate food supply, based on the maximum utilization of the existing cultivated lands and
the maintenance of an agronomic balance between agriculture, forestry, grazing grounds, human habitations and means of communication emphasise the need of a careful land use study of the area.

The present work studies in detail the utilization of the existing cultivated lands in the thirteen selected villages of the Central Ganga-Yamuna Doab. It attempts at an appraisal and assessment of the land resources and lays down the basis for planning an effective and overall improvement of the living standards of the agrarian population.