7.1 The agricultural labourers, forming the lowest rung of the rural society, both economically and socially, constitute the most depressed section of people among the occupational categories in Assam like any other parts of the country. These persons who happen to belong to the low caste-class and are subject to abject poverty and consequently the deplorable level of living, do have a very low social status. The social status of the agricultural population is, to a great extent, determined by the classification of the type of agricultural enterprise with which they are closely associated. "This economic action, to a large extent, determines the social position and the privileges of each class and the entire agricultural population is subjected to a complex process of stratification from which the rural masses cannot escape and they have to get along." As observed by the Second Agricultural Labour Enquiry Committee, "Agricultural labourers, particularly those who are landless, generally belong to backward communities. Their socio-economic status in the rural community mostly depends upon the sub-communities from which they are drawn, institutional rigidities prevailing in the area, as for

2. Ibid.
instance, land tenures and systems of tenancy, hereditary occupations, economic status of land owning classes, crops grown in the area, and additional employment opportunities available to them in rural industries. Being backward they suffer from social disabilities and are prone to economic exploitation."

7.2 In the villages, some upper caste-sections, particularly the Brahmins, with their tiny plots of land also carry on poor economic condition. Some of them are very poor and are not in a position to earn from any regular source so as to maintain their minimum consumption need. But even in that state of poverty their superior caste consciousness prevents them from ploughing and they lease their tiny bits of land to others for cultivation against share of produce or wages. In such cases, if not economically, socially these people enjoy higher position than the agricultural labourers because of the presence of caste system still this time. As the agricultural labourers possess very low economic power due to landlessness, unemployment and under-employment, low wages and earnings and indebtedness and as they


4. "Some Brahmin people are, by religious custom, prevented from ploughing and they often interpret this very broadly as an indictment of all manual agricultural work. For that reason some of the very poor among them lease their tiny bits of land to share-croppers or have the work performed by farm servants" - (Myrdal, Gunnar, Asian Drama - An Inquiry into the Poverty of Nations, vol. II, p. 1060).

5. "Through such strict observance of caste - proscriptions they are likely to sink still deeper into poverty, but this demonstration of orthodoxy may enhance the esteem in which they are held by the village people" (Ibid.).
mostly belong to scheduled castes, scheduled tribes and backward sections, the social status of agricultural labourers is poorer than that of other sections of rural people who either by economic power or social caste - classification hold the higher positions in the society.

7.3 Thus, it has been found that "apart from the economic differentiation arising from land ownership, tenancy or the landless status, there are the socio-economic gradations associated with castes. The result is that the village community rarely acts as one body. The higher classes do not easily associate themselves with those lower down in the social scale and these latter are rarely in a position to 'break the barriers of custom and tradition." The agricultural labourers inherit the caste and their occupational means from their forefathers and as such their socio-economic status is largely a social inheritance.

7.4 The rural areas of Assam represent a heterogeneous group of persons including Hindus, Muslims, Christians and again from the view point of language, variety of Assamese, Bengalees, Hills Tribals, (Mikir, Garo, Khasi etc.) and Plains Tribals (Moran, Rabha, Kacharis etc.), Nepalese and so on. Although the agricultural labourers come from different communities and castes other than Brahmins, in case of Hindus, the larger section of agricultural labour families belongs to village communities consisting of scheduled castes, scheduled tribes and backward

classes. Of the sample studies of 227 families of agricultural labourers, in 1950-51, 29 were scheduled castes and tribes, 44 tribal and aboriginal communities, 37 backward class, 27 Kshatriyas and 3 Vaishyas and 87 belonged to other communities. It indicates that agricultural labourers are mostly provided by the non-upper caste communities and though they represent different religious groups and communities, their socio-economic status is more or less identical. The Census of India 1961 showed that nearly 18 per cent of agricultural labourers belonged to only scheduled castes and scheduled tribes and the rest belonged to other classes, including the backward communities (Table 7.1). The proportion of

Table 7.1

District-wise Distribution of Agricultural Labourers belonging to Scheduled Castes and Tribes in 1961

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>District</th>
<th>Total Agricultural Labourers</th>
<th>Agricultural Labourers</th>
<th>Percentage of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes Labourers to total Agricultural Labourers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Goalpara</td>
<td>38,522</td>
<td>8,272</td>
<td>21.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kamrup</td>
<td>29,609</td>
<td>4,665</td>
<td>15.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Darrang</td>
<td>21,147</td>
<td>5,057</td>
<td>23.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lakhimpur</td>
<td>10,407</td>
<td>1,290</td>
<td>12.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nowgong</td>
<td>22,552</td>
<td>1,558</td>
<td>6.9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


scheduled castes and scheduled tribes labourers in Assam was lower than the all-India proportion which was about 33.2 in 1961. But taking the backward communities, overwhelming proportion of agricultural labourers belongs to low social castes. The caste distinction among the Muslim inhabitants in the rural areas is not as decisive factor of social recognition as in the case of Hindu families and as such the Muslim labourers do not face the caste barrier unlike their counterpart belonging to scheduled caste. It may, however, be pointed out that with the change of outlook and economic condition of the rural society some change towards flexibility in the caste structure in the rural society is also being noticed.

Unlike the rural areas, the urban areas have followed more flexible caste system. This is perhaps due to some important factors like promotion of education, scientific and technological development, spread of industrialisation and monetisation of the economy and adoption of new progressive ideas and philosophy of

life. The poor pace of development of these factors in the village areas and continuance of old village customs and traditions in the social and economic behaviour of the people have prevented the rural society to overcome the barrier of castism. It is only through a rapid change in rural environment, with spread of education, industrialisation science and technology in agricultural production and improvement in the economic condition of backward sections that agricultural labourers can be set free from the social neglect.

7.5 Since independence when the caste dominance has been declining steadily, economic supremacy by the richer sections in the society over the poorer ones has been on an increase. The agricultural labourers living in chronic poverty under the pressure of eviction, bondage of indebtedness and apprehension of losing existing employment, whatever social, political and economic decisions are imposed on them by the persons holding economic and political power and consequently form a toiling class in the lowest social stratum.

This exploitation of labour class is not obviated by the State action so far, although the Five Year Plans have been aiming at building up of the socialist society. So long as economic and political supremacy over agricultural labour class is not completely reduced, it is our firm conviction that their social status cannot be upheld.

Since independence a number of welfare programmes have been taken by the Government with a view to improve upon social and economic position of the scheduled castes, scheduled tribes
and other backward sections of the rural people. But the governmental action could touch only the fringe of the problem and though some flexibility in rigid caste dominance has been reflected upon agricultural labourers belonging to the lower caste-stratum, their social status could not be raised because of their insecure economic position. Thus, in an economy aiming at socialist goals the issue of giving higher social status to the agricultural labourers needs immediate attention and the State will have to come forward to improve upon their status by imparting education and training, ensuring higher wages and employment, providing social welfare measures and guaranteeing protection against socio-economic exploitations, extending social security and other necessary facilities to them to become a disciplined and organised working force in agriculture.

SOCIAL WELFARE PROVISIONS

7.6 The welfare of agricultural labourers is related to the raising of their economic lots and social status, removal of backwardness arising out of traditional way of living and attainment of high order of decent living. Social welfare is a state of complete physical, mental and social well being and it cannot be achieved only through some relief measure, or elimination of some social evils. 10 The objectives of social welfare are "to secure for each human being the economic necessities, a high standard of health and decent living conditions, equal opportunities with his fellow citizens and the highest degree of self-respect and freedom of

thought and action, without interfering with the same right of others.\textsuperscript{11} Despite the planned efforts for more than two decades, still, to a great extent, the attainment of welfare of agricultural labourers depends upon the uplift of their economic condition with the provision of continuous employment and a minimum wage determined and operated from time to time in relation to changing cost of living index. Apart from security of employment and wages, agricultural labourers also need protection of their interests as labourers in economy's vital sector and extension of facilities for promotion of their well being in order to attain a higher standard of living.

\textbf{7.7} The promotion of welfare of agricultural labourers and other backward and under-privileged sections in the rural society has received significant attention in the Five Year Plans. "During the pre-independence period these sections (backward classes) of population were left to their own devices and it was only after independence that a comprehensive programme for the development of all these underdeveloped and backward people was taken up."\textsuperscript{12} But the welfare programmes of the backward classes under the Five Year Plans "are intended to supplement benefits accruing from programmes of development in different fields such as agriculture, co-operation, irrigation, small industries, communications, education, health, health, health, health, health, health, health, health, health, health, health, health, health, health, health, health, health, health, health, health, health, health, health, health, health, health, health, health, health, health, health, health, health, health, health, health, health, health, health, health, health, health, health, health, health, health, health, health, health, health, health, health, health, health, health, health, health, health, health, health, health, health, health, health, health, health, health, health, health, health, health, health, health, health, health, health, health, health, health, health, health, health, health, health, health, health, health, health, health, health, health, health, health, health, health, health, health, health, health, health, health, health, health, health, health, health, health, health, health, health, health, health, health, health, health, health, health, health, health, health, health, health, health, health, health, health, health, health, health, health, health, health, health, health, health, health, health, health, health, health, health, health, health, health, health, health, health, health, health, health, health, health, health, health, health, health, health, health, health, health, health, health, health, health, health, health, health, health, health, health, health, health, health, health, health, health, health, health, health, health, health, health, health, health, health, health, health, health, health, health, health, health, health, health, health, health, health, health, health, health, health, health, health, health, health, health, health, health, health, health, health, health, health, health, health, health, health, health, health, health, health, health, health, health, health, health, health, health, health, health, health, health, health, health, health, health, health, health, health, health, health, health, health, health, health, health, health, health, health, health, health, health, health, health, health, health, health, health, health, health, health, health, health, health, health, health, health, health, health, health, health, health, health, health, health, health, health, health, health, health, health, health, health, health, health, health, health, health, health, health, health, health, health, health, health, health, health, health, health, health, health, health, health, health, health, health, health, health, health, health, health, health, health, health, health, health, health, health, health, health, health, health, health, health, health, health, health, health, health, health, health, health, health, health, health, health, health, health, health, health, health, health, health, health, health, health, health, health, health, health, health, health, health, health, health, health, health, health, health, health, health, health, health, health, health, health, health, health, health, health, health, health, health, health, health, health, health, health, health, health, health, health, health, health, health, health, health, health, health, health, health, health, health, health, health, health, health, health, health, health, health, health, health, health, health, health, health, health, health, health, health, health, health, health, health, health, health, health, health, health, health, health, health, health, health, health, health, health, health, health, health, health, health, health, health, health, health, health, health, health, health, health, health, health, health, health, health, health, health, health, health, health, health, health, health, health, health, health, health, health, health, health, health, health, health, health, health, health, health, health, health, health, health, health, health, health, health, health, health, health, health, health, health, health, health, health, health, health, health, health, health, health, health, health, health, health, health, health, health, health, health, health, health, health, health, health, health, health, health, health, health, health, health, health, health, health, health, health, health, health, health, health, health, health, health, health, health, health, health, health, health, health, health, health, health, health, health, health, health, health, health, health, health, health, health, health, health, health, health, health, health, heat...
The provisions of welfare programmes for agricultural labourers have been broadly formulated under the rural development and welfare schemes and welfare programmes of the scheduled castes, scheduled tribes and other backward sections and as agricultural labourers mostly belong to these sections in the rural society and form even the weaker part of these people, the benefits extended to the backward classes are assumed to increase welfare of the labourers. Apart from the broad outlines of development of welfare schemes for the backward sections, some special measures have also been taken by the Government for the agricultural labourers. Under the broad outline of welfare schemes taken in the Five Year Plans, apart from employment and minimum wage provisions which are by far the most important essential for any programme directed towards improvement of economic condition of agricultural labourers, there are provisions of housing, resettlement of landless labourers, promotion of education, primary health and medical facilities and provision of drinking water, etc.

7.8 The economic security of agricultural labourer tends to improve when he owns land whatever may be its size as against who are his landless counterpart. The proposal for resettlement of landless labourers received importance since the early years of

13. Third Five Year Plan, p. 701.

planning in India and subsequently land reform policy of the
Government was designed to meet the objective. Under the Centre
sponsored scheme for resettlement of landless labourers on waste
lands envisaged during the Third Five Year Plan, about 1,08,828
landless agricultural labour families in India could be
resettled on 4.6 lakh acres of agricultural waste lands by the
end of 1967-68.\textsuperscript{15} The distribution of land to the landless
agricultural workers through State agencies in India till the end
of 1965-66 was 107.545 lakh acres in which the States which had
larger shares were Rajasthan (28.350 lakh acres) and Madhya
Pradesh (23.457 lakh acres).\textsuperscript{16} The distribution of land to the
landless agricultural workers in Assam during the same period was
3.02 lakh acres as against 1.22 lakh acres in West Bengal, 1.663
lakh acres in Orissa, 5.064 lakh acres in Bihar, 13.09 lakh acres in
Andhra Pradesh, 9.442 lakh acres in Uttar Pradesh, 7.226 lakh acres
in Mysore, 1.679 lakh acres in Punjab, 6.407 lakh acres in
Maharashtra, 3.111 lakh acres in Madras, 0.484 lakh acres in Kerala,
3.332 lakh acres in Gujarat, 28.350 lakh acres in Rajasthan and
23.457 lakh acres in Madhya Pradesh.\textsuperscript{17}

Though the distribution of land to the landless
agricultural labourers did not make much headway, it reflected sign
of progress during the post-independence period. It may, however, be
pointed out that from the distribution of land to the landless it is
difficult to assess the extent of real benefits to the labourers.

\textsuperscript{15} The Indian Labour Year Book, 1967, p. 378.

\textsuperscript{16} Report of the National Commission on Labour, p. 415.

\textsuperscript{17} Ibid.
It is because, the resettlement programme has not been able to exert much of its influence in the context of growing landless labourers in the country-side and those who have benefited from this programme can also make little effort to utilise those wastes or uncultivable lands because of high cost of reclamation.

7.9 Necessary provision for medical treatment is an important condition of modern living as it is to protect health and maintain efficiency of the workers. In maintaining health and medical care of the rural people, the Government have recognised that "provision of adequate health protection to the rural people is by far the most urgent need to be met" and the Primary Health Centres and State Dispensaries are to serve as the focal points for providing comprehensive basic health services in the rural areas. These are "expected to provide the basic framework for effective implementation of the maintenance phase of malaria and other communicable diseases and their eradication and control programmes and also to serve as the main plank for carrying out family planning programmes in the rural areas."

Although the medical facilities in the rural areas have increased considerably in recent times as compared to the situation about two or three decades ago, yet the agricultural labour class has benefited little from the rural health development schemes. The labourers, being illiterate, ignorant and tradition-bound, do not even follow the common minimum standards of maintaining health and taking care of epidemic diseases. Despite

the opening of medical dispensaries and Primary Health Centres, the labourers do not afford to benefit from costly medical assistance and in most cases they go without medical treatment during illness. No special care has been taken so far to provide free treatment adequately to this class of people though certain provisions are already in existence.

7.10 The programme of social education as "an all comprehensive programme of community uplift through community action" was emphasised in the Five Year Plans. It included "literacy, health, recreation and home life of adults, training in citizenship and guidance in improving economic efficiency." An important scheme in the field of education is of awarding post-matriculate scholarships to students belonging to scheduled tribes, scheduled castes and other backward classes. As a large part of agricultural labour households belong to this sector of the society, they are expected to benefit from this scheme. The introduction of free and primary education in the country for the age group of 6 to 11 years is also expected to benefit the labour families. It is well held that "this measure together with the development of other social services would help diminish some of the handicaps of the weaker sections of the community to which agricultural labour households belong."

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21. Third Five Year Plan, p. 598.
22. Ibid.
23. Ibid., p. 377.
During 1962-63 to 1970-71, the Government of Assam has spent on Community Development Programme, Rs.170.8 lakhs for Housing, Rs.143.4 lakhs for development of Rural Arts Crafts and Industries, Rs.266.8 lakhs for communication, Rs.135.0 lakhs for Social Education, Rs.134.1 lakhs for Education, Rs.254.3 lakhs for Health and Rural Sanitation, Rs.124.2 lakhs for Reclamation, Rs.336.9 lakhs for Irrigation and Rs.449.8 lakhs for Animal Husbandry and Agriculture. Though these expenditures have significantly affected rural community through improvement of rural communication, better provision for health and sanitation, primary and secondary education and craft training, household industries, drinking water, rural housing, sports and recreation etc., the merit of these developmental and welfare expenditure does ultimately hinge on the extent of the rural development that has moulded the levels of living of the poorer sections in the rural society.

Thus, the provision of drinking water, facility of road communication, development of market, spread of primary and secondary education etc. having left impact upon agricultural labourers, have, in fact, been able to touch only the surface of the problem in which the agricultural labourers work and live in the rural areas. They are, on the other hand, largely unprotected from the greater issues of their employment, wages, income, consumption and level of living, indebtedness and poverty. Despite certain measures already undertaken to provide education and impart training to the weaker sections, the agricultural labourers form

still now largely the illiterate section in the rural community. But lack of education "constitutes a serious impediment to the effective participation of the people as well as of developing leadership for carrying out the developmental programmes." It has been widely experienced that most of the labour families suffer from mal-nutrition throughout the year whereas proper nutrition is considered as the most important single factor in the maintenance of health and resistance to diseases." 27

It is, thus, to be pointed out that welfare measures meant for promoting new amenities of rural living will undoubtedly lose their importance if the minimum economic security of the labourers is not guaranteed. Without economic security, the social status and welfare of the labourers have only the dim prospects.

SOCIAL SECURITY

7.12 The agricultural labourers who are still having insecure economic position and low social status despite various measures undertaken to ameliorate their conditions cannot be left to their own destinies particularly when they live in hand to mouth condition and at times are not able even to have two meals a day. The pace of economic development attained so far has not been able even to minimise the severity of the situation emerging out of striking increase in their number accompanied with their ever


growing rise of landlessness, unemployment and underemployment, indebtedness and low level of income, consumption and living. This section of rural population either being landless or at best owners of small fragments of land and also being dependant on irregular and uncertain agricultural and rural employments, are first to suffer from flood, drought, famine and scarcity, inflation and epidemic diseases. This disadvantaged section of the rural society is, therefore, in need of protection and assistance.  

7.13 It can, thus, be maintained that with common programme of development and some relief measures, economic conditions of agricultural labourers cannot be expected to improve. The welfare and relief measures, though significantly visualised and approached in the context of the problem of agricultural labourers and other backward sections against landlessness, illiteracy, diseases, indebtedness, flood, drought, famine and scarcity and other inconveniences of living, have yet proved inadequate to ameliorate their living conditions. It is, however, to be well confessed that only development and welfare measures will not protect the labourers against various socio-economic contingencies to which they are put to. They, therefore, need provision of contingencies like unemployment insurance, minimum wages, provision of subsidised food and dresses and ration facilities, free medical treatment, free education and training etc. which do not only directly benefit the labourers but largely protect them against various exigencies. It is because, the extension of development and

welfare measures in the rural areas has only its impact upon the
general problems of the rural economy and as such are inadequate
to protect these poverty-stricken labourers.

7.14 The task of provision of social security, the most
indispensable part of economic programme for industrial workers is
also held important for agricultural workers. The Permanent
Agricultural Committee in the International Labour Conferences
under auspices of the International Labour Organisation has laid
emphasis on various items like the extension of social insurance
to the rural population security of employment in agriculture,
hours of work in agriculture and contribution of I.L.O. to
international action in respect of land reform, employment services
in agriculture, working and living conditions of tenant farmers.
and similar categories of agricultural workers. Moreover, the
International Labour Organisation has adopted different Conventions
in respect of Holidays with Pay, Invalidity, Old Age and Survivor's
Insurance, Maternity Protection, Minimum Wages, Right of
Association, Sickness Insurance, Vocational Education and Training.
The implementation of these measures, though involves hurdles, both
economic and administrative, is sure to strengthen base of social
security for agricultural labourers.

7.15 But very little has been done for the protection of
agricultural labourers so far. Neither the Minimum Wages Act, 1948,
which was extended to agricultural labourers in the Cachar district
of Assam in 1953 and for all the districts in 1959 has been operated
nor the Assam Shramik Vahini Act, 1959, which facilitated formation
of voluntary association of workers and registration of workers for
development works, has left any impact on organising the rural workers or agricultural labourers. These unorganised labourers with very low bargaining capacity do not have terms and conditions of employment and wages in their favour and are not provided with necessary security not only in old age but even in day to day employment. But compared to agricultural labourers, the industrial labourers have been enjoying, to a great extent, social security during these years since independence. There are laws for protecting labour in factories, mines, plantations, road transport and bidi industry. But apart from the ineffectively and imperfectly implemented minimum wages, the workers employed in agriculture and other rural industries have been, by and large, kept beyond the purview of labour legislation. Agriculture which provides for livelihood to a large number of rural people, has not been lucrative as an occupation. The agricultural labourers who are the producers of State's largest sector are not granted even the minimum social security against unemployment and underemployment, old age, invalidity and sickness, and high price and inflation.

It has been found that agricultural sector though nourishes large number of agricultural labourers and sub-marginal cultivators, is incapable to provide for their economic security and the process of development in the rural areas has by-passed the people who are in the lowest rung of rural society. This economic class of people who are growing with landlessness in the villages without having employment opportunities throughout the year except some agricultural and some manual labour employments and who are least benefited during planned economic development need protection from the State covering their economic and social
necessity. It is because, unless the State secures economic and social position of this class of people not only exploitation of agricultural labourers will continue but keeping a vast section of the rural society in poverty and insecurity, the rural economy itself cannot advance. The State, therefore, has the responsibility to protect the agricultural labourers by providing them with necessary economic and social security which is not expected to emerge out of rural development programme and the programmes introduced to improve the condition of agricultural labourers.

The improvement of the condition of agricultural labourers through employment programmes like rural works, resettlement of landless labourers, fixation of minimum wages and such other activities like debt relief, provision of drinking water, flood and drought relief, free lower education, preventive and curative medical facilities, regulation of wages with hours of works etc., has not been possible because of the fact that other classes have enjoyed the larger share of these programmes whereas these have touched very little the poverty-striken agricultural labour class. In these circumstances, when the broad programmes have not been able to improve the position of agricultural labourers, the protection by the State even on this ground gets strong support. It is, however, true that like the labourers in industrial and other employments agricultural labourers also need higher wages and other allowances, old age benefits, unemployment insurance, invalid and survivor's benefit, sickness benefit, profit sharing, leave with pay etc. But the difficulties in implementing these measures appear to be insurmountable in the present condition of agricultural farming. The nature of employment of labourers in agriculture differs
from that in industry and while the latter sector is organised, the former is unorganised largely with marginal farmers, cultivating labourers, share-croppers or contract producers. The economic position of farmers, in most cases, is weak and as it has been seen they engage hired labourers, share-croppers or make contract of production not because of the fact that their economic position is satisfactory but some socio-economic factors prevent them from cultivating land by themselves. However, it cannot be ignored that big cultivators or big non-cultivating owners to whom quite a higher proportion of village land concentrates are placed in much better economic position to pay more to the labourers.

Considering even in those cases where employers are better off, in practice we find larger scope of evasion of statutory measures in these cases due to various hurdles in proper implementation of security provisions. These difficulties are likely to arise primarily in case of the casual and seasonal nature of employment and existing individual farming and village customs. Recognising these difficulties in implementation in agricultural sector, it can be maintained that the State can easily persuade the employers to provide for such security measures as sickness benefit while at work good working condition, minimum wages, fixation of hours of work, holidays with pay and share of produce as bonus. Though these measures can improve social security condition of agricultural labourers, the State has to bear the responsibility to protect this class of people by introducing suitable measures in regard to reasonable wage, unemployment insurance and payment of levels so that this section of rural people does not feel insecure in their social and
economic position and does not get exploited by other richer sections in the society. As an alternative to provision of unemployment insurance, the proposed Work Guarantee Scheme (Chapter X) through the Special Cell with a view to guarantee employment of labourers with minimum wage has great significance. It may, however, be noted that financial problem in implementing the schemes will arise in both the cases but the financial burden has to be shared through contribution by the employers, workers and State itself. Living in a country aiming at socialist goals, the agricultural labourers cannot be left to the mercy of low individual farm employment opportunities and the State as a guardian of its citizens has to protect them from the disabilities from which they have been suffering for long time. It is, however, true that social security of agricultural labourers as in the case of industrial labourers can be better provided in the farms which are organised and scientifically managed providing regular employment to labourers.

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29. "One may express doubt here, with regard to the economic capacity of the Government/Governments, to sponsor such a scheme (unemployment insurance). No doubt, it entails huge expenditure on the part of the Government. But yet it is a desirable and even necessary investment to ensure the welfare of the neglected class of agricultural labour" (Murty, B. S., Agricultural Labour—Study of a Depressed Class in Rural Andhra, AICC Economic Review, September 1, 1965, p. 19).

30. "The State, as a guardian of its citizens, has certain duties and obligations towards labour. Its duties towards labour include the establishment and maintenance of industrial peace, abolition of unemployment, protection of the wage earners, increase in labour efficiency, industrial assurance against old age, injury and sickness, improvement in the conditions of employment, in short preserving the general welfare of the society, by keeping labour efficient and contented" (Punekar, S. D., Trade Unionism in India, p. 133).