

**RURAL LABOUR ADMINISTRATION**  
**IN**  
**GUJARAT & MAHARASHTRA STATES**  
**IN**  
**INDIA**

**POTENTIAL AND CHALLENGES : AN ASSESSMENT**  
(Study Sponsored by ILO-ARPLA, Bangkok)

STUDY - I

by

**B. B. PATEL**



**GANDHI LABOUR INSTITUTE**  
**DRIVE-IN ROAD, OPP : MANAV MANDIR**  
**AHMEDABAD-380 052**  
**GUJARAT, INDIA**  
**JULY-1991**

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## ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

At the outset we are very grateful to Shri AMAH Siddiqui, Director, ILO-ARPLA, Bangkok and Shri Omakant Rao, Expert, ILO-ARPLA, Bangkok, for providing financial support for two studies which are expected to be the basis for the Seminar. We are grateful to them for having accepted our proposal for the Seminar and for providing financial support to the Seminar. We are very grateful to them also because they evinced keen interest in the theme of the seminar right from the beginning and made very valuable suggestions for structuring the sessions of the seminar.

In the preparation of this study I have immensely benefitted from a number of eminent persons in the field of development administration in particular. I would, therefore, like to place on record my gratitude for their help. Among these eminent persons Shri M.P. Parekh, who was formerly the Additional Chief Secretary in the Government of Gujarat and who is at present the Director General of the Institute, is the first to whom I greatly indebted for his encouragement, guidance and suggestions at all stages in the preparation of the study.

Shri K.S. Baroi, IAS, Secretary to the Government of Maharashtra, Department of Labour and Industry, was kind

enough to discuss at length with me a number of questions on the theme of Rural Labour Administration which I had raised when I met him in his office in Bombay. He also facilitated my meeting with the other officials in the Department of Labour in the Maharashtra State for further discussion on various aspects. I had very stimulating discussion with Shri Harman Singh, IAS, Commissioner of Labour, Maharashtra State and his deputies. I am grateful to them also.

In the course of my work I received very good cooperation from the Office of the Rural Labour Commissionerate, Gujarat State and their officers at different levels.

And last but not the least, I would like to place on record my deep sense of gratitude for continuous support in terms of literature and discussion with Shri K.A. Sheth who was formerly the Additional Labour Commissioner, Gujarat State and at present Visiting Professor in Labour Law in the Institute.

My secretarial staff Ms. Mercy James, Mr. Jayesh Mhasker and also Mr. Nainesh Desai rendered all help willingly and efficiently.

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I may clarify that the views expressed in the study are my personal views and not necessarily of the Institute.

B.B. Patel

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RURAL LABOUR ADMINISTRATION IN GUJARAT  
AND MAHARASHTRA STATES IN INDIA -  
Potential and Challenges : An Assessment

B.B. Patel\*

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The unorganised labour accounts for about 9/10 of the total labour force in the national economy and these proportions in different states are also not very different even in the relatively industrially well-developed states like Gujarat and Maharashtra where about 85 percent of the total workforce remains in the unorganised sector.

The bulk of the workforce still continues to live and work in the rural areas as is the case with the total population.

The ILO Convention 141 on the Rural Workers' Organisation defines rural worker in a manner so that the rural workers comprise of the wage paid workers as well as low income self-employed workers like the small and the marginal farmers, non-agricultural self-employed artisans, persons engaged in a wide variety of services etc. The workers like sharecroppers, attached labourers, brick-kiln workers, salt workers, forest workers etc., are all rural workers.

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Among these rural workers, the bulk of the wage employees are the agricultural labourers. According to the NSS Enquiry on economic class of households 30.28 per cent of the rural households were agricultural labour households, 10.63 per cent were non-agricultural and other casual labour households in India in 1987-1988.

Although the labouring poor comprise of wage paid as well as low income self-employed class, it may be useful to distinguish the two because of differences in the characteristics of their work situations and the set of measures which may be required either for their economic and social protection or for their employment. What is striking is that the employment and income scenario for the rural labour is characterised by considerable vulnerability in terms of the availability of work and also the reward for their work i.e. wages or income. Often the distinction between the employee and the employer is blurred as many of them derive livelihood from work on land as well as work on wages often followed by the periods of lack of demand for work. The seasonable bouts of unemployment and underemployment for rural labour in many regions within a state and in many states across the country still continue to be common features which have given rise to seasonal migration both within the state and across the states. The migration of about 80,000 sugarcane cutters from Maharashtra



to South Gujarat is a wellknown example. Moreover, there is increasing reliance on contract labour in agriculture although the proportion of attached or permanent labour has been low and even falling. Often the farmers misinform about the status of a worker who may be either sharecropper or an attached labourer. To a Revenue official they are introduced as permanent farm labourers whereas to a labour department official they are introduced as Sharecroppers.

Moreover the socio-economic milieu in which most of these labouring poor live in rural areas, de facto imply lack of freedom, lack of economic and social security and practically they live on day to day basis. A slight stroke of misfortune can make them destitute.

It is not only that their number is large, which it is, but in the last two decades or so their number has been rising. There is a process of casualization of labour because of the growing inability of the resource base to sustain more numbers on land and partly because of the lack of access to co-operating factors of production particularly credit and water.

It is a matter of controversy whether agricultural labourers existed as a distinct class in the pre-British rural India. It is possible that in the casteist organisation of society the people in the lowest place in the caste hierarchy belonged

to the menial occupations. There is, however, enough historical evidence of the large scale and extensive additions to the ranks of rural proletariat during the British rule through the late 18th and 19th centuries owing to forces like new landtenures, monetization of transactions and decline of village artisans which seriously impaired the balance and inter-dependence among the different strata in the rural society and weakened the traditional viability of the rural economy.

The growth in the agricultural labourers in this context was a product of process of disintegration and immiserisation and not of a developmental process bringing in its trend occupational diversification. As the report of the Agriculture Commission puts it "if we understand by the term occupation, a mode of livelihood chosen willingly by the earners in that occupation, 'agricultural labour' in this setting was hardly any occupation". It was merely one of the forms assumed by destitution which overtook the erstwhile cultivators and artisans who had been deprived of their traditional occupations.

A number of studies and reports which have examined the critical questions of the rural poor i.e. the extent of availability of employment and their wage rates, suggest that in respect of both the availability of employment and wage rates, the emerging trend is a matter of concern.

The real wage rate of agricultural labourers for example has either stagnated or declined in the 1960s or even in the last two decades for most of the states, whereas the number of days of employment particularly for females in rural areas has turned out to be lower in 74-75 than in 1964-65. The latest NSS data on the structure of employment of casualisation, decline in self-employment almost stagnation in the regular employment and somewhat increase in the rural unemployment both for male and female.

For the rural labour these two variables i.e. the availability of employment and the wage rates are no doubt very important. In most cases either across the regions or over time in a year, however the prevailing market wage rates rarely go above the prescribed minimum wage rates except in some rare cases. What is of concern however is that the statutorily fixed minimum wage rates even if implemented in full, are unlikely to ensure a certain level of annual income to the agricultural labour household which would enable the family to live above the poverty line.

Hence the measures to provide additional employment through special programmes have become an important component in the strategy of poverty alleviation of the rural poor. The special wage employment programmes which were earlier called NREP and RLEGP and which are now merged into the Jawahar Rojgar Yojana

is an important aspect of the strategy under which about hundred days of additional wage employment is sought to be provided to at least one member of the agricultural labour household during the off season.

Similarly, a wide range of self-employment programmes such as the IRDP and the self-employment and bankable scheme under the directorate of cottage industry are designed to promote self-employment outside the crop production sector. The programmes for the development of small and marginal farmers to provide credit, supplementary work, agricultural extension services, seeds, etc., perhaps are intended not only to prevent them from falling back into the class of wage labourers but to make them viable self-employed farmers.

However, despite all these efforts and also due to low degree of percolation of benefits to the needy generally, these rural workers live on the brink or at the margin of survival. They are faced with large number of risks in their life such as of life, accidents, old age, diseases etc. The onslaught of these risks not only prevents them from working but requires additional expenditure which these poor persons are simply not able to meet. It is thus ironical that the provisions of social security is perhaps the least for the class of the people who need it the most and who account for a majority of the working population in the Indian economy.

It is under these circumstances of rural labour in general and of agricultural labour in particular that the issue of what is Rural Labour Administration - its dimensions, role and potentials become crucial. In other words what are the aims of rural labour administration and how would it grapple effectively with the prevailing situations and thereby protect social, legal and economic rights of the rural labour? To be precise, what laws should be enforced. Should we confine to the enforcement of the minimum wage in agriculture or take into account some other laws such as the Bonded Labour Act, the Inter-state Migrant Labour Act, Equal Remuneration Act and the Child Labour Abolition and Regulation Act? In addition, whether any other law can be brought in the ambit for rural administration?

In order to achieve the above goal what type of organisational set up is likely to be effective? The Gujarat State has a separate Commissionerate for rural labour administration, while in the rest of the states in India there is no such separate arrangement but is under the Labour Commissioner with a set of officers at different levels specifically looking after the enforcement work in the field of agriculture. What are the views on this separate arrangement and what has been the experience in the state of Gujarat and Maharashtra? What are the views on administering laws applicable to rural non-agricultural labour by such separate inspectorate?

Should the rural labour administration confine only to the enforcement of laws ? Or must undertake simultaneously developmental work consisting of creating awareness, about labour laws among farmers and labourers; advise and make available the information on the supplementary employment and income opportunities ? Should they only co-ordinate the information ? Or should have certain powers of helping the target group population directly ?

What is the place of welfare measures and their administration by the enforcement machinery ? The welfare measures such as the Group Life Insurance Scheme, the Maternity Benefits Scheme for the agricultural labourers, the Old Age Pension Scheme for the agricultural labourers, Accident Compensation Scheme and other measures like scholarships etc., are under implementation by various departments of the government of Gujarat, although many of these schemes have not been yet implemented in the state of Maharashtra.

It would be worthwhile to discuss as to what is the experience of Gujarat in implementing these welfare schemes; particularly is there a need for a separate Rural Labour Welfare Board on the pattern of the state level welfare board which is mainly confined to the organised labour in urban areas both in Gujarat and Maharashtra. The Gujarat State has already set up a separate Rural Labour Welfare Board in 1981 and hence a

decade of experience of the functioning of that Board and its infrastructure is already available. It would be of interest to examine the details of the activities, resources and the structure of the Rural Labour Welfare Board in Gujarat with a view to come to conclusion regarding the need for such a separate organisation for welfare schemes.

The importance of enforcing relevant legislation in agriculture is evident in the fact that ILO in 1969 adopted a Convention (No. 129) and Recommendations (No. 133) which lays emphasis on method and context of inspections, procedure to file case in violation, penalty, powers of inspectors etc.

The National Agricultural Commission which had submitted its Report in mid-1970s, had devoted one complete chapter on agricultural labour and discussed at length the issue of implementation of minimum wages and other measures for their upliftment. Here below we have elaborated some relevant findings to provide the framework and the perspective on the issue under discussion here.

### Implementation of Minimum Wages

The Commission attached significance to minimum wage legislation on two counts. First, the legislation endeavours to help some of the poorest sections in the vast rural landscape

of India by reassuring them that they are as much a part of the society as any other group in the country. And second, the legislation seeks to do this by protecting these sections from their own powerful neighbours who, by long tradition, looked upon the agricultural labourer as fated to be a destitute.

The minimum wage legislation for agriculture needs to be looked upon hence, as an important testing ground of the viability of the present political system and planning in India. It is equally important that there is a need for constant vigilance on the part of the state to guard against slackness in implementation. With this preamble, the report of the Agriculture Commission dealing with the question of enforcement of minimum wages made the following recommendations :

The strategy suggested for implementation should have the following components :-

1. The implementation of the policy needs to be focussed on the areas where wages are adjudged to be low due primarily to caste and economic inequality.
2. It will be necessary in these areas to integrate the policy on minimum wages with a range of other policies and programmes to upgrade wages in agriculture.



3. The success of enforcement of minimum wages in these areas, will depend crucially on the co-ordinated efforts as suggested above of the Panchayata and the watch-dog Committee to be supplemented by measures to encourage and support the forces working towards unionisation of agricultural labourers. In other low wage areas, it would seem best to rely on indirect regulation of wages through guaranteeing adequate alternative employment at the desired level of wages. This strategy should also enable most effective deployment of our none-too-abundant resources and talent for regulatory operations.

To elaborate further we may mention that report of the commission emphasised the need of some degree of selectivity in the choice of areas for enforcement and realism in fixing the level of minimum wages.

In looking for the criteria for the selection of areas, it wanted to begin negatively and indicate areas which merit lower priority in the enforcement of minimum wages (areas close to urban industrial centres, areas located in prosperous agricultural regions).

Commission wanted the same approach for the areas at the other extreme having very low wages but the low wages are because of

'poverty of agriculture' and which therefore need programmes focussing on the 'poverty of agriculture' dimensions of the problem.

In order to further narrow the selection of areas it suggested the examination of the characteristics of heterogeneity of labours and employers in the market. The areas where the labourers are sharply marked off from the class of land owners or cultivators and suffer from low socio-economic status should be the areas where the enforcement of minimum wages should receive the first priority. They can be called exploited areas. The existence of virtually bonded serf type of situation may be traceable chiefly to the accumulated consequences of inequality, debtor-creditor or tenant-landlord relationship.

For a realistic specification of the minimum wages, the criteria can be formulated on the basis of its conditions prevailing in the 'exploited' areas. We may compare the wages in the exploited areas with those prevailing in the neighbouring areas without such handicaps. More importantly, the minimum wage legislation should work for a progressive increase in the minimum level through positive programmes to remove 'poverty of agriculture' and through a gradual strengthening of the enforcement machinery. The long term target of the legislation should be to ensure the need based minimum wage for agricultural labourers.

The Commission then discussed the instruments for implementation. First, in respect of the direct enforcement of minimum wages, it observed that 'it is not feasible to view the enforcement of minimum wages narrowly as a policing operation to detect and punish every single instance of payment of wages at a rate lower than the specified'. It would be more appropriate to have a broad based and more constructive approach to the system of wages as a whole.

This approach might work through a committee of the Panchayat aided by some functionaries appointed under the legislation who can arrange for a systematic collection of sufficiently extensive data of wages paid to different categories of labourers for different operations'.

With these data the committee could establish a regular liason with the representatives of employers to draw their attention to the prevailing levels of wages and to impress upon them the need to pay prescribed levels, using in the process pressure including but not exclusively relying on legal sanctions.

The objective of the committee would be to persuade the employers through their representatives to enter into broad understanding if not formal agreement about the level of wages. Panchayat or the Committee could inspect the enforcement of the understanding reached and devise the measures to meet violation.

The Commission wanted a watch-dog Committee consisting of local MIA, Chairman of Jilla Parishad and representatives of labourers and farmers with an appropriate official serving as the secretary of the committee. It should be the responsibility of this committee to lay down the working procedures for enforcement and to secure their adoptions by the Panchayats. In addition, it will function as an appellate body to look into the grievances arising in the process of enforcement and as also as a trustee of the labouring class working vigilantly to secure for them their basic right for minimum wage.

The Commission observed that 'it seems to us that in the matter of regulation of wages, neither the legislative efforts by themselves nor the local non-official initiative alone will yield a satisfactory measure of success. What is needed in our view, is a harmonious balance and integration between these two instruments so that the force of law is harnessed and put to work not by distant and inaccessible government functionaries but to a growing extent by the local participant themselves including the intended beneficiaries of the minimum wage legislation'.

Considering the context of ineffective implementation of the minimum wage law, the Commission was of the view that a beginning has to be made by strengthening official machinery

for inspection, conciliation and enforcement. It mentioned about the modification made at that time in the minimum wage law in Maharashtra and Kerala to ensure effective enforcement. For example, in Maharashtra the minimum wage law was extended to cover the whole of the state.

Further, Block Development Officers and the Secretaries of Gram Panchayat had been designated as Inspectors for the purpose of enforcement of the minimum wage and the legislation provided for the limitation of working hours in a day and for days of rest with wages for agricultural labourers employed on annual, seasonal or monthly basis.

The Kerala Legislation appeared to be even more ambitious. It contemplated more elaborate machinery for inspection conciliation and enforcement and it contained bold provision to set up Provident Fund for agricultural labourers and to confer the security of employment. These measures were expected to put teeth into the minimum wage laws for agricultural labour and generate momentum and extended coverage.

The Commission was of the view that the long term solution of the problem however was in the effective unionisation of agricultural labour.

It further felt that this should become easy progressively because of politicisation of masses. These forces would need support and nurturing to survive against hostile interests and to develop into a healthy trade union movement among agricultural labourers. The Commission felt that primarily this is a field for local leaders and voluntary agencies. However, the supporting role that the state can play deserves careful consideration.

For this, the Commission suggested two sets of supporting policies. In the first set were programmes for social rehabilitation of agricultural labour from their serf like conditions. Unless labourers are freed from such socio-cultural bondage there will be little chance of their benefiting from the regulation of the wages. In fact such social rehabilitation is precondition for effective enforcement.

The second set consists of policies to prevent premature and unregulated mechanisation of agriculture from complicating the task of regulating wages.

In the areas where the employers or farmers tend to throw out tenants or share croppers and resume land for self-cultivation, they might go for mechanisation of agricultural operations. Thus, it will be noted that the task of regulating wages cannot

be isolated from issues connected with demand and supply of labour, status of agriculture, extent of mechanisation and socio-economic conditions of agricultural labour. Hence, it is only a part of broader and intractable problem of helping the rural poor to enter the mainstream of national life.

In addition, it was realised by the Commission that the direct enforcement of minimum wage too would take time to become effective. It must, therefore, be integrated with the employment creating programmes such as rural works programmes, to influence the wages indirectly by offering alternative employment. In such public works programmes, however, the Commission cautioned not to assign a relief-cum-welfare role, instead such public works programmes at the local level must play vital role in mobilising the growing rural unskilled labour which is redundant in agriculture and which constantly drift towards urban areas and in providing it employment on an organised and continuing basis with terms, conditions and amenities to be eventually made comparable to those prevailing in urban employment. It thus wanted support to agricultural wages and provision of supplementary employment as a subordinate function of the public works programmes. It further cautioned that while these are relevant in the short period, a long term objective ought to be generated on for adequate and attractive employment opportunities within the rural sector capable of transforming

the rural unskilled labour from an inert burden which it is now, into a dynamic input for capital formation and social change.

The issue of minimum wage implementation and fixation became the part of Twenty Point Economic Programme announced by the then Prime Minister. As a result, the task of upgrading minimum wages for agricultural labour and setting up of special machinery for its implementation was undertaken in a number of states on priority basis.

With this rather detailed background and perspective, we shall focuss on the status, issues, potential and challenges in rural labour administration in Gujarat and Maharashtra states in India. We shall begin by understanding some basic relevant information in these two states. Wherever possible and necessary, the information on the state of Kerala and at all-India level is also given. We shall throw light on macro as well as some micro level relevant details for these two states.



## SECTION II

### MAHARASHTRA AND GUJARAT

#### FEATURES

Gujarat and Maharashtra states both are adjoining to each other and are located in the western region in India. They have a common past as they were the parts of erstwhile bilingual Bombay state. In 1960, Gujarat and Maharashtra became two separate states.

Maharashtra is a large state and has a long coast line. Coastal area particularly Bombay region is highly industrialised but the vast hinter land is semi-arid with maximum temperature ranging between 40 to 46 degree celsius in Summer.

The drier regions which account for 40% of the area receive less than 700 mm annual rainfall. 12 of 25 districts covering 74 blocks (1/3rd area are drought prone); about 1/4th of the area receives the rainfall ranging from 700 to 1200 mm per year. While the rest-coastal area receive more than 2000 mm annual rainfall.

The present level of irrigation is around 11-13% of the cropped area and the population density in rural areas was 135 per squ. km. in 1981. Cultivators plus agricultural labourers as a percentage of the total main workers accounted for 62% (1981).

## GUJARAT

In Gujarat 8 out of 19 districts receive annual rainfall of less than 700 mm mostly in Saurashtra and Kutch. 9 out of 19 districts have the rainfall of 700 to 1200 mm while two districts viz.

The rural population density was 123 persq. metre and the temperature ranging from 42 to 46 degree celcius us common in most of the districts in summer. Cultivators plus agricultural labourers accounted for 60% of total main workers (1981). About 24% of the net area shown is irrigated.

In terms of population Maharashtra is sizeable bigger (62.78 million) than Gujarat (34.09 million in 1981). The scheduled caste and scheduled tribe population in Gujarat accounted for 7.2% and 14.2% respectively whereas in Maharashtra, these percentages were 7.1% and 9.2% respectively.

In Maharashtra the agricultural labourers as percentage of cultivators plus agricultural labourers where 43.1% as against 37.7% in Gujarat and 68.4% in Kerala and 37.5% at all India level.

Salient Features of Workforce, State Income, Agriculture (Macro Shareof Agriculture in the total State Domestic Product :

The percentage of share of agriculture and allied

activities in the state domestic product generally decreases overtime this can be noticed either at all India level or across the states. However, the level at which the shares are obtained defer from state to state. Moreover the year 1987-88 being a drought year the levels are seen very low although among the three states, it has been the lowest in Gujarat (14.2%) followed by in Maharashtra (20.9%) while it was 34.0% in Kerala in the year 1986-87.

The share of mining and manufacturing activities was at a higher level i.e. 37-39 percent in Gujarat and Maharashtra but was only 20.0% in Kerala. The percentage share of mining and manufacturing in the total state domestic product has been generally rising.

The similar rising trend can be seen in the share of services sector in the state domestic product in all the three states. Although the increase was much faster in Gujarat followed by that in Kerala. 48.6% of the state domestic product came from 'services' in Gujarat while 45.8% was the contribution of the 'services sector' in Kerala and it was 40.5% in Maharashtra.

The compound annual rate of increase in the share of agriculture between 1970-71 to 1977-78 was negative to the extent of -4.8% in Gujarat and -0.1% in Kerala while it was +2.7% in Maharashtra.

Per Worker Sectoral Income (Rupees at 1970-71 prices) :

In the state of Gujarat the per agricultural worker (cultivators plus agricultural labourers) sectoral income (1970-71 prices) in 1987-88 was Rs. 686/- in agriculture as against Rs. 1118/- in Maharashtra and Rs. 1778/- in Kerala. Gujarat ranked 15th in the descending order of per worker agricultural income among the states in India; Maharashtra stood 10th while the rank of Kerala was 4th.

Over the years both Maharashtra and Kerala have improved their rank i.e. Maharashtra moved from 14th to 10th place and Kerala from 5th to 4th place between 1970-71 and 1987-88. However, Gujarat slipped to 15th position from the 3rd position in 1970-71.

The per worker state income originating in the mining and the manufacturing sector was considerably at a higher level in Maharashtra i.e. Rs. 8302/- at 1970-71 prices with rank 2. While Gujarat had the income of Rs. 6587/- per worker with rank 5. The per worker manufacturing product in Kerala however was very low at Rs. 2697/- and had 14th rank in the year 1986-87. These ranks have remained the same during the period under consideration.

Further Gujarat had about Rs. 7103/- income per worker engaged in the 'service sector' and had the second rank in

1987-88. Maharashtra occupied 5th rank with per worker income of Rs. 6828/- at 1970-71 prices. As in the case of manufacturing in services also, Kerala occupied low rank of 14 with per worker income of Rs. 4126/- in the 'services sector'.

### STATUS OF AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTION

While Maharashtra accounted for 12.13% (Kharif + Rabi) of the food grain production in the country. The share of Gujarat is around 7% only.

Rabi food grain production was about 31% of the total in Gujarat. It was 28% in Maharashtra thus inter season spread of food grain production activity was more or less same at around 1/3rd of the total.

Sugarcane and banana however are long duration crops and are grown extensively in Maharashtra and to lesser extent in Gujarat among the non food crops and mostly confined to Kharif are the cotton and groundnut in Gujarat. Thus the demand for labour in winter and summer depended on assured supply of water for irrigation which is confined only in few pockets within each state. The labour therefore out migrates seasonally either to urban areas or to agriculturally prosperous rural areas.

It may be also noted that the food grain production as well as the production of cotton and groundnuts in Gujarat

have shown negative growth rates. While the rape seeds banana and sugarcane have experienced high growth rates.

The per hecta yield of food grain in Gujarat (1984-85/1988-89) was 829 kg./hecta against 677 kg./hecta in Maharashtra. Both levels however were lower than in all India (1190 kg/hecta).

#### THE LEVELS OF UNEMPLOYMENT

The rural unemployment both of men and women have been lower in Gujarat than in Maharashtra or at all India level in 1983. Between 1977 and 1983 the unemployment has generally fallen except for males in rural Maharashtra.

#### POPULATION BELOW POVERTY LINE(%)

Among the three states viz. Gujarat, Maharashtra and Kerala, ~~Kerala~~ had the lowest percentage of population below poverty line (26.1%). Gujarat was the close second with 27.6% population below the poverty line while in rural Maharashtra, 41.5% of the population lived below the poverty line. However the rural urban combined rates of population below the poverty line indicate that 24.3% in Gujarat 26.8% in Kerala 34.9% in Maharashtra lived below the poverty line. As per the latest information pertaining to year 1987-88 the population below the poverty line in Gujarat came down to 11.7% it was 29.1% in Maharashtra and 17% in Kerala and 29.2% at all India level.

About 12% of all agricultural labourers in the country lived in Maharashtra, 5% lived in Gujarat and only 3% in Kerala. In absolute terms Maharashtra had 6.5 million agricultural labourers as against 2.5 million Gujarat and 1.9 million in Kerala. In the country as a whole the number was 55.5 million.

#### RURAL FEMALE LITERACY

Gujarat and Maharashtra had 24 - 27 % their rural females as literates. In Kerala it was 64 % but only 15% at all India level.

The over all population density in Gujarat was 174 (ranked 12) Maharashtra had 204 (ranked 9) and Kerala 655 (ranked 1).

#### SIZE OF LAND HOLDING

According to the data of the year 1985-86 the average size of operational land holding was relatively large in Gujarat (3.29 hectares) as against 2.65 hectares in Maharashtra, 0.36 hectares in Kerala and 1.68 hectares in India. Maharashtra and Kerala experienced a relatively fast decrease in the average sized of land holding between 1977 to 1985 - 86. The percentage of rural households owning less than 1 hectare of land was 57% in Gujarat, 55% in Maharashtra

and 67% at all India level in 1982. On the other hand the households which owned 10 or more hectares accounted for 3% in Gujarat, 4% in Maharashtra and 1.42% in the country.

Within Maharashtra the agricultural wage rates are relatively high in Konkan Marathwada and Khandesh While they are low in South Maharashtra and Vidharbha Usually agricultural wage rate is the lowest in the eastern area.

In Maharashtra the Employment Guarantee Scheme (EGS) although takes care of 2 to 4 per cent of the total generated employment, it plays an important role as an instrument of labour market intervention. The impact of this t intervention on the market wage rate may be difficult to guess because the EGS wage rate seem to have increased faster than the market wage rate and in some of the regions EGS wage rate is higher than the market wage rate. However, such an arrangement under EGS has helped to bring about lot of awareness and the possibilities if interaction and organisation of the rural labour become real. Further, the administration of some welfare schemes can be also facilitated if administered by the involvement of such agency.

In Maharashtra the major concentration of the agricultural labourers are

- 1) Inland Eastern Vidharbha 30%



- 2) Inland Central Marathwada 22%
- 3) Inland Western Maharashtra 19%
- 4) Inland Northern Khandesh 17%

It may be also mentioned that in these very regions agricultural labourers as percentage of cultivators plus agricultural labourers are also very high.

In Gujarat the maximum concentration of agricultural labourers is in the south and central Gujarat consisting of the districts like Valsad, Surat, Bharuch, Vadodara and Kheda, followed by the north Gujarat region. It may be mentioned that the proportion of the agricultural labourers is relatively less both in the Saurashtra region as well as in the tribal areas of Panchmahals and Dangs, although now more and more tribals tend to take up wage employment in agriculture and other public works in rural as well as urban areas in the state.

SECTION - III

PAST DEVELOPMENT IN RURAL LABOUR ADMINISTRATION IN GUJARAT

SATEM COMMISSION

The Satem Commission was set up by government notification of legal Department No. GK/76/41/COI/1076/601D of 12th August, 1976 under the Chairmanship of Mr. M. I. Pandya, retired District Judge to hold inquiry into the violent clash that took place between certain farmers, field watchmen and agricultural labourers and as a result of which, two agricultural labourers were killed at village Satem of Navsari Taluka in Valsad District, Gujarat State on 10th June, 1976.

The terms of reference of the commission were :

To ascertain whether the circumstances which led to the violent clash between certain farmers, field watchmen and agricultural labourers were in any way, connected with the question of payment of minimum wages under the Minimum Wages Act to agricultural labourers by farmers.

If it is found that the cause underlying such clash, was in any way connected with any dispute regarding the payment of minimum wages to such labourers, to look into the adequacy and efficiency of the arrangement so far made in Navsari taluka for the payment of minimum wages

to agricultural labourers and to make such recommendations as may be considered necessary as to how such arrangement can be made more effective so that the possibility of such confrontation between farmers and agricultural labourers can be avoided. The report of the commission was submitted to the government on 15th December, 1976.

## RECOMMENDATIONS OF SATEM COMMISSION

1. The government should call at the earliest, a tripartite meeting consisting of the representatives of farmers, agricultural labourers and of the government. In this meeting the questions pertaining :
  - A. Apart from the minimum wage, the other questions like the implied contract between farmers and agricultural labourers for kind payment such as food, tea, tobacco etc. and certain traditional practices followed by them should be discussed and resolved.
  - B. The farmers should be told emphatically not to employ out side labour as far possible.
  - C. In case of need of Seem Rakha (Field Watchman) the farmers should be advised to engage the local persons. If there are any complaints against such local persons the farmers should draw the attention of the concerned officers in this regard.
2. Steps should be taken to organise the agricultural labourers and such activity of promoting workers' organisation should be promoted.

3. Under the Clause-19 of the rules, the persons who have been appointed as an Inspector & under the act, were sufficient in number. However, the powers which were conferred on these inspectors under the Act and the rules, were not used effectively by these Inspectors for the protections of the rights of agricultural labourers.
4. Hence the Commission recommended that each taluka or block should be divided into Zones and for each Zone a Zonal Officer may be appointed. It recommended that each zone should consist of 10 to 15 village. moreover, such Zonal Officers should be given training for settling the disputes between farmers and agricultural labourers and for the implementation of the Minimum Wage Act.
5. At taluka level, the inchargee must supervise and coordinate activities of the Zonal Officer.
6. The District Officers appointed under the Act should be incharge implementing and supervising and coordination of the Act. He will be link among the taluka level functionaries and their activities.
7. At the state level, the organisational set up will coordinate and supervise the activities pertaining

the Minimum Wage Acts and its implementation related questions.

8. Any violation of the rules of Clauses of the Minimum Wages Act should be treated as a criminal offence and appropriate penalty should be determined or provided.
9. In case of sufficient number of complaints in any given village, the concerned officer must go to the village to bring almost settlement of the dispute, so that time and money of such poorer labourers is not wasted in going to Court etc.
10. With a view to ensure the proper payment of the minimum wage, whenever the difference in the minimum wage payment is made, it should be in the presence of some educated agricultural labourer.
11. The government must constitute an appropriate organisational structure or proper monitoring of the implementational aspects in which the weekly report from the Zonal Officer pertaining the inspection activities, complaints, settlements and the working of the mechanism for settlement of the disputes are sent or filed regularly.

12. It should be made obligatory on the farmers to submit a weekly to the Zonal Officer.
13. Under the Clause-18 of the Minimum Wage Act, the farmers should be advised to maintain the register and the other necessary records with utmost care.
14. Steps should be taken to create awareness among farmers as well as agricultural labourers regarding the provisions and requirements under the Minimum Wage Act and rules.
15. The responsibility of implementing the Minimum Wage Act in agriculture should be of the department of labour and should it be required, the labour department may seek the cooperation from the other related department.
16. On the basis of the recommendations of the Commission, the set of agreed rules which may be arrived at, may be incorporated in the set of rules already framed under the Act.

The Commission's finding viz. "there was no direct link between the violent clash at village Satem on 10th June, 1976 and the payment of minimum wages" was accepted by government.

However, the government did not accept the finding of the commission that "this incident at village Satem was the result of under current of a dispute that had arisen between the agricultural labourers and the farmers on the payments of minimum wages." Because such violent clashes did not take place in other parts of the Gujarat.

The Commission's second finding that the 'machinery' set up for the implementation of the Minimum Wages Act in Navsari taluka was not adequate and effective at relevant period is accepted by the Government.

Commission's recommendation that the State Government should constitute as early as possible, a tripartite committee of farmers, agricultural labourers and government officials is also accepted by the government.

The government has also decided that the above tripartite committee will consider all the recommendations of the commission and will submit its findings and suggestions to the government. (Labour and Social Welfare and Tribble Development Department)

Resolution  
Sachivalaya  
Gandhinagar, 15th July, 1977.)

By order in the name of the Governor of Gujarat, T. H. Shah under Secretary to the Government of Gujarat.



In pursuance with the acceptance of the recommendation of the Satem Commission, the Government of Gujarat set up the tripartite committee under the Chairmanship of Shro V.R. Mehta, Vice Chancellor, Gujarat Agricultural University by their resolution No. Kh-ASAL-368-MWA-4277-48537-T notification of 12th August, 1976 government notification No. GK-76-41-CLI-1076-601D.

The terms of reference of the Committee were as follows :

To examine the recommendations of the Satem Commission and make suggestions.

Without causing any harassment to any party concerned make suggestions regarding instruments and remedies to insure effective implementation of the Minimum Wages Act in agriculture. Under the terms of reference the Committee will also examine the question of maintenance and the type of forms for inspection, filing of complaints and its procedure etc.

To consider the question such as part time worker in agriculture, use of contract labour and wages of the contract labour, availability of employment on continuous basis, kind payment of wages etc. matters and their suitability for acceptance etc. and make suggestions about them.

The existing machinery should be examined with a view to ensure effective implementation of the Minimum Wages Act; to make the suggestions for the existing machinery/organisation for that purpose.

To examine along with other matters, the ILO Convention 129 regarding the inspection for agricultural labour and make suggestions.

To consider ways and means to establish cordial and harmonious relation between farmers and agricultural labourers in the interest of both of them and at the same time make suggestions which would encourage farmers to accept the obligation to pay minimum wages to agricultural labour.

Mr. M.N. Desai, Dy. Labour Commissioner, Ahmedabad was the Secretary to the Committee. The committee was expected to submit its report in three months. The head quarter of the committee was Ahmedabad.

By the order of and in the name of Governor of Gujarat, R.C. Shah, Section Officer, Labour Social Welfare and Tribal Development Department. A summary of Findings and Recommendations of the V.R. Mehta Committee are given in Annexure-I.

It may however be of interest to mention that neither the S. 10

the Satem Commission nor the V.R. Mohla Committee had recommended a separate commissionerate for Rural Labour.

The Committee however had recommended the need for an appropriate organisational structure and manpower, had emphasised the role of tripartite, made detailed recommendations on the nature and number of inspections by Inspectors on the nature of record keeping and on powers of the inspectors and superios officers for claims settlement in line with recommendations of honourable justice D.A. Desai Committee earlier.

While these recommendations bring focus on the thinking on this theme some fifteen years back, and before the new and separate set-up for enforcement came in existence, the views on enforcement and other functions of the inspectors of rural labour commissionerate were discussed at length in a one day Tripartite Seminar organised by GLI to enable this study to benefit from the views of the distinguished representatives of workers, employers and the Government.

Viewpoints and Suggestions Regarding the potential and Challenges of Rural Labour Administration which emerged from a Seminar and Panel Discussion at GANDHI LABOUR INSTITUTE on 29th April 1991.

## SECTION - IV

### ONE DAY SEMINAR ON

### NEW DIRECTIONS IN RURAL LABOUR ADMINISTRATION IN INDIA WITH A SPECIAL FOCUS ON GUJARAT

Co-ordinator: B.B. Patel,  
Gandhi Labour Institute  
Drive-in Road. Ahmedabad

The seminar was planned as a concluding event of the four day training programme for the Government Labour Officers who were incharge of implementing the labour laws for rural labour in Gujarat.

Twenty-four GLOs participated in the training programme. The focus of the training was three-fold.

1. More effective enforcement of the labour laws and related matters.
2. Potential for extension role of a GLO in the context of large number of schemes of social welfare and employment generation implemented by the various departments of the Government.
3. The role of a GLO in promoting the organisations of the rural labour with a view promoting social justice through building their own bargaining power.

Apart from these trainees, the seminar was attended by representatives of rural trade unions and voluntary agencies working for rural poor in Gujarat. Social thinkers and representatives of farmers also attended this seminar. As a part of the seminar, we had also arranged panel discussion on the theme of the seminar. Shri Arjun Singh, IAS, Secretary to the Government of Gujarat, Department of Tribal Welfare, Shri T.D. Soyantar, IAS, Secretary to the Government of Gujarat (Retd.), and Shri M.P. Parekh, IAS Director General of Gandhi Labour Institute, presided. The panel discussion was chaired by Shri M.P. Parekh. In the original arrangement Shri Ashok Narayan, IAS, Secretary to the Government of Gujarat, Department of Labour and Employment had accepted our request to chair the panel discussion. Unfortunately because of circumstances beyond his control he was unable to attend the panel discussion. He was however, right from the beginning when we made this proposal, was very helpful and provided guidance.

The seminar was a joint effort of GLI and the Rural Labour Commissionerate. Shri Mahendra Acharya, IAS, Rural Labour Commissioner, Gujarat State and Dr. B.B. Patel of GLI worked together at each stage of this seminar for its proper planning and success.

In the beginning Dr. B.B. Patel who was the co-ordinator of the seminar and the training programme explained the objective of the seminar and informed the participants that the training programme for AGLO is one of the regular training programmes of the Institute and, apart from discussing the items in enforcement, the training imparted helps them to comprehend the problems of agricultural labour, socio-economic structure of the rural society and role of non-governmental agencies and trade unions. Shri Mahendra Acharya, Rural Labour Commissioner, gave idea about the working of the rural labour commissionerate as well as the working of the rural labour welfare board. He gave statistics regarding the number of inspections carried out and the amount of money which the Inspectorate was able to secure as compensation for less payment of wages to the agricultural labourers. He further explained that the Rural Labour Welfare Board provides an excellent infrastructure consisting of 163 rural labour welfare centres and 123 Honorary Organisations incharge of welfare centres and 123 Honorary Organisations incharge of welfare centres reaching out to the poorest of the poor in rural areas. It was felt that a more effective use of this infrastructure can be made in the interest of the labouring poor by way of providing help and information about the

other types of schemes of benefit - both economic and social - by making use of this infrastructure. He requested the participants to give their views on how this can be operationalised.

Shri M.P. Parekh while inaugurating the seminar raised a basic question regarding the form and the structure of the rural labour administration in the context of our socio-economic goals and the state of economic development in our rural society. He was of the view that we have to shed the stereotypes tried earlier in this country or which are more commonly adopted in the developed countries. He also felt that a more effective framework should be developed with a series of urgency.

He also referred to the problems of small villages and also of the villages which are deep in the interior and not easily accessible. It is often felt that administrators become like rural tourists and our biases even after going in the villages lead us to meet only the leaders and not the people in the villages. He, therefore, emphasised the need for not proper orientation of the manpower but also specifically taking care of such gaps in the system of rural labour administration.

He also referred to the experiment of organising rural labour shibirs by the Gandhi Labour Institute with the

objective of creating awareness among the rural labour about the laws meant for their economic and social protection and also the various schemes of economic benefit which are already under implementation. He felt that one need not always start with conflict. He cited the example that even Mahatma Gandhi who was the guiding spirit behind the establishment of Textile Labour Association in Gujarat emphasised the welfare scheme for the workers first.

In the open discussion the participants expressed their views on different aspects which may be put in three category :

1. The enforcement of **Labour** Laws aspect including the type of organisation and approach for the enforcement of labour laws.
2. Mr. Manhar Shukla of Textile Labour Association (Ahmedabad) felt that while care should be taken to enforce the laid down requirements under the laws, conflict situations should be avoided. The productivity and discipline of work are of equal importance. He also pointed out that we should take the help of Panchayats to sort out the problems between the farmers and the labourers and in case of a dispute, it should be possible to approach the Court as we do it for industrial labourers under the ID



Act. He referred to the philosophy of Shri Jugathram Dave to maintain hermony in the rural society while ensuring the social justice for them.

3. Shri Indukumar Jani of Khet Vikas Parishat laid emphasis on the problems pertaining to the Bonded Labour definition and the implementation of the Bonded Labour Act in Gujarat and the inaction on the part of the state to implement the land reforms. He pointed out that the Government is not willing to accept that there are bonded labourers in the state and in support they are citing the study of GLI. He contended that there is a need for a more through survey on bonded labour issue in the state and that in carrying out the survey a tripartite approach should be adopted. He further pointed put that the sugarcane cutters are not even recognosed as human being as they are often referred to as 'koyta' which is the name of an instrument for cutting sugarcane. This only reflects the attitude of Administration. He felt that our policies have resulted in uprooting the rural labour from their assets like land and forest. He emphatically felt that the Government under no circumstances should except any employers' group from the implementation of minimum wage even in times of droughts. The Government investment results in improving the resource base of the rich while when it comes to giving even the

minimum remuneration to labour we are hesitant.

He further felt that in rural labour administration the voluntary agencies and trade unions have to be associated particularly in the implementation of the welfare schemes.

He further pointed out that of the Rural Labour Commissionerate cannot act strictly and with determination there is no need for a separate Commissionerate. He was sorry to mention to mention that usually the offices of the AGLO and GLOS in rural areas are overcrowded with rich farmers. He was thus critical of the approach of these functionaries who are meant to protect the interest of the rural poor. It was further pointed out that the recovery matters in cases of violation of the MW Act should be taken up by AGLO themselves rather than requiring the voluntary agency or the trade union to get involved and creating an avoidable hardship for such organisations.

Shri Rasikbhai Dave (Vadnagar) felt that there is a need to exercise proper judgment and criteria in the selection of AGLOs (Inspectors in Agriculture). It is necessary that such Inspectors come from proper socio-economic background and have enough motivation to act on behalf of the rural labour. He also felt that the violation of the Minimum Wage Act should be considered as injustice and should be acted accordingly.

Shri Rikhavdas Shah a Social thinker (Mehsana) was of the view that we should aim to minimize the web of labour laws to reduce corruption and inaction. He further felt that the present trends in enforcement of laws have brought disharmony and division in otherwise a compact rural society. He cautioned that it is necessary to preserve the harmony in the rural society and in order to achieve the the goals of social justice the village level committees consisting of the representatives of the farmaers, labourers, social thinkers and the Government, can be established with the help of the Panchayats and thus such committees should take care of the minimum wages and other welfare measures meant for the rural labour. He also opined that the minimum wage level should be realistic and enforceable. No purpose is served by paper proclamations. It only breed corruption. He further emphasised the need for developing alternative source of employment. He mentioned Amber Charkha Centre where the needed rural labour can come as and when required to work and earn particularly in the lean season. He was not in favour of organising rural trade unions as he suspected that such organizations are very often in the hands of totally uncommitted anti-social persons who utilize such forms not in the interest of rural labour but for the purpose of creating disharmony and for self-interest.

Mr. Madhusudhan Mistri of DISHA felt that the Rural Labour Commissionerate must have the top priority for the enforcement of labour laws as laid down by the society. In doing so if there is a disharmony or conflict or a problem of law and order it should be taken care of by the concerned other departments or agencies and such fears should not be utilized as an excuse for not enforcing the social legislation. He further felt that the Clause 26 (2) under Minimum Wage Act providing for the exemption from the Minimum Wage Act under certain circumstances should be abolished from the Act. He also felt that the implementation of the minimum wage was the most powerful weapon to ensure the social justice as, a majority of the poor people were wage employed. He further suggested that under the Clause 29 of the Bonded Labour Act there is a need to appoint social activists and social thinkers and other distinguished persons as Magistrates under the Act. He pointed out the deplorable conditions of workers in the grass and sugarcane fields in South Gujarat and wanted the Rural Labour Commissionerate to concentrate on their problems.

He feared that with the increase in irrigation and cropping intensity, the problems of the rural labour are increasing as it leads to greater extent of bonded labour and crop sharing.

Dr. Indira Hirway (GLI) pointed out that the unorganized sector has received a step-motherly treatment in all respects. As for minimum wage she opined that while enforcement is necessary it should be treated as only a part of the package and as a transitional step. She wanted equal emphasis on the welfare measures and the generation of economic activities for overall increase in the employment.

Shri Jethalal Parmar (AITUC) wanted more effective working in the social justice committees at the district level and taluque level. It was earlier also pointed out that these committees hardly meet. Mr. Parmar drew attention to suspect deals between the forest department and the revenue departments for transferring even valuable government waste land for the purpose of forest which in fact could have been used for generating more employment for the rural poor.

Shri Ramjibhai Choudhary of Rayda Mill, Mehasna and ex-Member of Gujarat State Agriculture Commission was of the view that there is no dispute regarding the payment of the minimum wage to agricultural labourers. But he did not favour the elaborate maintenance of registers. He agreed with the suggestion of Shri Rikhavdas Shah that a tripartite committee at the village level in co-ordination with Panchayats can be effective forums for sorting out the problems between the labour and the farmer. He felt that all the complaints must be referred first to such committees.

The Seminar thus emphasised the need to mainly concentrate on enforcement functions, and to go for implementation of welfare and other schemes only marginally and in for a selective few such as ensuring Ration Cards, benefit of free grain distribution under the mid-day meal scheme etc.

It was also felt that conflict is not inevitable. Forums to resolve violation of MW Act and cases of injustices method to the labouring poor should be referred to the committee in which the Panchayat, farmers' and workers' representatives and some other independence social can participate. It should be the first step.

It was further felt tahat the other related issues like distribution of surplus land, tenancy and poors' access to common property resources of land and water must be considered in a scheme for effective Rural Labour Administration.

It was further pointed out that the voluntary agencies and rural trade unions should be assigned a greater role in the implementation of the schemes of Social Security, labour and family welfare and in wage and self-employment schemes meant for rural labour.

Shri Praful Trivedi (Janpath) was of the view that as more and more development projects are implemented they have

brought with them more miserable conditions for the rural labour. The introduction of machinery has substituted labour and have also increased the health hazards in agriculture.

In Aspect-II the group discussed the role of Rural Labour Commissionerate in ensuring <sup>34</sup> the benefit of various schemes of welfare and income generation. Participating in the discussion Shri Ambubhai Shah, Sarvoday Ashram (Gundi), felt that while there are innumerable laws there is a lack of coordination among those who implement, the functionaries and the voluntary agencies or trade unions. He further felt that instead of concentrating only on agricultural labourers or rural labourers we have to bring under one umbrella all rural poor which includes the rural artisans, marginal farmers and non-agricultural labourers in rural areas. He further felt that there is a very strong need to redistribute land and see that land is worked only by those for whom the principal source or livelihood is land. He realizes that because of the vast gap between demand and supply of labour the enforcement of minimum wage is not very effective. He therefore suggested that the employment in agriculture and animal husbandry should be also promoted simultaneously and the agro-based activities or processing activities should be

cautiously promoted with labour intensive technology. In this connection he wanted that the design of amber charkha also should be improved so that it is offered as an alternative to the needy at a reasonable level of wage rate.

He was also of the opinion that a wide variety of voluntary agencies have come into existence with different motives. He therefore, felt that the government must identify some key agencies and take their help both in the administration of the labour laws and the schemes of welfare and employment generation.

It was felt by the participants that each agricultural labour should be given an identity card which would avoid the need for going to many agencies for the purpose of getting certificates of eligibility etc. preferably. Further, at the level of taluka/district a Vigilance Committee/Nyaya Samiti should be established which consist of the representatives of the concerned groups. social workers etc. It was also felt that some of the problems which agricultural labourers face like mortgaging their ornaments should be taken care of by making arrangements for credit for consumption and social occasions. The Labour Department functionaries can also help in matters like issue of the ration card and unsure that the grains



are properly distributed to the children of the agricultural labourers under the mid-day scheme etc. One more suggestion was that in rural areas large number of processing activities are going on. Unfortunately minimum wages are not laid down for such activities and therefore it becomes a problem for the voluntary agencies in the rural areas. To this it was pointed out that the Advisory Committee on the minimum wages have already considered this question and an all inclusive category "others" is also made to apply to the rest of the processing activities for the purpose of fixing the minimum wage. The NGOs were of the view that the M.W. for such processing activities carried only in rural areas wide publicity and that they should be associated in their enforcement.

At 4.00 pm there was Panel discussion in which Mr. T.D. Soyanter. Secretary to the Government of Gujarat. Department of Tribal Welfare and Shri Arjun Singh, IAS, Secretary to the Government of Gujarat. Department of Tribal Welfare, participated. Shri M.P. Berekh. Director General of GLI presided. Mr. Soyander argued that the agricultural labour status is a man-made status and it is the indication of the wrong doing by those who have assets and therefore we should not accept this fate accompli and work towards the goal of making them farmers.

Further he was critical about the prevailing system of half-day work in agriculture where payments were made at the rate of half of the minimum wage. He was of the view that the optimum productivity of a worker in any case is 4-5 hours. It is unfortunate that the farmers squeeze but the cost productive time period of the labourers and pay them only at half rate. He demanded the abolition of the "Half-day" work in agriculture.

Shri Arjun Singh, Secretary, Tribal Welfare agreed that there are a number of welfare scheme for the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes in which the Labour Department officers can play a helpful role. He suggested that in respect of tribal project administration there is scope for co-ordination which should be explored.

While referring to the problems of the forest labour it was pointed out (by Shri Mistry) that the Government is exploiting forest resources and making profits. He alleged that there are about one lakh persons working in the Forest Department and the Department is not making them regular workers at all. In fact the working conditions of Chowkidars and Mails are very pitiable. He further pointed out that the Forest Development Corporation makes profit in the production and collection of the minor forest

produce while even minimum wage is not ensured to the tribla forest labour. It was argued by some as to why the Forest Labour engaged in Mutur farms produce of gathering be not given the share in the profit of the Forest Development Corporation.

The Chairman while concluding the discussion impressed upon the participants the need for an urgent action to create effective forym for the administration of labour laws and welfare schemes. With In this he saw the poss\$ibility of coordination, information sharing the functionaries of different departments and creation of forum in which, apart from the government, the panchayats, and NGOs can participate for more effective results.

The Seminar thus emphasised the need to mainly concentrate on enforcement functions and so far at the implementation of welfare and other schemes are concerned it should be only marginal.

It was further pointed out that the Voluntary Agencies and Rural Trade Unions should be assigned a greater role in the implementation of the schemed of Social Security, labour and family welfare and in wage and self-employment schemes meart for rural poor.

## SECTION V

### DETAILS REGARDING THE ENFORCEMENT OF THE MINIMUM WAGE IN AGRICULTURE IN GUJARAT AND MAHARASHTRA

In September, 1964, the Government of Gujarat had appointed the Minimum Wages Advisory Committee for employment in agriculture under the chairmanship of Prof. M.B. Desai to fix a minimum wage for agriculture in Gujarat State.

On the basis of the recommendations of the Advisory Committee, the new rates of the minimum wages had come in force from February 10, 1968. It may be mentioned that initially these rates were different for different zones-each district was divided into 3 to 4 zones on the basis of agro-climate conditions, crops were in the range of Rs. 1.25 to Rs. 3.00 for daily workers and in the range of Rs. 300/- to Rs. 1000 for permanent workers.

From August 15, 1972, this practice of having different minimum wages in different areas was done away with.

Instead Rs. 3.00 was fixed as the Minimum Wage Rate for daily worker and Rs. 1200.00 for the annual farm servant.

These rates were revised from time to time, the details of which are given below :

Date	Daily Worker(Rs)	Annual (Rs)
15.8.1972	3.00	1200.0
5.1.1976	5.30	2000.0
2.10.1982	9.00	3200.0
4.2.1986	11.00	4000.0
1.8.1990	15.00	5400.0

It will be noted that it has usually taken 4-6 years to revise these rates.

In the state of Maharashtra government fixed the minimum rate of wages for agricultural labourers under the Minimum Wages Act, 1948, with effect from March 24, 1974. The minimum rates of wages had been revised in the year 1978, 1986 and in 1988. The minimum rates of wages which became effective from May 1988 were as under :

Zone	Daily (Rs.)	Monthly(Rs.)	Annual(Rs.)
I	20.0	640.0	7680.0
II	16.0	520.0	6240.0
III	14.0	460.0	5520.0
IV	12.0	400.0	4800.0

(Source : Office of Labour Commissioner, Maharashtra State)

It should however be noted that the minimum wage rates in Maharashtra are fixed for four different zones depending

upon the agro - climatic conditions, incidence of agricultural labour, proximity to urban industrial centres, etc, status of agricultural activities and employment prospects.

It will be noted that the daily minimum wage rates among the zones differed by about 45% between Zone I to Zone IV. This is in contrast with the practice of fixing only one wage rate in the state of Gujarat although agro - climatic conditions do vary substantially among the three sub-regions, namely, the South Gujarat, North Gujarat and Saurashtra and Kutch. Further, the minimum wage fixed in Gujarat is more or less equal to the rate fixed for Zone III in the state of Maharashtra.

In Table below we have shown the Types and number of cases of violation under the Minimum Wages Act for agriculture in Gujarat during 1981 to 1989 :

Partticulars	1981	1982	1983	1984	1985
Cases settled through persuasion (Less Payment)	4327	11082	17382	7473	5121
Cases settled through Court Cases (Less Payment)	74 (1.68)	170 (1.51)	321 (1.81)	177 (2.31)	241 (4.49)
Total of 1 & 2 (Total less payment cases)	4401 (85.18)	11252 (80.03)	17703 (76.67)	7650 (58.76)	5362 (58.36)

No. of Proceution (nonmaintenance of Forms etc.)	766 (14.81)	2807 (19.97)	5386 (23.33)	5369 (41.24)	3842 (41.74)
Total	5167	14059	23089	13019	9204

Table Contd...

Particulars	1986	1987	1988	1989
Cases settled through persuasion (less payment)	5014	1432	1103	1601
Cases settled through court cases (less payment)	75 (1.47)	113 (7.31)	76 (6.45)	37 (2.26)
Total if 1 & 2 (Total less payment cases	5089 (73.07)	1545 (50.03)	1179 (48.06)	1638 (42.29)
No. of Proceution (non-maintenance)	876 (26.93)	503 (49.97)	1274 (51.94)	2235 (57.71)
Total	6965	3088	2453	3873

(Source : Gujarat State Rural Labour Commissionerate,  
Gandhinagar.)

In the table we find that the proportion of the cases of less payment of wages settled through law courts, barring some years, are extremely low, roughly between 2-4 per cent. In absolute term the number of such cases settled through the law courts are around 50-60 in the last two years as compared to around 122 in 1981-82.

What is noteworthy is that most of the cases of less payment of wages have been settled through what is usually referred

to as through 'persuasion', Even here, However, we find that the total number of saces of less payment have declined over time. It is not necessarily an indication of either greater compliance to pay the minimum wages. It may be even less determined effort by the enforcement machinery. This, however, is a point of debate.

In Maharashtra the reporting on the above subject is done by the office of the Commissioner of Labour in their publication meant for official use only entitled 'IMPORTANT LABOUR STATISTICS FOR 1990'. The data which are made available in these publications are of 5 years between 1986-87 to 1990-91. The reported data separately given for the details under the Minimum Wages Act (other than agriculture, agriculture and other acts). The details are of the number of visits, irregularities detected, irregularities rectified, prosecution, monitoring benefits and number of workers benefited. The data pertaining to the implementation of the minimum wages act for agriculture are given in the table below :

Statement showing number of visits and prosecutions etc., in respect of enforcement of Minimum Wages Act in Agriculture in Maharashtra, 1986-87 to 1990-91



Year	No. of Visits	Irregularities detected	Irregularities rectified	Prosecutions	Monetary benefits (lakhs)	No. of workers benefite
1986-87 (upto April, 1987)	239129	274012	254618	813	16.80	5919
1987-88	237265	283132	256255	147	13.90	4404
1988-89	237623	249320	231414	84	71.68	21547
1989-90	230994	227633	219096	48	26.27	19859
1990-91 (till Dec. 90)	175480	165464	155809	31	22.58	2075

Source : Important Labour Statistics for 1990, Office of the Commissioner of Labour, Bombay, Maharashtra State.

It will be seen from the above table that in Maharashtra also the number of prosecutions launched has declined over time, it being only 48 in the year 1989-90. The emphasis in the enforcement is clearly on rectifying irregularities outside the court. Although there is a decline of the total number of irregularities detected over time, their number still remains substantially high because as many as 2,27,633 irregularities were detected in the year 1988-89 and in the year 1990-91 upto December 1990 the detected number of irregularities were 1,65,464. In relation to the total number of agricultural labourers in the state, this is striking.

It will be further noted that a very high proportion of these detected irregularities have been rectified outside the court in which the amount of financial benefit made available to the affected workers ranged from about Rs. 14 lakhs in 1987-88 to about 72,00,000 in 1988-89 during 1986-86 to 1990-91. The total number of beneficiary workers ranged from 4404 in 1987-88 to as many as 19,859 in 1989-90 during the same period.

However in order to understand the effectiveness of inspection work, the available data will have to be looked at from different angles and interpretations. This would also help in judging even the relative performance of inspectorates in the two States.

In the year 1988-89 and in 1989-90 taken together, total inspection were 161059 or an average of 80529 inspections.

The number of prosecution launched (average of two years) was most non-maintenance of forms)	1756
Cases settled through persuasion (mostly less payment of wages) were.	1406
Cases of less payment of wages taken to Law Courts.	<u>56</u>
All Cases	<u>3218</u>
All Cases percentage of inspectors	<u>4.00%</u>

In other words, irregularity or violation either in respect of maintenance of records or less payment of wages, which could be detected through inspections were only in 4% of cases of inspection in Gujarat.

This implies that inspections were carried out in areas or of farmers where in fact do not violate the provisions of minimum wages;

Or, inspectors are not in a position or do not want to report the cases violation.

Or, the evidence to register the cause of violation sufficient and necessary details, evidences oral or on paper are not made available and the necessary cooperation from the farmers or neighbours of such farmers is not forthcoming.

Or it also means that the reported inspections are fake. Whereas in fact inspectors have not visited the places. In any case, this only underlines the superfluousness of inspectorate and its work. For, there is absolutely no evidences to suggest that, the provisions of the Minimum Wages Act in Gujarat are almost wholly and dutifully complied with by the farmers.

It is true that in Maharashtra also the number of cases of violation taken to the court of laws has been insignificant

What is however noteworthy is that in terms of reported irregularities and the number of inspections one finds interesting results.

(1) For instance, taking the average of 1988-89 and 1989-90, the total number of visits of the inspectors was 2.34 lakh (average of the years)

(2) The number of irregularities detected was 2.39 lakh or detected irregularities were more than 100% of the visits. (102.00%) as against only 4% in Gujarat.

It is also interesting that on average 2.25 lakh irregularities were recruited. This amounted to 94.14% of the irregularities were rectified through mutual adjustment, persuasion etc.

Another point is about the average monetary benefit obtained and the no. of workers involved in settlement of cases either through persuasion or in Court cases.

In Gujarat for example, in the cases settled through mutual adjustment there seems to be a compromise on both the sides and perhaps the cases involve less financial burden. The benefit obtained was about Rs. 639 per beneficiary.

In the cases settled through court however, the financial benefit per beneficiary was Rs. 3755 in Gujarat. This aspect needs to be emphasised so that the tendency to violate the act is reduced as it could be an expensive proportion.

In the reported data in Maharashtra, it is not possible to isolate the monetary benefit obtained by a labourer separately through persuasion channel outside court and in those cases which have been settled through courts.

The average monetary benefit per worker came to Rs. 236 only. It covered about 20,000 workers and the financial commitments of Rs. 48.97 lakh (average of 1988-89 and 1989-90)

It will be seen that the total inspections of about 80,000 in relation to the total number of agricultural labourers (2.5 million) comes to about 3-4% in both the Gujarat and Maharashtra (2.34 Lakh visits to 6.5 million agricultural labourers).

The above picture raises many questions about the working of the Enforcement Machinery and the utility in the existing framework.

For example, if the inspector is not in a position to report violations, is it because he finds himself isolated without the backing of the system?

Is it because, the affected worker, although comes forth initially but turns about and either refuse to provide cooperation to the inspector or even gives opposite evidence. Such cases have been reported.

For every cases of violations, if the inspector has to attend the court, which motivation is left with him to report such cases to court ?

The cooperation from the farmers organisation to implement this social legislation is necessary.

It is this context that the promotion of associations/unions of rural labour by all feasible methods needs to be supported.

It could be the method to recognise or give ~~affiliations~~ affiliations to registered groups of rural labourers and involve them in implementing welfare measures.

It is by forming village level block level tripartite advisory committees consisting of the representatives of the affected parties as far as possible rather than outsiders and associate such bodies with even welfare activities under the aegis of a Welfare Board which is board based and independent of the government control.

Even if an irregularities of less payment is ractified by payment of difference in the presence of the inspector,

will it not be taken back from the labourer ?

Will not a farmer maintain wageship with the payment of Minimum Wages although in the field. He has paid less than the Minimum Wages ? Is this not happening even in the educated labour market ?

These are then the complaints arising out of the socio economic milieu and overall lack of work opportunities. Under the circumstances, police operations to detect violation are unlikely to help. Rather a selective approach to concentrate on a big farmers or farmers having tube wells, areas predominantly cultivating cashcrops like sugarcane, bananas, hybrid cotton etc and listing up of areas, villages and farmers who have greater propensity to violate although the capacity to pay existed is likely to be more effective.

#### Organisational Structure

The organisational structure for the enforcement of relevant labour laws for agriculture consists of one Dy. Commissioner of Labour in charge of agriculture in the office of Labour Commissioner himself. He is supported by the requisite number of officers of the rank of ACL and there are 214 Inspectors for the enforcement of Minimum

Wage Act in Agriculture of Class III rank and are on par with the Inspectors for shops and commercial establishments. These are mostly recruited directly and the department has not encountered any special problem regarding their prospects or promotions.

In Gujarat there is a separate Rural Labour Commissionerate since 1981. The Rural Labour Commissioner is assisted by two ACL and Dy. Labour Commissioner. In all there are 19 GLOs - one in every district and there are 147 AGLOs - one in a taluka basis. In addition, the organiser of the Rural Welfare Centre is working under the supervision and control of the AGLO/GLO of the Rural Labour Commissionerate. The activities of the Board including the welfare schemes are implemented by the Inspectors with the support of the honorary organisers of the centres.

Wage slip is a main item of records which every farmer is expected to maintain for casual labourers. While for permanent labourers, the farmer-employer is required to maintain attendance-cum-wage registers.



## SECTION VI

### RURAL LABOUR WELFARE BOARD AND IMPLEMENTATION OF OF WELFARE AND OTHER SCHEMES ACTS

An outline of the approach to Rural Labour Administration as discussed above emphasises that the enforcement of labour laws is one of the aspects albeit a crucial one. The Laws which aim to protect the economic interest and welfare of the poor must be enforced without excuses. Along with the enforcement of laws however the measures for economic, social and educational welfare of the poorer sections of the society is a must. It is a complementary aspect.

Many scheme which serve these objectives, are under implementation by the various departments of the Government such as rural development, social welfare, social defence, labour, scheduled caste, scheduled tribe corporations etc. In fact one would say that there is a plethora of schemes and they are also of different types. A glimpsis of this is available in a pamphlet which has been recently issued by the Government (Pamphlet 1). The information pertains to the laws welfare schemes for agricultural labourers.

#### GUJARAT STATE RURAL LABOUR WELFARE BOARD:

The important question, however, is of constituting a

separate agency to work for economic, social, educational and cultural development of the rural labour. The Gujarat state Rural Labour Welfare Board was set up in 1981 in the same year in which the separate rural labour commissionerate was also set up in the state. Perhaps this is the first of its kind in the country.

The Board as a separate and independent body is expected to formulate an influence the policies and programmes having the bearing on economic and social welfare of the labouring poor in rural areas.

The constitution of the Board was as under :

Chairman	-	Honourable Minister Labour
Vice Chairman	-	Secretary Labour
The Government Members	-	Seven
Non Government Members	-	Thirteen
The Member Secretary	-	Rural Labour Commissioner

The Rural Labour Commissioner also works as the chief executive and is answerable to the Board for the activities. At the headquarter the Board has a staff of ten including the Member Secretary. The other nine are administrative and accounts staff who run the administration of the Board.

The Board does not have its own staff either at the taluka level or at the district level. But has a fairly well developed instructure of Rural Labour Welfare Centres (147) and in each centre there is a staff of three, 1) honorary organisor, 2) a part time lady teacher and 3) a part time attendant.

Thus at the grassroot level the position of the honorary organiser is quite relevant and important. However, under the existing arrangements he is no more than a clerk to the AGLO or GLO. He is expected to be outside the Government service and is linked not only with the functionaries of the Labour Department but with the other departments also which are also having the schemes for the rural labour.

Given the above arrangements, it appears that there is not much of autonomy or independence of the Board from the Government. Even the non Government members of the Board are nominated by the Gdvernment. Under these circumstances it is a question of debate as to what special role and in what way the Board can play for ensuring the fulfilment the laid down objectives of the Board.

The Board receives 100% of its financial support from the Government the different organs of the Government such as the district planning boards occasionally provide financial

support for the construction of the buildings of the welfare centres. In a number of centres the local population irrespective of any caste or occupation takes an appreciative view and have offered donations for supporting the activities of the centres or by providing uniform for the children attending the kindergarten or Balwadi.

The Board advises the Government on policy and problems relating to the enforcement of minimum wages in agriculture also.

The activities of the welfare centres are to run the Balwadi in which, on an average 35 to 45 children attend; to organise and run adult education class; to run a library; to organise games and sport and cultural activities; and provide information and create awareness about labour laws and relevant opportunities for employment and income earning.

In addition, the organiser of the centre collects information regarding the cases of Group Life Insurance Scheme for landless agricultural labourers, cases in maternity benefit schemes for agricultural labourers, old age pension, and cases of incurable diseases for the purpose of financial support. This information is collected for AGLO/GLO through whom the onward procedure is carried out.

From the year 1982-83, the Central Government had sponsored a scheme of honorary organisers with an objective of organising rural labour. Under the scheme the centre provided about Rs. 250 for organiser. 116 such organisers have been covered in the state of Gujarat. It may be mentioned that the Government of Gujarat adds its own resources for the purpose of maintaining the staff at the centre. The honorary organiser is paid Rs. 500/- per month, a part time lady teacher Rs. 200/- per month and attendant Rs. 100/- per month. We are given to understand that the staff of the centres have been pressing for increase in their remuneration.

The non recurring expenditure for centre has been around Rs. 7700/- and it included the educational and teaching material, furniture, instruments for games and entertainment etc. The recurring expenditure per centre per year has been around Rs. 21,540/- or Rs. 1,795/- per month.

Usually where there are 10,000 or more agricultural labourers in taluka, one welfare centre is provided. If in a taluka there are 30,000 or more agricultural labourers, two centres are provided whereas in the tribal areas because of the low density of population the centres are provided on the basis of its backwardness rather than its population. In the state there are in all 147 rural labour welfare centres in

which 106 are called non scheduled tribe areas and 41 such centres are located in the scheduled tribe areas. Considering the fact that there are 184 talukas in the state the number of centres so far established is impressive and we understand that there are further proposals so as to cover almost all talukas with such centres and maintain an appropriate ratio between population of agricultural labourers and location of centres.

In the year 1989-90 for the state as a whole 4680 children in the age group of 3-6 attended the balwadi on an average per month. 6202 took interest in the adult education activity. 24,455 took interest in the games and sports about 21,000 were involved in the cultural activities and the honorary organisers had helped 1,112 deserving rural labourers to apply for subsidised loan assistance for income and employment of which 390 were given such assistance. These members as such as may not convey the real importance. It is difficult to judge even the intensity and the quality of participation and the use made by the target group persons. Nonetheless, the centres would certainly increase the awareness on many useful aspects.

It would thus be seen that these rural labour welfare centres have a good potential to be of help to the rural labour at

the grassroot level. The only question is that whether the existing link between the Rural Labour Commissionerate and the organisers of the centre serves any purpose. On the contrary it seems that it has reduced these organisers to the status of a clerk and have left little independence and initiative for their work which is essentially of a different nature. It is likely that if the various concerned departments of the Government including the department of Labour explicitly recognise the role of the honorary organiser at the grassroot level in helping the rural labour by spreading of information, by supplying them with relevant forms for financial assistance or for availing the social and welfare schemes it can go a long way in establishing his rapport with the rural labour and in the process the environment for forming associations or groups can become very favourable. Even Rural trade unions or Voluntary Agencies should also have the access to the infrastructure of these centres and even in managing the activities of these centres.

It may be mentioned that the Maharashtra state does not have such a separate board nor it has a separate rural labour commissionerate. In fact the desirability of having a separate rural labour commissionerate was doubted by some of the top officials of Department of Labour, Government of Maharashtra. It was argued by them that such a dichotomy

is likely to cause the problems of jurisdiction, problems of prospects and motivations for the staff which may be earmarked for rural areas and as such, looking to the nature of the activity the point was made that the enforcement of the labour laws in the rural setting is not a continuous activity but must have judicious approach based on areas and the employer groups so that wearing emphasis is given for achieving for more cost effective reserves in the enforcement.

On the question of separate rural labour welfare board however there was considerable receptivity on the part of the top officials of the Labour department of the Maharashtra Government. They seem to agree that there is a good scope to initiate and separately administer some of the welfare schemes for the labouring poor in the rural areas. In view of their way large number such type of separate arrangement like a Board can become useful and effective. However regarding the constitution of the board it was their considered view that it need not be and rather should not be a government show. Rather, they would like that the employers and the representatives of the labourers play a dominant role.

While the Government may provide certain financial and infra-structural support. In their view, the industrial entrepreneurs who have started units in rural areas and employ rural



labour should be also involved in administering the welfare schemes for the rural labour.

It may be mentioned that at present there is limited activity specially focussing on the welfare schemes for rural labour. The Maharashtra Labour Welfare Board is meant for mainly urban and organised labour. In recent past six centres called Rural Labour Welfare Centres have been started in which the industrial labour working in industries located in such areas as also agricultural labourers take the advantage of the activities of the centres.

The state of Maharashtra has encouraged the social service agency for the work of identification of bonded labour - (1) Shranjivi Sanghtana Vidayak Sanad, at post Dehisar, District Thane (2) Mukti Morcha Sanghtana, Latur. These organisations have filed the complaints in the court of law under the Bonded Labour System.

There are also sixteen registered rural trade unions in Maharashtra.

The Government of Maharashtra has also constituted 46 vigilance committees in the state under Section 13 of the Bonded Labour Act, 1976, as per the directions of the Government of India. The State of Maharashtra has constituted the screening committee dated 26.12.1986 for

considering the problems regarding rehabilitation of freed bonded labourers. They are as under :

- 1) Scheme for rearing goats units of 20 does and 2 bucks
- 2) Scheme for supply of 2 buffaloes
- 3) Scheme for supply of bullock pairs and carts

676 prosecutions had been launched, 208 cases had been decided in which 4 accused were convicted affecting 1382 bonded labourers. 1292 bonded labourers have been rehabilitated.

The Commissioner of Labour has proposed the scheme of separate rural labour commissioner on the basis of Gujarat State dated 8th March, 1989, but the Govt. of Maharashtra rejected the proposal.

Social Security measures for the rural labour. In this measure like Group Life Insurance, partial and total disablement compensation, accident compensation, occupational health, related social protection etc.

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The National Commission on Rural Labour under which social security for rural workers was one of the issues. The social security is a broad concept.

It means to provide certain facilities like insurance, benefits for partial and total disablement, accident, education health

and social protection etc. The Govt. of India has framed social welfare labour legislation under which the provisions of Accident, Medical Benefits, Insurance, health facilities etc., are covered. The names of the above benefits are covered under the following labour Acts :

- 1) Maternity Benefit Act under which the female workers get the Maternity benefits.
- 2) Employees Provident Fund and Misc. Provisions Act, 1952, Employees Family Pension Scheme, 1971, Employees Deposit Link Insurance Scheme, 1976.
- 3) Employees State Insurance Act, 1948, under which the benefits such as (1) Sickness (2) Maternity Benefits (3) Disablement Benefits (4) Accident Benefits (5) Dependent Benefits (6) Occupation disease benefits etc., are provided.

Under the Bidi and Cigar Workers Act, 1966, under which Central Government has reconstituted the Committee is chalk out the various welfare programmes for bidi workers in rural area. The programmes are carried out by the State Government in Maharashtra state for the bidi workers. The scholarship to children of the bidi workers have been given from the 4th standard to Medical, Technical and for professional education as well as Gharkhep workers. The grant-in-aid

of Rs. 50/- to purchase the school uniforms have been provided to bidi workers. The housing scheme for the bidi workers is also introduced by the Central Government by giving the grant of requisite subsidy and loan facility to the economically weaker bidi workers. The Central Government has approved the scheme to built up 4,000 houses at Solapur for bidi workers. Similarly, different housing project for bidi workers are going on in Kamathi, Jalna, Nanded and Aurangabad.

In Nasik district there are 3 co-operative housing societies framed by the bidi workers such as (1) Nitya Seva Griha Bandani Sahakari Sanstha (2) Grihanirman Sanstha (3) Shramik Janta Sahakari Housing Society, Ahmednagar, (4) Rajiv Durbal Ghatak Bidi Kamgar Sahakari Sanstha (5) Secular Bidi Kamgar Griha Bandani Society (6) Sanjay Bidi Kamgar Grihanirman Society.

The central government has constructed 4,210 houses in Maharashtra state for bidi workers during the year 1989-90.

Important Court Judgements, if any, on relevant issues pertaining to rural labour administration (regarding minimum wages, bonded labour etc.)

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In the court of Collector and District Magistrate, Latur, has given judgement dated 9-7-90 under the Bonded Labour

System (Abolition) Act, 1976. There are 113 bonded labours belonging to Andhra Pradesh were working in M/s. G. Shiv Prasad Reddy of Andhra Pradesh, who was the contractor, had taken the work of left bank canal of lower Terna project, which was under supervision of Executive Engineer, Latur. The Court has taken the action under Sec. 4,5 and 11 of the Bonded Labour Act, 1976 and have released all the bonded labourers from the custody of the contractors. The Minimum Wages Inspectors (Agri) used to prosecute the employers for non-maintenance of records. The Government Labour Officer-cum-Minimum Wage Inspector under 51 scheduled employments used to prosecute for the non-maintenance of records under sub-sec. 18 of the Minimum Wages Act.

#### Implementation of Bonded Labour Act in Gujarat

Under the Bonded Labour Abolition and Rehabilitation Act, 1976, the Gujarat Government has constituted Vigilance Committees in all the districts. In all 44 vigilance committees have been constituted for screening, scrutinising and rehabilitating the bonded labourers.

The implementation of Bonded Labour Act in Gujarat reveals that 64 bonded labourers have been identified so far. Out of these 59 have been rehabilitated in self-employment under the Central Government scheme. Rs. 2.03 lakhs had been spent on rehabilitation.

It has not been possible to trace the 4 bonded labourers while one had died.

### What is a 'bonded labour' ?

Although a number of studies have argued that there are no bonded labourers in Gujarat, this contention has been denied and challenged by social activists and voluntary groups in Gujarat. In fact, they have been demanding a tripartite group to conduct a study on the incidence of bonded labour in Gujarat.

### Debt Bondedness

The problem of identifying bonded labourer is a complex one. Sheer technical aspect like indebtedness to the employer is not sufficient although it might be a necessary condition.

Paying wages lower than the minimum wage is a case of forced labour, but paying even lower than the prevailing market wage rate is the case of greater helplessness of the labourer. Attachment of women and even the children for work at employers house without reasonable reward are surely the elements which have to be looked into in understanding the overall helplessness of a labourer which in fact might imply bondedness. This requires indepth and participant observation approach rather than one shot data collection technique.

Similarly there are district level committees to advise the government on implementation of minimum wages act. Unfortunately, as per the data available in the annual report of the Rural Labour Welfare Board 1989-90, these committees have met only once in a year although they are required to meet every quarter in a year.

### Interstate Migrant Labour Act

As for the Interstate Migration Act, Gujarat had made special arrangement for implementation of the provisions of this act in respect of sugarcane cutters who migrate to Gujarat from Maharashtra in large number and stay there with their families for 4-6 months in camps in Valsad and Surat districts.

One Asst. Com. of Labour and 3 GLOs are specially appointed to look after the work of implementing this act in this respect.

And yet Jan Breman has argued for inaction or even open collusion between government labour officer and farmers or sugar co-operatives.

In another recent article 'Even Dogs are Better Off' he laments that although cooperative capitulation has reached the dizzy heights of success the labouring poor have been left out.

It would thus be seen that in Maharashtra the welfare schemes for rural labour are few in relation to what Gujarat state is

implementing specially for agricultural labourers in the state. Welfare activities including housing for bidi workers are striking in Maharashtra. The Group Life Insurance Scheme for landless agricultural labourers (state government schemes) and the Central government schemes are both under implementation in Gujarat. The schemes are operated by the Rural Labour Commissionerate.

Similarly, the Maternity Benefit Scheme for agricultural labourers was implemented by the Rural Labour Commissionerate till recently. After that the scheme is implemented by the department of Health and Family Welfare.

Under the State Government Scheme of Group Life Insurance, a landless agricultural labourer is paid Rs. 1000/- in case of natural death and Rs. 2000/- in case of accidental death. A variant of the scheme to cover the partial or total disablement is recently introduced.

The central government group scheme is confined to the head of the family of a landless agricultural labourer, in which the said amount is paid only in case of the death of the head of the family.

The age group covered is 18-60 years and that the households are landless and agricultural labourers.



Under the Maternity Benefits Scheme the benefit is available in respect of the first and second delivery, that the woman is an agricultural labourer and is above 18 years of age. The progress under the scheme is shown in annexure-II.

It may be mentioned that the implementation of the Maternity Benefit Scheme in a few selected blocks in Gujarat is given to voluntary agency like SEWA, an Ahmedabad based women's trade union. We are given to understand that a few more blocks are being assigned to SEWA for the same. This shows that the experience of implementing Maternity Benefit Scheme through a voluntary agency seems to have been satisfactory. A few more selected and reputed voluntary agencies for implementation of welfare schemes need to be tried further.

In Maharashtra for instance, there is no separate Board for rural labour. The schemes of welfare are available under the general acts for workers.

However, under the Employment Guarantee Scheme (EGS) the associated voluntary agencies or unions have taken interest and ensured the implementations of such measures for the members who participate on EGS works.

In our judgement, looking to the large number of risks to which rural labourers are exposed in the course of their work and in old age, a comprehensive approach to cover deaths -

natural or accidental, partial or total disablement, incurable diseases etc., as well as huts, cattle etc., is necessary. A national seminar on Social Security for the Unorganised Labour and Low Income Self-employed persons which was organised by the Gandhi Labour Institute in collaboration with the LIC of India, ILO and the FES - a German Foundation in India - in July 1989 had made very important recommendations for schemes to cover the risks faced by various groups of rural workers. The recommendations of the working group on Social Security for the Rural Labour set up under the National Commission on Rural Labour are yet not available. However, the participants in the National Seminar held earlier at GLI included some of the experts who were concerned with the study on social security measures under the Commission. The question is stressed for another reason, i.e. in our approach we have also emphasized the need for provisions for some additional supplementary employment for the rural workers to take care of periods of unemployment in their main occupation.

### EGS, Maharashtra

In this connection the EGS of Maharashtra state considered to be a very useful labour market invention experiment through which those who want work are guaranteed work at

reasonable wage rate and not too far from their home. Usually, the families below the poverty line predominate among the participants in the EGS. It was found that about 45% among the participants were landless households, 32% of small and marginal farm households and 23% were other households. Among these participants about 62% were from the households who were below the poverty line.

### Persondays of Employment Generated under EGS, Rural Maharashtra

In 1986-87, 18.76 lakh persondays of employment was generated in EGS as against 10.5 lakh of persondays in 1975.

The EGS workers as percentage of agricultural labourers in Maharashtra were approximately 8.48%.

In different regions, these percentages were between 5 to 11 percent. It was 11% in Khandesh and 5.47 percent in Vidarbha. In south Maharashtra it was 10.99%, 9.45% in eastern region and 8.32% in Marathwada. In Konkan it was 7.81%.

Average attendance was 6.26 lakh persons per month. It rose to the maximum of 10.61 lakh and went down to the minimum of 3.47 lakhs.

The real wage rate under the EGS (Rs.) for men and women combined increased at the annual rate of 7.30% between

1975 to 1986-87. The market agricultural wage rate however increased as the annual rate of 5.03% for men and 3.47% for women.

Moreover, in terms of 1970-71 prices, the EGS wage rate was higher than the market agricultural wage rate in all sub regions in 1981-82. In 1984-85, the market wage rate in Maharashtra, Vidharbha and eastern regions, were above the EGS rates.

This type of labour market intervention in rural labour market has multiple advantages in so far as they supplement and not supplant the existing work opportunities and thereby reduce deprivation, ensure dignity to the rural poor and works are productive assets to strengthen the rural economy and infrastructure.

Moreover, with such group participation from a given area, the group or association formation among the rural labour is facilitated. The image and the strength of the voluntary agencies/small trade unions involved in organising the workers and the work under EGS are strengthened and a number of welfare and social security measures for the rural labour can be implemented on a decentralised basis and with the involvement of the rural poor and their groups.

The possibilities on these lines are further seen in the

context of the JAWAHAR ROJGAR YOJANA in which down below at Panchayat level, financial resources are made available for organising suitable rural works for generating additional employment for more deserving families.

Thus, apart from the self-employment schemes under the department of Rural Development and Cottage Industries, Khadi and Village Industries schemes, which are implemented through these departments - at district, block levels, this type of wage employment in rural works, if implemented through Panchayat and concerned beneficiary groups, it would lead to genuine people's participation.

TRAINING AWARENESS, CREATION SUPPLY OF INFORMATION ON LABOUR LAWS, SCHEMES OF SOCIAL SECURITY AND WELFARE AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR SUPPLEMENTARY EARNINGS ETC.

\* ROLE OF GANDHI LABOUR INSTITUTE, GUJARAT :

The Gandhi Labour Institute is established by the Government of Gujarat and is a registered society under the Societies Registration Act. The department of labour is the nodal department and governing council of of the institute is tripartite in composition. Minister of Labour Gujarat State is the Chairman. In the Governing Council, there are representatives of the government, employers and of workers. In addition persons with outstanding contribution in the field of labour are nominated. The representatives of some academic institutions, ILO and the Ministry of Labour Government of India are also represented on the Board.

The Institute aims to promote social justice and harmonious industrial relations through training, research and education activity. The major focus of the Institute's activities is on the issues in the unorganised rural and urban sectors besides its work for the organised industrial working class.

The different subject matters like the labour laws, employment and industrial relations measures of social security and labour welfare etc. and the programmes relating to these subjects are taken up for discussion in the training programme for evaluation studies and thereby; it endeavours in formulation and implementation of appropriate programmes and policies for the promotion of social justice.

#### TRAINING PROGRAMMES FOR GOVERNMENT OFFICERS :

The Institute conducts training programmes with a focus on labour laws for the officers in the department of labour/public works, irrigation, forest etc. The objectives in these training programmes is to improve the understanding of dynamics of the labour laws and the socio-economic setting of rural labour etc.

Among these various categories of officers the training for the inspectors in agricultural (AGLO and GLO) is an important activity. Each year about four to five training programmes are conducted for these inspectors in agriculture and are given training in the laws and their enforcement of Minimum Wage Act, Inter State Migrant Labour Act, Bonded Labour Act, Equal Remuneration Act and Child Labour Abolition and Regulation Act.

The training includes detailed discussion about the provision of these various laws, the results of various evaluation studies regarding the enforcement, court cases, problems of farming, role of voluntary agencies and trade unions etc. The social and labour welfare measures as well as employment generation scheme are also discussed.

These are usually short duration (two or three days) residential programmes conducted at Gandhi Labour Institute. The other relevant training programmes from view point of rural labour administration are the training programmes for voluntary agencies and rural trade unions. Moreover in the training programmes of organised urban trade unions the topics such as the role of urban organised unions in organising the unorganised rural labour is usually discussed.

#### RURAL SHIBIRS :

Apart from the above mentioned residential training programmes at Gandhi Labour Institute, the institute is organising one to two days rural shibirs in different districts in Gujarat State. The participants in this shibirs are mainly agricultural labourers some other rural labourers and low income self employed persons.



Usually 40 to 45 participants take part. They are both men and women.

These shibirs are normally organised in collaboration with a local rural trade union or voluntary agency which has its base in the concerned area among the rural labourers. The institute provides financial as well as the training support.

The purpose of these shibirs is usually three folds (i) to create awareness among the rural labourers about the various labour laws designed for their economic and social protection (ii) to explain them various schemes of social security and social welfare which are applicable to them and help them to take the advantage of these schemes (iii) also bring to their notice the opportunities for supplementary income earning etc. On an average about 18 to 20 such shibirs are organised by the various faculty members each year. In these shibirs attempt is made also to bring about interaction and establish rapport among the government officers, farmers, labourers and also rural trade unions. Attempt is also made to identify young workers who have potential to take leadership. Intensive training is arranged for such identified persons at the institute.

\* DIPLOMA IN LABOUR STUDIES :

Last year the institute started a nine month diploma in labour studies with the objective to promote new and competent leadership among the young persons for working in the field of unorganised, particularly among the rural labour. About 15 to 20 persons are recruited for the diploma. Diploma is not designed for preparing the students to take up jobs.

Further details of the activities of the institute including research activities are given in "profile a document which is prepared by the institute and which is included in Study-II.

Apart from these type of training and awareness creation support from the Gandhi Labour Institute, the Rural Labour Commissionerate also organises usually one day shibirs or meetings of the labourers in different areas for the purpose of creating awareness. Similarly, the Regional Board of Workers Education also conducts the programmes for rural labourers.

\* Posters, pamphlets, T.V. feature, drama etc.

The aspect relating to awareness creation and improving

of access to information is a strategic aspect in the approach to Rural Labour Administration.

Both Gujarat and Maharashtra States attach a great deal of importance to this aspect.

In both the states posters and pamphlets are used for the purpose of wide publicity.

Posters in Maharashtra give information on prevailing rates of minimum wages in different zones in the state for daily, monthly and annual/yearly based agricultural labourers in the state.

Poster also give information that every farm-labourer is entitled as a matter of right to the minimum wage and in case of nonpayment, the poster gives the addresses of the competent authorities to whom they should contact for filing complaints and for guidance etc.

The posters in Gujarat give information on daily and annual wage for agricultural labourers and addresses of offices where they should contact for guidance in case of nonpayment.

CONCLUSION :

The approach to Rural Labour Administration has to be a multi pronged strategy in which the enforcement of relevant labour laws such as the Minimum Wages Act, Bonded Labour Act, Inter State Migrant Labour Act, Equal Remuneration Act and Child Labour Abolition & Regulation Act are implemented effectively by the enforcement machinery which may be either a separate specialised organisation or is a part of Labour Commissionerate.

The study of enforcement details in Gujarat and Maharashtra state indicate that there is no special advantage in having separate commissionerate. On the contrary the problems of prospects and promotion as well as transfer of the inspectors in such separate commissionerate seen to be complex and difficult.

The enforcement machinery must concentrate on faithful and effective implementations of the specified labour laws as a top priority. The administration of welfare schemes and other schemes can not be function on par

with the first objective.

This however does not rule out their role as catalyst to help rural labour by supplying information guidance and even making available some application forms. The implementation of the schemes of social security, social assistance etc. are no doubt very important. However this aspect can be taken care of more effectively if there is a separate Rural Labour Welfare Board. In fact a number of other welfare schemes can be thought of in case of such a separate board.

However in order that such a separate agency is able to discharge its function effectively. Involvement of rural trade unions, voluntary agencies and farmers organisations at the grassroot levels in running the activities of Rural Labour Welfare Centres and in its management is necessary.

The Rural Labour which is usually drawn to the activities of such centres may be persuaded to become the members of this board at the village level on payment of nominal fee. So that they have a right to provide direction for the activities of the centres. The Government may provide some financial support as one party in Tripartite Board at local level. Some resources should be mobilized from

the employers group as well as from the workers group.

We may also recognise a few selected workers organisation for the implementation of the schemes of social security like the Group Insurance or the Maternity Benefit Scheme as it is tried in few block by voluntary agency in Gujarat.

Similarly the planning and implementation of the Wage Employment Programmes on the patterns of EGS of Maharashtra with the involvement of panchayats and workers organisations should be tried. The works programme can be prepared by genuine participation of the rural labour it can be implemented with their involvement.

The present approach in enforcement is target oriented but doesn't seem to be effective as revealed in the data. For cost effective implementation it may be necessary to be selective in terms of areas employers group, and seasons etc. for the enforcement of laws. This is because policing and panalising every violation is not likely nor it is feasible. Hence we may concentrate on creating awareness and give wide publicity to certain court cases which have been settled in favour of labour and make effective use of tripartite forums and promote workers organisations at the grassroot level. The socio

economic milieu is such that it is not always easy for the affected rural labourers to complain. This is because there is lack of alternative implement, it also increases insecurity for such labourer etc. Hence the cooperation of panchayats and farmers organisations is necessary to sort out problems as a first step.

The inspectors are blamed for corruption or lack of commitment and even anti poor attitudes. Jal Breman has written very extensively on this aspect. While this is a well taken analysis it is also necessary to work for creating conditions in which greater justice is done to the rural labour. For example, it might help if the inspectors have to deal with their own superior officers about the settlement of claims rather than take the matter in law court. Honorable Justice Shri D.A. Desai Committee had made the recommendations to confer such powers on the appropriate official in the inspectorate.

The importance of properly designed training programmes for inspectors organisers of voluntary agencies and rural trade unions as organised by the GLI is a necessary and crucial input. Similarly the rural shibirs fulfil the objective of creating awareness and improvement in

the access to information about other opportunities for rural labour. It is true that concerned inspectorate in the two states also undertake some programmes in this context. However a specialised input to identify training needs to conduct training programmes and subsequently to monitor to evaluate the working of some of these laws can be undertaken periodically by independent research bodies so that right type of feed-back is available for making rural administration more effective and meaningful.



Table - 1

BASIC Information Sheets: Gujarat and Maharashtra

Indicator	Gujarat	Mahar- ashtra	Kerala	All India
Population (000), 1981	3410	6280	2550	68520
Population Density KM <sup>2</sup>	174	204	655	216
Percentage in Urban Population	33.1	35.0	18.8	23.3
Percentage in Rural Population	66.9	65.0	81.2	76.7
Literacy Rates (1981)				
Rural : Male	48	51	74	34
Female	24	25	64	15
Total	36	33	69	25
Percentage of Population				
SC	7.2	7.1	10.0	15.8
ST	14.2	9.2	1.0	7.8
Population below poverty line 1983-84				
Rural	27.6	41.5	26.1	40.0
Urban	17.3	23.3	30.1	28.1
Total	24.3	34.9	26.8	37.4
1987-88 (All)	11.7	29.1	17.0	29.2
Unemployment Rate NSS: Daily statistics (Rural) (Population in the Age       , 1983)				

Contd.

Table - 1 (contd.)

	1	2	3	4	5
Male		3.02	3.99	13.39	4.79
Female		1.67	2.69	6.56	2.52
Per worker income (Rs) in Agriculture & Allied activities. 1970-71 prices)		686	1118	1779	-
in 1987-88 prices					
Percentage share of Agriculture & Allied activities in the State Domestic Income					
1970-71		48.0	28.4	49.4	
1987-88		14.2	20.9	34.0	
Agricultural Labourers as percentage of (C + Ag.c) 1981		37.7	43.1	68.3	37.5
Agricultural Labourers as % of total workers 1981		22.66	26.63	28.23	24.93
<u>Total Main Workers</u>					
Rural		7933	17417	5605	176434
Urban		3051	6885	1186	46083
Total		10984	24301	6791	222517
Marginal workers					
Total		1718	2416	980	22088
Rural		1648	2230	858	20874

Contd.

Table - 1 (Contd.)

	1	2	3	4	5
Total Rural Workers (Main) '000'					
Persons		7933	17417	5605	176434
Cultivators		3993	8337	858	90157
Total Rural Workers (main) '000'					
Ag. Labourers		2350	6120	1820	52713
HH Industry Services & Religion		183	388	216	5433
Other workers		1406	2574	2711	28131
Sex Ratio among Ag. labour No. of females per 1000 male, 1981		544	1054	599	589
Agricultural Labourers among women workers (out of 100 women workers)		48	46	44	46

Table - 2

Normal and actual Rainfall in Different Regions  
1989-90

State	Meteorological	Rainfall Normal	(CMS) Actual	1989-90 Deviation %
Gujarat	Gujarat Region	113	111	-1.8
	Saurashtra, Kutch & Diu	56	56	-
Maharashtra	Konkan & Goa	303	271	-11.6
	Madhya Maharashtra	95	92	-3.2
	Marathwada	86	106	23.2
	Vidarbha	111	105	-5.4

Table - 3

Districts covered under the Drought Prone Area  
Development Programmes : 1988-89

State	District	No. of Blocks covered
Gujarat	1. Surendranagar	9
	2. Amreli	8
	3. Kachchh	7
	4. Panchmahals	7
	5. Rajkot	5
	6. Bhavnagar	3
	7. Ahmedabad	2
	8. Jamnagar	2
	Sub-total	43
Maharashtra	1. Ahmednagar	10
	2. Nasik	10
	3. Solapur	10
	4. Pune	9
	5. Beed	6
	6. Aurangabad	6
	7. Sangli	6
	8. Jalgaon	5
	9. Dule	4
	10. Satara	4
	11. Osmanabad	3
	12. Jalna	1
	Sub-total	74

Table - 4

Percentage of Unemployed to total persons of Age 5 years  
and above on Daily Status basis (32nd & 38th Rounds of NSS)

State	Rural				Urban			
	Male		Female		Male		Female	
	1977- 78	1983	1977- 78	1983	1977- 78	1983	1977- 78	1983
Gujarat :	4.49	3.02	1.88	1.67	3.49	5.50	0.82	0.67
Maharashtra:	3.44	3.99	4.09	2.69	5.47	4.42	2.61	1.68
All India :	4.45	4.79	2.45	2.52	5.35	5.45	2.11	1.72

Table - 5

Status of Agriculture Production

Item	Food Grains			
	Kharif		Rabi	
	Gujarat	Maharashtra	Gujarat	Maharashtra
1. Production (lakh tons) Average of five years ended 1988-89	24.8	68.9	10.8	26.8
2. % share in All-India Production	2.9	8.2	1.6	4.1
3. Growth Rate (% increase between triennium ended 1979-80 and 1988-89)	-1.7	-0.3	-4.4	-1.2

Table - 6

## Status of Agricultural Production : Non-Food Crops

Crop	Production (1)	Share (%) (2)	Growth rate (3)	Production (1)	Share (%) (2)	Growth rate (3)
Ground-nuts.	12.7	19.3	-2.5	6.5	9.9	2.5
Rapeseeds, Mustard and	2.4	7.4	20.4	-	-	-
Cotton	13.8	17.6	-7.6	14.4	18.3	-1.5
	2.5	1.9	1.0	0.6	0.4	0.9
Sugarcane	67.3	3.6	7.8	249.3	13.4	1.4
Banana	6.0	10.6	6.9	13.0	22.9	2.4



Table - 7

Percentage Distribution of Households and Area Owned Over Five Broad Holding classes in Maharashtra, Gujarat and All India for the years 1961-62, 1971-72 and 1982

States	Year	Marginal		Small		Semi Medium	
		Less than 1.01 ha.		1.01 - 2.02 ha.		2.03 - 4.04 ha.	
		Household	Area owned	HHS	Area owned	HHS	Area owned
1. Gujarat	1961-62	48.81	3.15	11.05	5.66	15.66	15.61
	1971-72	52.25	4.53	15.24	9.94	13.63	16.73
	1982	57.25	6.66	13.61	10.78	14.98	22.63
2. Maharashtra	1961-62	50.26	17.55	11.41	25.97	13.98	28.81
	1971-72	48.36	3.48	14.94	8.59	16.28	18.34
	1982	54.89	4.65	14.96	10.90	14.83	20.82
3. All India	1961-62	60.06	7.59	15.16	12.40	12.86	20.54
	1971-72	62.62	9.76	15.49	14.68	11.94	21.92
	1982	66.64	12.22	14.70	16.49	10.78	23.38

Contd.

Table - 7 (contd.)

State	Year	Medium		Large		All household	
		4.05 to 10.12 ha.		10.13 ha and above		Household	Area owned
		Household	Area owned	Household	Area owned		
1. Gujarat	1961-62	17.67	37.68	6.81	37.90	100.00	100.00
	1971-72	13.80	36.15	5.08	32.65	100.00	100.00
	1982	11.45	39.45	2.70	20.49	100.00	100.00
2. Maharashtra	1961-62	16.92	24.30	7.43	3.37	100.00	100.00
	1971-72	14.99	35.45	5.43	34.14	100.00	100.00
	1982	11.83	26.23	3.50	27.40	100.00	100.00
3. All India	1961-62	9.07	31.23	2.85	28.24	100.00	100.00
	1971-72	7.83	30.73	2.12	22.91	100.00	100.00
	1982	6.45	29.83	1.42	18.07	100.00	100.00

Table - 8

Net Irrigated Area as % of Net Sown Area.

	1961-62	1971-72	1975-76	1985-86
Gujarat	7.8	14.4	14.6	23.6
Maharashtra	6.0	8.0	9.9	10.3
Kerala*	16.9	20.1	10.4	13.5
India	18.3	22.7	24.3	29.6

\* The entire state falls in High to very high rainfall zone. Hence irrigation percentage is not indicative in potential for Multi-cropping etc.

Table - 9

Per Worker Sectoral State Income (Rs.) at 1970-71 prices

State	S E C T O R					
	Agriculture and Allied		Mining and Manufacturing		Service	
	1970-71	1987-88	1970-71	1987-88	1970-71	1987-88
Gujarat	1851 (3)	686 (15)	4085 (5)	6587 (5)	4264 (1)	7103 (2)
Maharashtra	901 (14)	1118 (10)	4908 (2)	8302 (2)	4181 (3)	6828 (5)
Kerala	1796 (5)	1779 (4)	1844 (14)	2697 (14)	2602 (12)	4126 (14)

Table - 10

Structural changes in State Income at 1970-71 prices:  
1970-71 and 1987-88.

State	Agriculture		Mining and Manufacturing		Service		Compound Annual Rate of income 1970-71 to 1987-88	
	70-71	87-88	70-71	87-88	70-71	87-88	70-71	87-88
Gujarat	48.00	14.2	21.8	37.3	30.3	48.6	-4.8	58.53
Maharashtra	28.4	20.9	34.4	38.6	37.2	40.5	2.7	53.51
Kerala	49.4	34.0*	16.4	20.2*	34.2	45.8*	-0.1	4.2

\* Relates to 1986-87.

Table - 11

## Population Below Poverty line (Percent)

State	Rural		Urban		Total		
	1977-78	1983-84	1977-78	1983-84	1977-78	1983-84	1987-88
Gujarat	43.1	27.6	29.8	17.3	38.9	24.3	11.7
Maharashtra	60.4	41.5	31.4	23.3	50.6	34.9	29.1
Kerala	47.4	26.1	53.2	30.1	48.4	26.8	17.0
All India	51.2	40.4	38.2	28.1	48.3	37.4	29.2

Table - 12

Temporal and Regional Agricultural Wages of Mal  
Labourers and EGS Wages in Rural Maharashtra  
at 1970-71 Prices.

Rupees

Region	Y E A R					
	1981-82	1982-83	1983-84	1984-85	1985-86	1986-87
<u>Konkan</u>						
EGS	2.45	3.29	2.87	3.45	3.59	3.09
Agr.	2.59	3.05	3.24	3.39	n.a	n.a
<u>Khandesh</u>						
EGS	3.29	4.12	4.14	3.85	3.43	2.59
Agr.	2.14	2.63	7.78	2.99	n.a	n.a
<u>South Maharashtra</u>						
EGS	2.37	2.54	2.82	3.14	3.34	2.40
Agr.	2.10	2.54	2.44	2.62	n.a	n.a
<u>Marathwada</u>						
EGS	2.47	2.90	2.88	2.77	3.15	2.79
Agr.	2.45	2.92	2.86	3.15	n.a	n.a
<u>Vidharba</u>						
EGS	2.62	3.00	3.72	3.23	3.55	3.54
AGr.	2.27	2.59	2.66	2.70	naa.	n.a.
<u>Eastern</u>						
EGS	2.28	2.08	2.21	3.78	2.15	2.28
Agr.	1.78	2.14	2.01	2.31	n.a.	na.a.

Table - 13

Real Wages (at 1970-71 prices) paid under the EGS and  
Prevelent in Agriculture, 1975-76 to 1985-86,  
Rural Maharashtra

Year	Real Wages under EGS (Rs.) (for both sexes)	Real Agricultural Wages (Rs.)	
		Male	Female
1975-76	1.59	1.79	1.29
1976-77	1.75	2.16	1.42
1977-78	1.85	2.32	1.57
1978-79	2.19	2.47	1.69
1979-80	2.30	2.27	1.52
1980-81	2.56	2.34	1.59
1981-82	2.63	2.26	1.51
1982-83	3.27	2.66	1.78
1983-84	3.20	2.79	1.84
1984-85	3.06	2.87	1.88
1985-86	3.39	3.75	n.a.
1986-87	2.77	n.a.	n.a.
Growth Rate	7.30	5.03	3.47



Table - 14

Districts	Normal Rainfall (5.22) (4 columns in mm)	% of Agricul- tural labour- ers to total Agricultural workers.	Agricultu- ral Labourers	Region %
<u>Saurashtra &amp; Kutchh</u>				
Kutchh	350.6	39.88	73452	3.13
Surendranagar	507.0	41.54	82071	3.44
Jamnagar	497.2	22.97	52020	2.22
Amreli	545.5	31.56	71138	3.03
Bhavnagar	595.9	38.83	137739	5.86
Rajkot	621.2	27.57	91457	3.89
Junagadh	881.1	30.76	114197	4.86
			<u>621074</u>	<u>26.43</u>
<u>North Gujarat</u>				
Gandhinagar	N.A.	52.05	21012	0.89
Mehsana	613.1	40.16	183432	7.80
Sabarkantha	796.8	29.15	97100	4.13
Banaskantha	758.4	23.92	91798	3.92
Ahmedabad	789.0	53.41	145348	6.18
			<u>538690</u>	<u>22.92</u>
<u>South Gujarat &amp; Central Gujarat</u>				
Valsad	1891.6	39.98	153173	6.52
Surat	1100.5	53.79	265827	11.31
Bharuch	883.9	57.71	193013	8.21
Vadodara	1006.1	51.86	252235	10.73
Kheda	832.2	39.58	237118	10.09
			<u>1101366</u>	<u>46.86</u>
<u>Tribal Districts</u>				
Panchmahals	989.1	12.78	80969	3.45
Dangs	1808.0	22.11	8096	0.34
			<u>89065</u>	<u>3.79</u>
Gujarat			2350195	100.00

Table - 15

Distribution of Agricultural Labourers and Workers (C + Ag.L) across Sub-regions  
in Maharashtra; 1981

Regions	Local Name	Districts	Agril. labour- ers	Dist- ricts %	Region Total	Region percent- age	Agricultural Labourers % of C+Ag.L
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Coastal	Konkan	Thane	157908	2.58	292366	4.78	30.88
		Raigad	76917	1.26			21.17
		Ratanagri	57541	0.94			10.94
		Sindhudurg					
Inland Western	South Maharashtra	Ahmednagar	311420	5.09	1153559	18.85	37.07
		Pune	187026	3.06			27.79
		Satara	121924	1.99			25.62
		Sangli	126254	2.06			30.78
		Kolhapur	126655	2.07			21.09
		Solapur	280280	4.58			45.96
Inland Northern	Khondesh	Dhule	307941	5.03	1016840	16.62	52.25
		Nasik	307067	5.02			37.83
		Jalgaum	401832	6.57			54.53

Contd.

Table - 15 (contd.)

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Inland Central	Marathwada	Aurangabad	303848	4.96			40.18
		Jalna					
		Parbhani	304051	4.97	1343376	21.95	49.29
		Beed	177186	2.89			38.67
		Nanded	247820	4.05			47.05
		Osmanabad	310471	5.07			46.53
Inland Eastern	Vidhrba	Akola	366496	5.99			63.09
		Buldang	289144	4.72			51.35
		Wardha	180366	2.95	1831387	29.92	61.94
		Nagpur	2219227	3.63			55.29
		Yavatmal	413807	6.76			63.62
		Amaravati	359647	5.88			67.75
Eastern	East	Chandrapur	261950	4.28	482431	7.88	39.10
		Garchiroli					
		Bhandara	220481	3.60			36.99
Maharashtra				100.00	6119959	100.00	42.33

DATA ON WAGE RATESDATA WAGE RATE OF THE ADECT RATE AGRICULTURAL LABOURERS IN  
13 STATES OF INDIA, 1950-51 TO 1965-66 (COMPARABLE DISTRICTS

State	Wage Rates				
	Money Wage Rate (Rs.)		Rate of Wage (1950-51 Prices	Percentage 1950-51/ 1960-61	1950-51 1965-66
<u>GUJARAT</u>	1950-51	1.69	1.69		
	1955-56	1.46	1.53	-24.3	-27.8
	1960-61	1.50	1.28		
	1965-66	2.01	1.23		
<u>MAHARASHTRA</u>	1950-51	1.71	1.71		
	1955-56	1.85	1.42	-33.3	-18.1
	1960-61	1.41	1.14		
	1965-66	2.30	1.40		
<u>INDIA</u>	1950-51	1.60	1.60		
	1955-56	1.48	1.55	-18.8	-18.8
	1960-61	1.60	1.80		
	1965-66	2.27	1.38		

Source : Kothari N.N. (1976) : Movement of Wage Rates in  
India : 1950-51 to 1965-66. University of Bombay,  
Economic Services No. 26.

1. Kothari has analysed the movements of high rates in agriculture across the states in India in the early period of 1950s and 1960s.

2. The author accepts that the decline in real wage may not be as big as is seen due to increase in coverage of more outlying centres for wage reporting.

3. However the pattern observed either at all India level or in Gujarat and Maharashtra for the periods of 1950-51 to 1960-61 and 1950-51 to 1965-66 is one of decrease in real wage rates of agricultural labourers (table).

Manabandhu Chattopadhyaya traces the movement in agricultural wage rates for male agricultural labourers and the prices of paddy and wheat for different states during 1960-61 to 1974-75. The graphs depicting their movement for Gujarat, Maharashtra and Kerala are given here below to focus on the changes of the real wages rates for agricultural labourers in their states.

It is noteworthy that in spite of the significant increase in money wage rates over years, the real wage rates in Gujarat, Maharashtra, Kerala and some other states have decreased due to the more rapid increase of the prices of major wage levels. (Graphs) Better availability of essential items of controlled rates - can protect real wages.



AHMEDABAD  
MANAGEMENT  
ASSOCIATION

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Telegram: MANAGEMENT Telephone: 486158

27 August 1991

The Editor  
Economic Times  
Ahmedabad

Dear Sir:

We would be grateful if you could kindly include the following in the 'Today's Engagement Column' of your esteemed daily on 28 August 1991.

---

AHMEDABAD MANAGEMENT ASSOCIATION

Mr. N.J. Yasaswy, Director, Institute of Chartered Financial Analysts of India, Hyderabad to speak on "Current Economic Reform" at 6.30 p.m. at Gujarat Chamber of Commerce & Industry, Ashram Road.

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Thanks for your help.

Yours faithfully,

*K.K. Nair*

K.K. Nair  
Executive Secretary