

## INTRODUCTION

The present research work entitled "A STRATEGIC ROLE OF AGRICULTURE IN THE PROCESS OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT - A CASE STUDY OF CHANDGAD TALUKA IN KOLHAPUR DISTRICT OF MAHARASHTRA STATE (1951-52 to 1983-84)" which is neither at macro level nor at micro level but at the mid-way between the two i.e. at taluka level, was under taken with a view to ascertain the performance of the agricultural sector in terms of increases in production since the beginning of the planned economic development in an administrative unit known as taluka, where an agriculture need not be subject to frequent droughts due to the assured south-west monsoon. The researcher, as he comes from that particular taluka of Chandgad and the guide being familiar with the economic resources of the taluka, the present research was directed to achieving the objectives stated earlier : For the present research we have drawn heavily statistical data regarding agricultural production from CENSUS OF INDIA 1961, DISTRICT CENSUS HAND BOOK, KOLHAPUR compiled by the Maharashtra Census Office, Bombay and thereafter the Socio-Economic Reviews and District Statistical Abstracts of Kolhapur District from 1960-61 to 1983-84 published by the Department of Agriculture, the Government of Maharashtra.

This taluka for the present study was purposively selected because of favourable agro-climatic conditions for development of agriculture. The main crops grown in the taluka as far as the cereals are concerned are rice and nachani and the pulse crops grown during the rabbi season after the harvest of rice crop. The Chandgad was essentially monoculture which means that a very large proportion of the agricultural lands were primarily devoted to the cultivation of rice, but with the beginning of the planned economic development, a gradual transformation of the agriculture took place. The transformation was essentially a diversification of agricultural production. The irrigated crops, mainly sugar cane crop, (perennially irrigated) has cropped up. This was mainly on account of the development of irrigation and the policy thrust of utilising the water resources to the maximum extent possible. The establishment of cooperative sugar factory, besides induced the expansion of the sugar cane cultivation in the taluka. So one cannot at present regard the taluka where monoculture is prevalent because not only sugar cane has cropped up but other vegetable cash crops such as potatoes, sweet potatoes etc. are on the increase. Aggregating the area under commercial crops one may consider the taluka as being under the process of commercialisation of its farming activities.

The whole dissertation has been split up into several parts. In the first chapter, a review of the growth trends of principal crops at macro level has been taken. At the next stage we have made an attempt to analyse the changes in the land use pattern over the period under reference. In the third part we have worked out the annual compound growth rates of the agricultural cropped area, yield and output growth rates during short runs : (i) 1950 to 1966, (ii) 1966 to 1984 and (iii) the long run 1950 to 1984. Similarly we have worked out the annual compound growth rates relating to area, yield and production of the principal commercial crops like sugar cane and an equally important analysis regarding the behaviour of the major pulse crops tur and oil seed crops like groundnut grown under rainfed conditions, is carried out in the fourth part and finally we have summed up our analysis and suggestions that emerged from the analysis of the changes of the crops (individual crop area, output and yield) over the period.