CHAPTER - I
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I N T R O D U C T I O N

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1.1 Introduction :

India is an agricultural country. Agriculture forms the backbone of Indian economy. Despite the concerted industrialisation during the plan period, agriculture still occupies a pride place. Agriculture is the pivot of Indian economy. It is generally believed that economic development of a country is synonymous with its industrial development. Hence, agricultural development is generally relegated to the background and all possible importance is given to the development of industries. At the same time, it has to be remembered that backwardness of agriculture is itself the result of low economic development and low industrilisation of the country. Agriculture is the most important of all the sectors in our economy. The importance is due to following basic facts.

1.2 Significance of agriculture in Indian economy :

i) Agriculture and national income

It is the most important sector of Indian economy, countributing nearly half of the national income. In 1981-82 the total national income was Rs.220 billion and agriculture contributed to Rs.94.2 billion or 42.8 percent. It is true that with an acceleration of secondary and the tertiary sectors the share of agriculture has been declining. Such a decline in the percentage share of the income from agriculture indicates the degree of economic development of the country.

ii) Agriculture as a source of livelihood

According to the census of population 1981, 7 out of every 10 persons in India still depend on agriculture as the main source of livelihood. This proportion of 70 percent has remained constant ever since 1901 and is likely to remain so for at least a few more decades. This fact also reflects the importance of agriculture.

iii) Agriculture and pattern of employment

It is often suggested that the importance of a sector can be judged from the percentage of working population engaged in that sector. Seventy percent of the working people are engaged in agriculture.

iv) Importance of agriculture for industries

Agriculture has been the source of raw material to India's leading industries - cotton and jute textiles, sugar, tobacco, plantation industries - all these depend on agriculture directly. Besides many others, processing and preservation of fruits and vegetables, all milling, rice, husking and handloom weaving also draw on agriculture for their raw material.

v) Agriculture and state revenues

Agriculture also brings about an increase in the government's revenues both directly as well as indirectly.

vi) Agriculture provides a large proportion of India's traditional exports.

vii) Agriculture and the tertiary sector

Tertiary sector consists of trade, transport service etc. Agriculture is the main support for railways and road ways, which transport agriculture produce from farm to the mandies and factories.

viii) Agriculture also provides fodder for livestock and poultry. Cattle and buffaloes provide protective food in the form of milk.

Thus, in short, agriculture is the backbone of the Indian economy and the prosperity of agriculture is reflected in the prosperity of the economy as a whole.

1.3 Importance of bovine animals in Indian economy :

Bovine animals, play a very important part in Indian agriculture. "But unlike other countries of the world where cattle are maintained mainly for milk and meat, in India these are primarily kept as draught animals for the plough and the cart as the camel, the horse, the donkey, as mechanical vehicles are recently used. Without them no produce can be transported".[1]

The contribution of the cattle and buffalo to the national economy is indeed vast. They provide motive power for various agricultural operations and rural transportation. They provide essential food of animal origin like milk and meat and large quantities of livestock by-products such as hids, skin, blood, bones, guts, etc; organic manure is also provided by these

livestocks. For many years to come the bullock and he-buffaloes will continue to be the main stay of agricultural operations, particulary for the small and marginal cultivators. In future also, despite the impact of modernisation, a large proportion of motive power of rural transportation will be bullocks and he-buffaloes. Cows play a vital role in rural economy, because they provide milk and bullocks for various agricultural operations and transportation. Buffalo is a triple purpose animal. It provides milk and meat and is extensively used for work in certain part of the state country. In India, buffalo is the main dairy animal, contributing more than 55 percent of milk production, while in numbers this animal is only one third of the cattle.

1.4 The Region of study :

Kolhapur district forms a part of peninsular Maharashtra. It is one of the most urbanized and industrialised district in Maharashtra. Kolhapur district lies between 15° to 17° North latitude and between 73° to 74° East longitude. The area of the district is 8,047 sq.kms. In area it is one of the smallest districts and out of all the districts in the state ranks 22nd in size and is 6th or the smallest in Pune division. Its population, according to 1981 census is 2,506,330. There are twelve talukas in the district.

1.5 Agriculture in Kolhapur district :

Agriculture is the main source of livelihood of more than 70 percent of the population in Kolhapur district. It plays

a pivotal role in the economic development of the district. Apart from providing food to the people, it provides raw material for the industrial development. Paddy, jowar, bajari, ragi, sugarcane, groundnut, fodder and tobacco are the important crops of Kolhapur district. As regards sugarcane produce, it ranks 2nd in the state.

1.6 Bovine animals in Kolhapur district :

Bovine means 'oxlike' or 'cowlike' so the terms bovine animals includes cows, bullocks, and buffaloes (both he and she). But livestock is a broad concept than bovine animal. 'Livestock' includes 'bovine and ovine'.

Kolhapur district possesses nearly 3.38 percent of the total bovine animals in the Maharashtra state (according 1982 census).

According to the livestock census 1982, Kolhapur district had 960,798 heads of livestock. Of this, 677,404 are bovine animals (277,588 cattle and 399,816 buffaloes). Out of the total livestock population 70.71 percent are bovine and 29.29 percent are other animals. In the district, for every 100 persons, there are 27.03 bovine animals.

Cattle constitute the life and soul of agriculture of the district. They are intimately associated with farm community in the district. Cattle are used for several functions, such as, ploughing, horrowing, threshing, lifting water and transportation. The essential equipment of petty peasant properties consists of

a pair of bullocks or he-buffaloes for tilling the arable land,
lifting the water and pulling the cart. Generally, the cattle
are reared mainly for two purposes, one is the milk and another
is the motive power for various agricultural operations.

The rearing of cattle is carried on throughout the
district. But the distribution of cattle population and breeds
are not uniform. They vary from region to region. Some parts
of district have shown high concentration while some parts very
low concentration. The distribution of cattle population depends
upon the climatic conditions, fodder supply and human activity.

The principal breeds of cattle found in Kolhapur district
are Khillar, Krishna, Dangi and Jawari (Deshi).[2] The Khillar
breed are mostly located in Shirol taluka, because these breeds
are very useful for heavy work; Krishna Valley breed is found
on the banks of the Krishna river. The animals are of the heavy
draught type. Dangi breed is found in the heavy rainfall region,
because it is suitable for paddy cultivation.

The buffaloes thrived better than ordinary cattle in
district of heavy rainfall and in rice field. Male buffaloes
were extensively used both for tillage and transport. The
principal breeds of buffaloes found in Kolhapur district are
Pandharpuri and local.

R E F E R E N C E S

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