

CHAPTER - II

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY AND METHODOLOGY

CHAPTER - II

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY AND METHODOLOGY

Agriculture undoubtedly plays a very important role in the economy of India. The need to produce higher output in the agricultural sector is obvious and is growing substantially; particularly due to the inexorable increase in the size of the population, as also the improvement in the living standards of the people.

Unfortunately, land in India has been exploited mercilessly over decades and the quality of soils and the environment has deteriorated beyond recognition. The agricultural sector continues to play an important role in India. The traditional agriculture is predominant even now. But the traditional agricultural practices are mainly subsistence - oriented in nature. The farmers must produce more, but in the process must take due care of the environment.

The need to take care of the natural environment and to produce more appear, on the face of it, quite contradictory. However, the spread of horticultural practices can come to the aid of the economy, where the conditions of the rural populace can be improved. More employment opportunities can be generated. Sangola taluka of the Solapur District in Maharashtra is a typical backward agricultural area with the added problem of paucity of water for irrigation purposes.

The farmers in this taluka did not lose heart, but began an experiment, by taking to horticulture, mainly to the production of Pomegranate, Ber and Grapes. This study is aimed at examining the progress of horticulture in Sangola taluka. How far has this practice, if at all, been responsible for bringing about a change in the attitudes, the economic conditions of farmers, in farming practices, socio-economic conditions and attitudes of farmers in Sangola taluka ? are some of the questions sought to be answered by this study.

The present study falls into three components i.e. the present socio-economic conditions of drought prone Sangola taluka, need of development of horticulture sector and impact of that sector on socio-eco condition of people of Sangola taluka. This taluka consists of 87 villages with the total population of 1,82,063 and 31,608 households. Of the total households, 325 are fruit growing farmers. For ascertaining the present socio-eco conditions of the people of Sangola, the necessary information was collected from the concerned Block Authorities of the taluka Tahsil Office, District Census hand-book and Gazetteers of Solapur district.

For the evaluation of the development of horticultural sector in the taluka, the necessary information was collected from Block Development Officer (B.D.O.), Branch Managers of all concerned Banks, Agricultural Produce Market Committee, Sangola and Pandhari Prasad Fal Utpadak Co-op. Sangh in Sangola.

The information collected, covers the entire period since the beginning of the horticulture era in the taluka.

Horticulture can be defined as 'the cultivation of fruits, vegetables and ornamental plants.' It is a general definition of horticulture. But in Sangola taluka horticulture covers only fruit crops. Therefore, the present study takes into account the development of a few fruit crops i.e. Grape, Ber (Jujube) and Pomegranate.

To assess the impact of development of horticulture on living conditions of fruit growers, a special field survey of 50 fruit growing farmers was conducted during 1988. These 50 farmers were spread in 37 villages. Thus the sample survey covers 15 percent of the total fruit grower farmers. The sample was selected on the basis of random sampling methods.

The study was conducted with the help of a comprehensive questionnaire. The data was collected personally through visits to the farmers concerned. Personal interviews and discussions were carried out with the orchard farmers. The extensive discussions provided valuable insights into the adoption of and impact of development of horticultural sector in the taluka. The field survey was under-taken during January, 1988.