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Jath Taluka is located on the eastern and southern parts of Karnataka state. Bijapur and Belgaum Districts are the nearest districts of the Jath Taluka from Karnataka State. Kavathemahankal Taluka is situated on the western side of Jath Taluka and Solapur District on north.

POPULATION

According to 1981 census report, Jath Taluka had a total population of 1,92,956 with Males totalling 98,319 and 94,637 Females.

A large proportion of the working population in the Jath Taluka is engaged in Agricultural activities, viz. 36,063 persons are agriculturalists and 32,815 persons are agricultural labourers; 800 balutedars and 415 artisans.

The 1981 census also indicates that there are 53,189 educated persons with 9,500 being graduates, in the Jath Taluka, with the remaining classified as 'uneducated'.

The life styles and practices particularly the economic activities, depend largely upon the natural and climatic conditions of the region. Infact, such factors condition the socio-economic and cultural life of the region. Climatically the region experiences hot and dry conditions with very meagre

average rainfall of 38 cm per annum. There is only one major river, 'Bor River' in the east, with a number of big streams like Korada, Sawal and Gandhrav. The Jath Taluka is also interspersed with a number of hills and forts like Aduva-Donagar, Shri. Arubabai Dongar, Rampur Killa, and Sinalle Hills.

Besides the natural and climatic conditions affecting the socio economic and cultural life styles of a people in a region, an important "modern" facility that can make an important contribution to services industry in the form of transport and communication, Jath Taluka doesnot have a well developed, fully dependable road structure. Infact, the state Highway traverses 48.4 Km through the taluka on, the Guhagar, Chiplun, Karad, Jath, Bijapur, Shretch and 29 Km on the Ahmednagar, Karmala, Pandharpur, Bijapur Shretch.

There is however, a fairly reliable district road system, with different types of road surfaces, permanent road account for about seasonal rought road too, accounting for 444 Km and connecting roads to the villages, further 805 Km, there is very little railway service in the region. The railway can boast a narrowguage service from Miraj to Latur, a distance of only 14 Km and encompasses, in the process Jath road and Gulwandi, railway stations.

The Jath Taluka comprises of 2,25,828 hectares of land. There are 11,780 acres of forest area. Further 90,639 hectares comprise wasteland where attempts are being made to plant grass, on the rest of land a number of crops both cash mainly seasonal and food are being grown. Such important crops include, grapes, bananas, gawar, cotton, coconuts, lemons, mangoes, pomegranates, geavas, jowar, tumeric, sugar-cane, bettle leaves etc. Other food requirements of taluka are broght in from outside. This is particularly so incase of rice, wheat, chillies, grains, groundnuts etc. The production of the cash as well as food crops in the taluka is unevenly distributed over the region e.g. coconuts are grown mainly in Jath town whereas, bananas are grown in Jath, Dafalapur, Bilur Gugawadi, Utagi, Baj, Belunki, Ko-Bobatad, Dhawadwadi, Basarggi, Madagyal, Shegaon.

Since the rainfall in the taluka is fairly meagre and since there is a very small, both absolutely and relatively, forest area, the land tends to become infertile. Even then, efforts to produce some crops with the help of monsoon rains and irrigation facilities are made. The major source of irrigation water is wells. There are inall 8,458 wells in the taluka, of which 72.28 (85 per cent) are useable. Further, there are 105 percolation tanks, 14 irrigation tanks and 3 minor irrigation projects. The total land area being irrigated by wells is 14,771 hectres, and other sources 8,502 hectares.

Most of the cash crops are cultivated in orchards and are being irrigated. Infact lemon cultivation alone accounts for 8,560 hectares of such orchards. Water is supplied to sixteen villages under water supply scheme facility and other villages receive water through village wells and bore-wells, most of these work is done through Gram Panchayats. In all 112 villages have gram panchayats.

The Jath Taluka consists mainly of small towns and villages. The total number of independent villages, towns, and localities is 118. There is only one town with a population of above 15,000 and above, and there are four villages having a population of above 5,000 each, Fifty Four villages have a population of upto 3,000 each and 38 villages have a population of 1,000 each. Twenty one hamlets and villages have a population of upto 1,000 each.

✓ Agriculture and allied activities constitute the main source of livelihood for the population of Jath Taluka. Dairy activity supplements the agricultural incomes as do making of ropes, articles of leather, Oil ghanis, handloom, and woolen products. The Wollen products are an outcome of a very large sheep population in the region. Besides these there are popultry and fishing activities which augment villager's incomes. Carpentry, black smithery pottery and making of cane furniture constitute the small scale industrial sector in the region.

As can be expected the taluka boasts a fairly large bovine population (which includes goats and sheep). There are 34,076 cows, 13,303 buffaloes, 26,562 bullocks, 4,164 bulls, 57,766 goats and 77,578 sheep in the taluka. Infact the cows, bullocks are of hybreed type, both of usual and Pandharpur types. This taluka is very famous for its Khillar bullocks and cows, The products of the agricultural sector (as far as possible) and the small and village industrial sectors find an outlet at the weekly bazars that take place at sixteen villages and in Jath town.

✓ Banking facilities to the taluka are provided mainly by the co-operative sector as well as the State Bank of India. The taluka is also served by a number of Co-operative Societies. There is a marketing society and fifty eight primary agricultural Credit Societies. Six Urban Credit Co-operative Societies, Two Urban Servant's Credit Societies, Four Industrial Co-operative, Four Industrial Co-operative Societies, Ten Water Supply Co-operative Societies, Sixty Milk Producers' Societies. Two Fishery Business Societies and Six poultry farming Societies. The taluka is also served with mainly wide spread primary education system though it does have other forms of schools and other facilities.

As for as the government development programmes are concerned, there are I.R.D.P. D.P.A.P. S.L.P.P. and Benar Schemes.

Although these schemes have had a beneficial effect on the rural economy of the Jath Taluka, the problems encountered is that it cannot wholly serviced by the governmental agencies alone. A trend which has been prevalent in Maharashtra and which has brought fair amount of success there, that of producing more and more cash crops appears to have percolated to Jath Taluka too.

In view of meagre rainfall and excessive dependence on good monsoons, and limited availability of irrigation facilities, the farming community appears to have opted for possibly best resource use. Infact some research has shown that per hectare production of grapes in India is much higher than in many leading grape producing communities in the world.¹ Further Maharashtra is a leading grape growing state where the production of grapes has more than doubled in the last twenty five years or so.² The pull of grape cultivation also emanates from the fact that it is considered to be one of the most remunerative farming enterprises of present times.³

NEED AND OBJECTIVES :

The national goal since independence has been to usher in a human socialist order. This implies a more equitable distribution of income and betterment of the lives of the poorer sections of the Indian population, since most of Indians lives

in the villages. This would imply an effort to uplift the rural poor. This can be done by denting the all prevasive problem of rural un employment. Grape cultivation can create employment opportunity as the use of proper and scientific cultivation methods involve labour intensive practices. Besides these, an indirect effect is to create need for other goods and services, there by creating further employment opportunities.

✓Farmers have taken to grape farming in the Jath Taluka and this study seeks to examine the types of grapes grown, methods of cultivation used, the cost of cultivation and the monetary reward of this venture. The study will further examine whether the grape cultivation venture could be extended beyond the confines of those places in the taluka where it is already being practiced.

In the past, experience has indicated that grape cultivation can be a lucrative proposition, particularly when vine yards have been well maintained. Such experiences have been reported in Maharashtra, Karnataka, and Andhra Pradesh. There appears to be a growing realisation amongst many of the vast potentialities of grapes emerging as one of the leading exportable fruits in the near future.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY AND LIMITATIONS :

Jath Taluka is in Sangli District and is recognised as a drought prone area. Grape cultivation comprises an important agriculture activity in the region.

Grape cultivation and culture need initial high investment. The expenditure on grape culture include both capital and non capital costs. Capital expenditure includes pre cultivation expenses of levelling the land digging of trendies, preparation for purchase of nurseries, purchase of iron bars, angles, sand pillars, wiring and pulling of wiring, purchases of instruments etc. Non capital expenditure, includes that on purchase of inputs like fertilisers fungicides etc. cutting, primary and marketing expenses.

A preliminary informal survey was made of all the grape growing areas in Jath Talukas, and the number of grape growing farmers in the area was determined. An initial discussion on grape cultivation and related problems and prospects was undertaken with some of the farmers. There are 449 grape producing farmers in the region, spread over eight places, out of these, 50 farmers constituting 10 per cent of the population were chosen at random. Infact, farmers chosen have been cultivating grapes in the region for between one year and ten years. A questionnaire was prepared and given to the sample farmers. The data so collected was collected and analysed. Some secondary data by way of publications

and literature has been used.

The study however, suffers from a limitation that of possible improper inadequate data supplied. Since farmers by nature are wary of revealing information to others, the veracity of their statements could not be counter checked.