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CHAPTER ONE: RESEARCH FRAMEWORK

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## 1.1 OBJECTIVES

The contribution of the agricultural sector to national income, foreign exchange, industry and employment is a measure of the sector's importance in the overall economy of the country. The most important factor affecting Indian agriculture, both in terms of production and productivity, is the size of the holding or the operational unit of cultivation. It is believed that none of the problems of inadequate or disproportionate equipment, of backward technique and efficiency, of underdevelopment and wasted labour, of poverty and exploitation can be solved as long as size of holding is neglected. Size of holding plays an important role in the development of agriculture. A viable size of farm gives the farmer an adequate margin over subsistence so that he may be able to invest in the farm for better prospects.

In order to know well the existing position of the structure of Indian agriculture, in the post-Independence period, the Government of India has undertaken sample surveys as well as comprehensive census of the farm lands. The endeavours began with the Agricultural labour Enquiry Committee Report-1954, 8th Round of the National Sample Survey (NSS) carried out in 1953-54, followed later on by

16th and 17th Rounds of the NSS in 1960-61 and 1961-62 respectively. A decade later a new chapter in this context was opened with the initiation of the Agricultural census; the first one was based on 1970-71 situation. Subsequently, census data was made available for the year 1976-77 and the latest one for the year 1980-81. These investigations have unearthed a wealth of information on land size, agrarian relations, land utilisation, land under irrigation, and so on.

Given this plethora of data at different points of time, it is worthwhile to put all that in juxtaposition so as to observe the trends in the post-independence period. Each of the aspects can be so isolated and examined in as many details as possible. Size of land holding is one feature which very often calls for attention of all the policy makers. The present study has picked it up for understanding the trend at the all-India level as also at the state level. There is a specific reason for this. With the beginning of the planning era in the country, land reforms programme was pressed in to bring about institutional reforms as a prelude to greater agricultural production and productivity. The thrust of the programme was on conferring land ownership on the actual tiller of the soil side by side creating viable size of the holding. Bhoodan Movement of Acharya Vinoba Bhave which followed shortly, also had

some impact in this direction. In the mid-sixties, the green revolution also did affect agrarian relations and size-productivity correlation.

In view of all these developments, trends manifest in changes in the size of land holdings need to be studied. This study, therefore, intends -

- (1) to examine the relationship between size of operational holding and productivity;
- (2) to discuss the major programmes that have influenced the size of operational holding;
- (3) to review the estimated number of operational holdings and Area operated by Size Class of operational holding at All India level during different periods;
- (4) to bring about state-wise Number of operational holding and area operated by major size groups under different periods;
- (5) to examine the all-India average size of operational holding by size class in different periods and
- (6) to study the state-wise average size of operational holdings by major size groups in different periods.

## 1.2 METHODOLOGY

Entire work is based on the secondary data collected from different official documents. Details are gleaned from various official publications. Particularly the following ones:

- (1) Agricultural labour Enquiry Committee Report-1954.
- (2) National Sample Survey, 8th Round Agricultural Year 1953-54.
- (3) National Sample Survey, 16th Round Agricultural Year 1960-61.
- (4) National Sample Survey, 17th Round Agricultural Year 1961-62.
- (5) Agricultural Census for the year 1970-71.
- (6) Agricultural Census for the year 1976-77.
- (7) Agricultural Census for the year 1980-81.

The information thus procured is knit together to bring out fully well the size of holding in Indian agriculture since 1950. Its final outcome is analysed at the end of this work. The data from these reports is put side by side to enable an analysis of changes that have taken place from time to time and thereby establish the trend over a period of nearly two decades during the planning era of the country. The issue is studied separately at the all-India level and at the state level.

### 1.3 PLAN OF THE STUDY

This study runs over six chapters. First chapter is in the nature of frame work of the study. It covers the objectives, and methodology of the study.

Chapter two is devoted for initially for the conceptual connotations of the terms, size of holding, ownership holding, operational holding, family holding, economic holding, basic holding and optimum holding. It, therefore, consolidates the expert opinions on the relationship between size of holding and productivity on the sides of both inverse and positive relationship.

Chapter three outlines the major policies and programmes in India during the planning era affecting the size of holding. The reference is to the land reforms programme, the Bhoodan Movement and the New Agricultural Strategy set in from the mid-sixties.

Fourth chapter is a statistical account of the size of operational holding during different times at all-India level. As mentioned earlier, the data pertains to the years 1950-51, 1953-54, 1960-61, 1961-62, 1970-71, 1976-77 and 1980-81. It is presented in juxtaposition with reference to the number of operational holdings and area according to the various size-classes. All-India trend is brought out.

Fifth chapter is a micro-study of the all-India position since it takes state-wise position into account for the corresponding years. Trends in different states on number and area of the holdings sizewise are noted. In

addition, inter-state comparison is made in respect of the number of holdings, area and average size of the holding.

Last chapter presents the statistical details in a nutshell and covers the entire gamut of the reference years to present at a glance the trends that have set in as regards the size of land holding in India.