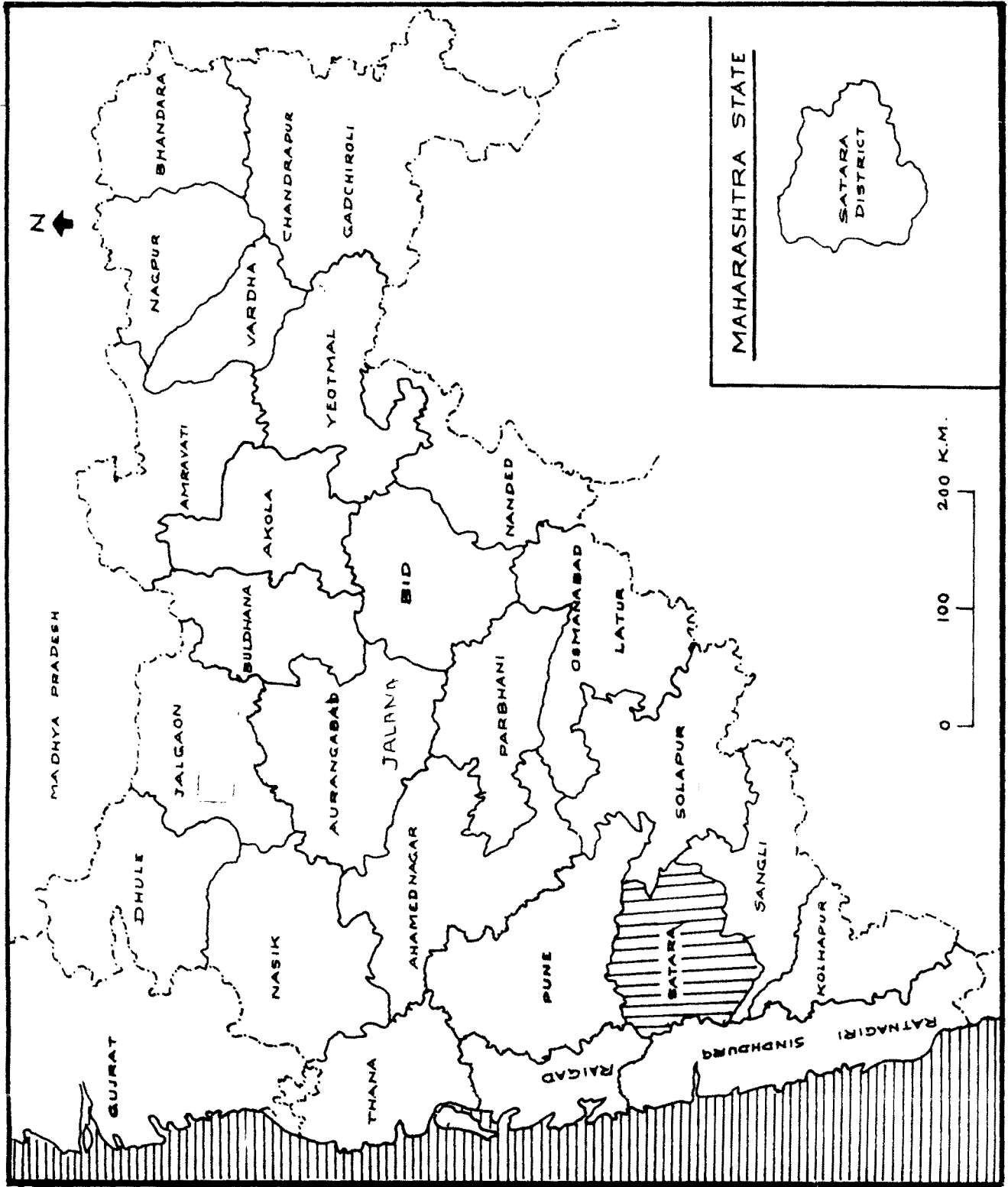
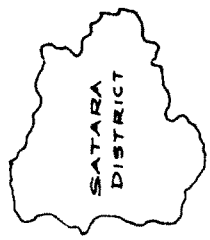


CHAPTER - 2

PHALTAN TALUKA AND PHALTAN MARKET



MAHARASHTRA STATE



0 100 200 K.M.

(1) LOCATION :

Phaltan taluka is in Satara District of Maharashtra State. Phaltan town lies on latitude  $17^{\circ}-58'$  and longitude  $74^{\circ}-26'$ . It occupies an area of 450 square miles within Satara district. There are several hills and hillforts, district rivers and drainage areas in the district. River Nira in the entire northern belt, Man in the South-east and Yerela and Krishna in the South enrich the soils of the district. River Nira separates Satara district from Poona district; rising from the ranges of the Sahyadri it runs through Bhor, Wai, Khandala, Phaltan, Malshiras and ultimately falls into river Bhima about five miles east of Tambave in the extreme north of Malshiras. The area covered by the course of River Nira is known as Nira Valley. The river has acquired great economic significance on account of Bhatghar and Veer dams both of which support an extensive network of canals for irrigation. Nira Right Bank Canal (NRBC) touches the northern border of Phaltan town. Western side of the town is served by the water flow of the Banganga river.

(2) PHYSICAL FEATURES :

Phaltan is dry area as it comes under the rainshadow of South-west monsoon; the winds coming from South-west give very little precipitation during the monsoon period. The

area receives about 35 to 40 cms. of rain every year involving larger degree of fluctuations over the year and thus making it drought. Its dry and hot weather suits cotton cultivation to a great extent. The soil is rich in its clay content. Medium soil is found in the north part of the Phaltan taluka along side of the River Nira.

(3) IRRIGATION :

Irrigation assumes special importance in Phaltan taluka. It has changed the agricultural pattern of the area nearby canal, wells, tanks etc. The area under different water facilities in 1981-82 was as follows -

Canal irrigation area	..	16,756 hectares.
Well water supply	..	16,563 hectares.

The main source of water supply for agriculture are the River Banganga and Nira Right Bank Canal. There were 554 oil-engines and 11,042 electric pumping sets operating in Phaltan taluka in 1981-82.

(4) CROPPING PATTERN :

Nearly 80 percent of cultivated area in the taluka is devoted to the growing of food crops. Of course, most of the area is occupied by the cereals (75 percent), pulses covering rather a marginal area (5 percent). Hybrid Jawar, maize and

rice are important food crops grown in the taluka. Hybrid jawar is grown in kharif as well as rabi seasons. Among the non-food crops sugarcane, cotton and oilseeds have an important place in the region and the area of cultivated land under them in the taluka is between 3 to 8 percent. As regards cotton cultivation out of a total of 94,086 Hectares of cultivated land in the taluka in 1981-82, 4,083 Hectares (4.3%) were covered by cotton crop. This area grows H4, Varlaxmi, Laxmi, Savitri and Nimbkar types of cotton and the quality of the produce is supposed to be superior to that of the Vidarbha region.

(5) TRANSPORTATION

The town is well connected by motorable roads with important places like Baramati, Nira, Pandharpur, Pune, Lonand, Walchandnagar, Satara etc. Lonand is the nearest railway station for it, at a distance of 26 kilometers.

(6) PROCESSING ACTIVITY

In Phaltan area processing of agricultural produce is undertaken in respect of sugarcane and cotton crops. There are two sugar factories in Phaltan taluka viz. Shriram Sahakari Sakhar Karkhana Ltd. at Phaltan in co-operative sector and the Phaltan Sugar Works Ltd., Sakharwadi in private sector.

Regarding cotton processing, there are seven ginning factories out of which four are in Phaltan town and remaining

three in taluka.

Besides the processing of sugarcane and cotton, which is on the large scale, in the villages of the taluka small activities of groundnut oil extraction also takes place. The produce goes mostly into local consumption.

#### (7) CREDIT INSTITUTIONS

In all seven commercial and co-operative banks have been serving the credit needs of the people in Phaltan taluka.

The banks are :

1. State Bank of India,
2. Bank of India,
3. Central Bank of India,
4. The United Western Bank Ltd.,
5. The Sangli Bank Ltd.,
6. Satara District Central Co-operative Bank,
7. Urban Co-operative Bank Ltd.

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All these banks together have a network of branches in the taluka as in 1981-82 fairly distributed all over the taluka, though a large concentration of the bank offices is obviously seen in Phaltan town.

#### (8) CO-OPERATIVE MARKETING

For the benefit of the cultivators in the taluka, Co-operative marketing societies have been established. The

Phaltan Cotton Sale, Ginning and Processing Society Ltd. was established in 1960 for undertaking business of cotton in open market. This society gave all sorts of help to cotton growers from the stage of production to marketing of cotton. Vidni Multi-purpose Co-operative Society was established in 1956 as a multipurpose society for upliftment of the cultivator member. The Co-operative Sale Purchase Union, established in 1949 presently acts as a sub-agent of the Maharashtra Co-operative Marketing Monopoly Purchase Scheme of Cotton.

(9) SEED FARM

The Phaltan taluka has privilege of having a well reputed institute for doing research in the field of crop-cultivation and development of improved seeds. The Nimbkar Agricultural Research Institute, located at Phaltan, is privately owned research farm and has gained good reputation all over Maharashtra on account of the improved varieties of seeds. It has been supplying throughout Maharashtra. Nimbkar Seeds has become a widely known name amongst the agriculturists.

(10) DEVELOPMENT OF COTTON GROWING IN PHALTAN TALUKA

Till early 1950s, this taluka was one of the major cane growing talukas in the State. The Phaltan Sugar Works and the Shriram Sugar Factory are located in this taluka. As a result cultivator's interest in growing sugarcane was maintained. However, since the mid-fifties, cultivators

gradually shifted over to cotton growing in place of sugarcane, and the shift was marked. It was really a case of one high value crop being substituted for another high value crop. That was the time when no price protection was available to either of the crops. Certain agro-economic factors seem to be responsible for the observed type of substitution. A brief account of the same would be enlightening.

1. Sugarcane production requires more period as compared to that of cotton. Generally, it requires fifteen to eighteen months to get it matured whereas within the same period cultivators can grow one crop of cotton and two crops of wheat.

2. Cultivators can get quick payments and meet day to day transactions from cotton. But from sugarcane, they get sale proceeds in three or four instalments within one financial year i.e. advance payment, at the time of harvest Rs.40, Rs.15, Rs.5 etc. per ton at the interval of four months. That is why they cannot utilise full amount for their needy and big transactions.

3. Both being cash crops sugarcane requires more cost of production than that of cotton. As sugarcane requires more labour, irrigation, mineral nutrition than that of cotton, average farmers prefer cotton production.

4. In the same soil sugarcane absorbs more water as well as nutrients as a result of which continuous supply of



water and minerals is needed. Three or four times irrigation is sufficient for the growth of cotton. The cultivators are benefited by cotton crops in this way.

5. Cotton crop is useful for rotation also. Sugarcane is a crop which exhausts soil. Sugarcane production cannot be repeated year after year in the same field hence it is to be followed by cotton growth.

6. The cotton crop increases the organic matter-contents of the soil. So it is used as cash crop as well as for rotation with the other crops. So this crop has vital importance as a complementary crop.

7. As compared with the sugarcane, cotton crops loose soil particles due to rotation system. Sugarcane is always followed by cotton in these areas due to same.

From the above reasons this does not mean that people have completely turned from sugarcane to cotton. Because of canal tract, the percentage of cotton crop has been increased and also it is so in the remaining parts by other means.

According to Shri Vydkar G.K. "this area is suitable for long staple cotton production because favourable weather and season for growth of crop picking becomes complete by the end of September. The picking follows at an intervals of

ten to fifteen days on account of low rainfalls (20 to 25 cms.) between April to September cotton crop escapes from insects and pests."

Till 1954-55, Phaltan taluka growing Kambodia and Jarila varieties of cotton. In 1954-55, the area under Kambodia and Jarila crops was 179 acres and 430 acres respectively. In 1957-58 a new variety, namely 170-CO2, was introduced in the taluka on a government level. All these varieties required production period from April to November every year. As a result, it was not convenient for the cultivators to go in for rabi jawar in the same field. Hence, the cultivators were in search of short duration cotton variety to suit their requirement. Some progressive cultivators were already on a look-out for an early maturing variety. As an outcome of their efforts, a progressive cultivator by name Shri Shrikhande Sadashiv Ramchandra brought in Gadag Laxmi variety of cotton. He decided to experiment with this variety in his own field. With all his painstaking efforts, experimentation and practical wisdom, he could raise eight quintals of cotton per acre. The length of the staple was also more by an inch as compared to the varieties grown in the taluka. Obviously, this specie became very much popular with the cultivators, so that the cultivation of the traditional varieties was totally discarded. The state government authorities also accorded their sanction to this changeover. Consequently, the 610 acres in 1954-55 to 3,041 acres in 1955-56, registering almost a five-fold increase.

Phaltan taluka was found to be quite suitable to the growing of Deviraj and Laxmi varieties of cotton and these species became a speciality of Phaltan taluka.

In 1963-64 Mr.Nimbkar, B.V. had brought some American varieties crossed naturally as well as artificially and were found to be superior to Gadag and other local varieties. These varieties deteriorated due to fluctuating temperature and climate conditions.

From 1972-73 some varieties were popular such as R.H.R., Varlaxmi, H-4 etc. But from 1977-78 onwards all varieties are deteriorating. Irrespective of any variety, soil fertility, weather condition, temperature, irregular rain etc. such factors became dominated leading to lowest product. Once upon a time there were people producing cotton 16 to 18 quintals per acre and now it has decreased upto 2 to 3 quintals. It indicates the course of yield has been totally reversed. The people in this area have come to conclusion that it is better to stop cotton production as a cash crop. Since last two-three years the government policy prevails that the enhanced rates for cultivators of cotton, which is a sort of incentives to the cultivators in this area hence the people will again by and large induce to increase the cotton area.

This change on the production front of cotton lead to rapid increase in the market arrivals of cotton in Phaltan

market. The earlier practice with many cultivators was to take their produce of cotton to Baramati market, about 17 kms. from Phaltan town, as it used to get huge quantity for marketing, so that the cultivators were hopeful of getting a better price therein. The Agricultural Produce Market Committee, Phaltan also regulated cotton marketing since 1957-58. This provided an incentive to the cultivators to transport their cotton for marketing in Phaltan market rather than Baramati market. Thus, by the fag-end of 1950s, Phaltan emerged as an important market of cotton in western Maharashtra.

The development in cotton marketing in Phaltan lead further to the setting up of cotton processing activity, particularly ginning of cotton. The Phaltan Sale, Ginning and Pressing Co-operative Society Ltd. was established in 1960 for the purpose of trade and processing of cotton. In 1963-64 ginning activities were started with 16 single roller gins and by 1968-69, the ginning activity picked up very sharply. Table-2 will indicate the progress in the ginning activity as depicted by installation of single and double rollers in Phaltan.

Between 1963-64 and 1981-82, the number of single roller gins increased by about 7.5 times. It seems that the ginning factories in this area are not favouring the use of double roller gins. They experimented with this type during a short span of 6 years from 1968-69 to 1973-74, with only 8 roller gins. The reason for this is that double roller gins are not properly working in this atmosphere and hence displaced, actually from the beginning they were in idle condition.

Table - 2

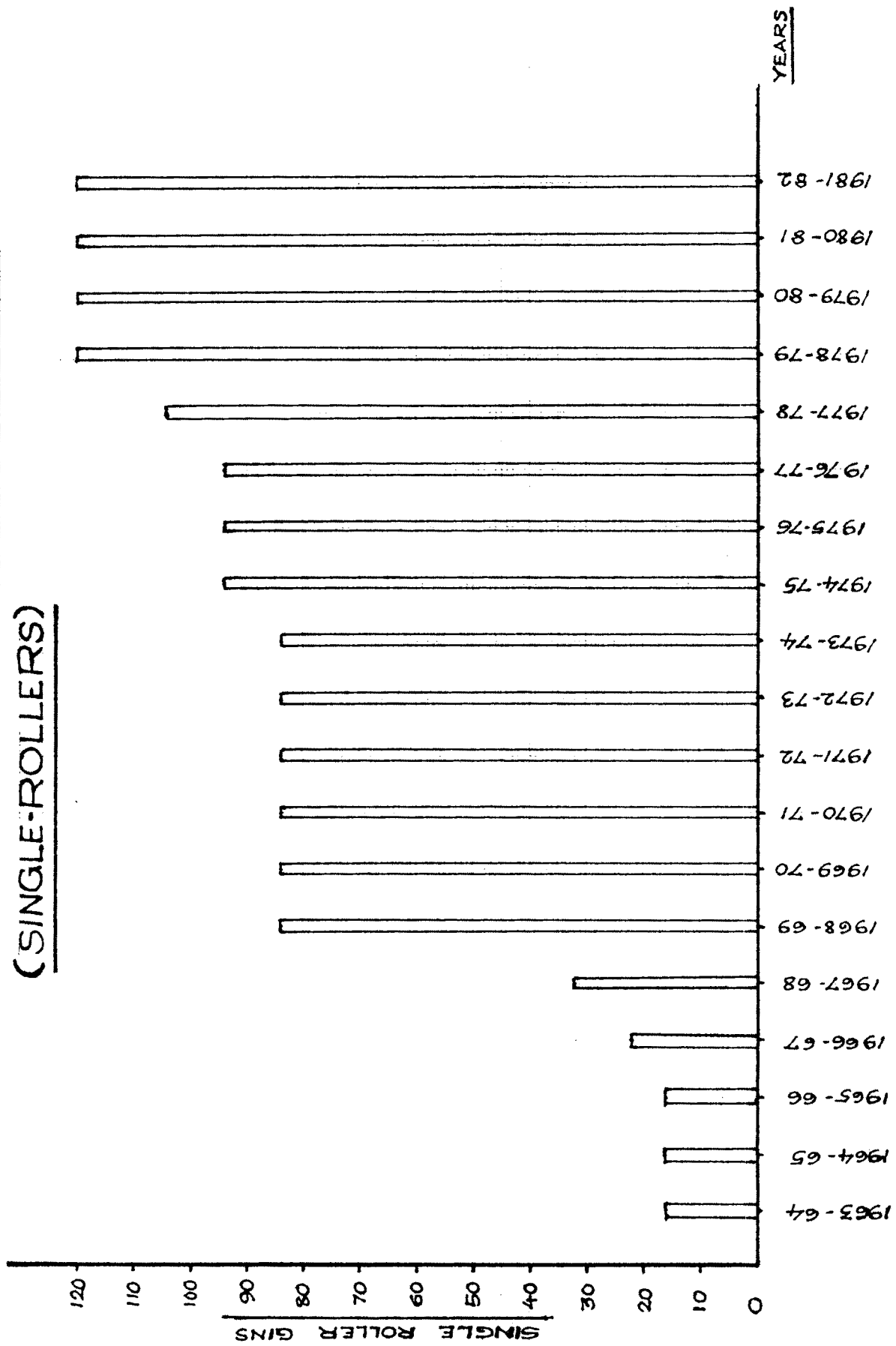
## Progress of roller gins in Phaltan town

Years	Number of Roller gins	
	Single Rollers	Double Rollers
1963-64	16	-
1964-65	16	-
1965-66	16	-
1966-67	22	-
1967-68	32	-
1968-69	84	8
1969-70	84	8
1970-71	84	8
1971-72	84	8
1972-73	84	8
1973-74	84	8
1974-75	94	-
1975-76	94	-
1976-77	94	-
1977-78	104	-
1978-79	120	-
1979-80	120	-
1980-81	120	-
1981-82	120	-

Source: Office-records of the ginning factories in Phaltan.

PROGRESS OF ROLLER GINS IN PHALTAN

(SINGLE-ROLLERS)



(11) PHALTAN TOWN AS A MARKETING CENTRE

Though cotton, wheat and cattle are the commodities traded largely in Phaltan market, it is much known for cotton marketing. Cotton produced in this area is strong and of long-staple and hence is considered to be of good quality. On account of the adoption of the scheme of monopoly purchase of cotton by the state government, the entire market arrivals of cotton are purchased by the Government.

Regulations of agricultural marketing was initiated on December 15, 1952 jointly for Phaltan and Khandala talukas, under the authority of the Agricultural Produce Committee, Phaltan. Later on Khandala taluka was disconnected from the authority of the Phaltan market committee and a separate market committee for Khandala taluka began functioning from May 29, 1969. The Phaltan Market Committee has regulated business in cotton, among other agricultural commodities, right from the beginning.

Table-1 gives details of market arrivals of important commodities in Phaltan Market during the 1970s.

Table-1 very glaringly depicts the predominance of cotton arrivals in the Phaltan market, as against the arrivals of major food crops.

Table - 1

Arrivals of important commodities in Phaltan Market  
(1971-72 to 1980-81)  
(Quantity in quintals)

Years	Cotton	Wheat	Jawar	Khapali	Gram
1971-72	60,778	20,950	1,786	27,913	2,066
1972-73	14,774	8,110	1,946	4,772	1,197
1973-74	84,110	8,216	16,582	8,652	2,197
1974-75	14,254	16,441	10,156	15,255	1,993
1975-76	1,05,699	24,750	12,757	12,415	1,915
1976-77	1,13,695	18,751	14,087	7,566	1,025
1977-78	1,16,540	16,838	29,080	7,352	638
1978-79	86,121	17,886	27,391	12,297	774
1979-80	70,302	12,313	18,934	14,059	1,434
1980-81	33,721	9,732	15,214	10,050	2,134
<b>Total:</b>	<b>7,04,994</b>	<b>1,53,987</b>	<b>1,47,933</b>	<b>1,20,331</b>	<b>15,373</b>

Source: Agricultural Produce Market Committee, Phaltan Annual Reports.

The Agricultural Produce Market Committee, Phaltan has, over last thirty years, attempted to develop infrastructural facilities in the Phaltan Market Yard. So far it has provided barbed wire fencing to the yard, office building, staff quarters, Shetkariniwas, canteen, godowns, bank office, water supply, electricity supply roads, street lights, trees by roadside, super market for consumers and publicity and propaganda devices.



In near future the Agricultural Produce Market Committee contemplates to provide auction platforms, additional roads, sanitary blocks, rest house, cattle sheds and compound wall in place of barbed wire fencing. Considering all this, the Agricultural Produce Market Committee has provided a good market infrastructure which will be beneficial to sellers and buyers. The Market Committee is preparing for the setting up of sub market yards at Barad and Taradgaon in due course.

Traders from many places purchase agricultural commodities in Phaltan market. Jawar is exported to Kolhapur, Wai, Mahabaleshwar, Satara etc. Traders from Karnataka and Baramati purchase wheat. Gur is sent to Bombay, Pen and Panvel. Cattle trade is mainly for local and Poona region. Cotton seed is transported to Vidarbha and Gujrat regions through Commission Agents of Baramati. Before monopoly scheme, cotton was sent to Gujrat State, Solapur, Belgaum, Coimbatore etc.

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