

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM :

It needs no emphasise the importance of agriculture in Indian economy. Agricultural base for overall advancement and it is a backbone of our economy. It has provided a framework in which majority of our population has adjusted its livelihood. The huge concentration of population in villages confirms the deep rooted relation between land and people.

Since time unknown agricultural practices are being performed but since independence planned efforts are being done to improve it. However, the pressure of population on land is increasing very fastly but scope for areal extent of agricultural land is limited. Hence, the only solution to feed the growing population is to intensify the agricultural by adopting modern technology thereby increasing the agricultural productivity of every piece of land. In this regards a rational assessment of agricultural aspects such as landuse, cropping pattern, crop productivity become important. By this way 'weaker areas' can be delimited as a priority areas for agriculture planning. And it is possible only when the whole complex of the aspects of agriculture are studied at micro-level by considering the local physical, social and economic conditions.

OBJECTIVES :

In view of the above the specific objectives of the present study are as follow :-

- i) To observe the physical and demographic determinants that have a bearing on the agriculture in the region.
- ii) To study the agricultural framework as a basis to assess the agricultural productivity and
- iii) To investigate the imbalances in the agricultural productivity, thereby delimiting the 'weaker area'.

CHOICE OF THE REGION :

Many considerations have influenced the choice of the region under consideration. The region selected for investigation is predominantly agricultural, being the backbone of its economy. It is fertile and relatively well watered part of the state. The region selected has a transitional location between Konkan to the west and plateau region to the east. The region has a long history. It is well known as the capital of Maratha power and one of the leading regions during the movement of independence. During the last two decades, the increased facilities of irrigation, inception of sugar factories and changing nature of farmers have led to certain changes in agriculture of the region. And the immediate response is that I know it better being my home region.

The region comprises southern part of states (area 10,484) and supports 2,038,677 population. It lies between 17°5' and 18°11' north latitudes and 73°33' and 74°55' east longitudes. Administratively it is divided into 11 tahsils. The river Krishna

with its tributaries like Koyana, Venna, Urmodi and Yerala; and the river Nira and Man tributaries of Bhima drain the entire region.

THE DATA BASE AND METHODOLOGY :

The data collected and used for the present investigation comes from primary and secondary sources. The primary data is collected through different sources for which special questionnaire was prepared. Personal visits to selected villages, taluka and district headquarters were arranged. For a micro-level analysis, one village from each agro-climatic zone have been chosen. A micro-level study includes plot to plot survey of land covering information of relevant aspects such as landuse, cropping pattern, agricultural implements, size of holdings, per hectare yield etc.

The picture of present pattern of agriculture in the region is prepared with the help of secondary data obtained from official documents like Socio-Economic Reviews, District Statistical Abstract, District Census Gazetteer, Agricultural Epitoms, season and crop reports published by the Department of Agriculture, Maharashtra State. The information regarding per hectare yield is collected from district and taluka level Market Committees, and supplemented by the information made available from Zilla Parishad.

The data thus collected through primary and secondary sources, were processed and represented by statistical and

Cartographic techniques. Proportion of implements, cultivators, agricultural labours etc. per 100 hectare of cultivated area is calculated and their spatial distribution is represented on the map by Choropleth method. Share of individual crop is also calculated and represented by the same method. Weaver's technique is applied for delimiting crop combination zone in the region. Whereas, ranking of crops are mapped to know importance of individual crop. The productivity of individual crop and overall productivity is computed by crop concentration and yield index ranking co-efficient method. The agricultural productivity in terms of money value is also calculated to assess the regional differences in levels of food production and tried to delimit the weaker areas in the region. The plot to plot survey technique is employed for micro-level analysis.

PLAN OF THE STUDY :

The entire work has been organised into six chapters. The first chapter deals with physical determinants of agriculture and comprises review of relief and drainage, climate and soil. The socio-economic determinants of agriculture is the subject matter of second chapter and deals with demographic factors, size of holdings, agricultural implements and irrigation in the region.

The agricultural framework is analysed in chapter three which includes landuse, cropping pattern, ranking of crops and

crop combination regions. The focus of attention in chapter four is to assess the agricultural productivity by selected methods. While some of the emerging features and themes are pursued through case studies at micro-level in chapter fifth. Finally chapter six includes conclusion of the entire work. Besides the bibliography at the end, references are given at the end of each chapter.