

## Agricultural Development and Sources of Output Growth in Maharashtra State

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*In the present study, an attempt has been made to analyse agricultural growth and the contribution of various components to the overall output growth of the Maharashtra State for the period from 1961-62 to 1997-98. It has been observed that the growth in area of major crops in the state revealed a mixed trend. For the overall period of study, except jowar, bajra and wheat all other crops recorded a growth in area. The growth in production and productivity of all these crops was visible in the second period (1971-72 to 1980-81), whereas commercial crops recorded remarkable increase during the third period (1981-82 to 1997-98) of the study. There has been growth in the use of crucial inputs like irrigation, chemical fertiliser and high yielding variety seeds. The growth in production of kharif jowar, paddy, bajra, rabi jowar, wheat and cotton is mainly on account of change in yield, while production of gram, tur and sugarcane increased due to expansion of area. The productivity growth and shift in cropping pattern were major factors that accounted for the growth of crop output in the state. The future strategy of agricultural development of the state will have to be centered on increasing productivity through the expansion of area under irrigation and high yielding variety seeds.*

### Introduction

Agriculture plays an important role in economic development, such as provision of food to the nation, enlarging exports, transfer of manpower to non-agricultural sectors, contribution to capital formation and securing markets for industrialisation (Johnston and Mellor, 1961). Agricultural development is an integral part of overall economic development. The Indian economy comprises of several important sectors, which contribute to total national product. But by far, agriculture is the main stay of Indian economy and prosperity of agriculture can significantly contribute to the general prosperity of the nation. With a 24.2 per cent contribution (triennium ending 2001-02) to gross domestic product, agriculture still provides livelihood support to about two-thirds of country's population. The sector provides employment to 56.7 per cent of country's workforce and it is the single largest private sector occupation. It accounts for about 14.7 per cent of total export earning and provides raw material to several industries (GOI, 2003). Agriculture forms the backbone of Indian economy and despite large-scale industrialisation in the last 50 years, agriculture still occupies a place of pride.

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