



GOVERNMENT OF MAHARASHTRA

REPORT ON
AGRICULTURAL CENSUS
1970-71
MAHARASHTRA STATE

PART I

and

PART II

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

REPORT ON
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FOREWORD

The role and importance of Agricultural Census in providing the basic and valuable information needed for the realistic planning of agricultural development programmes and correct appraisal of the progress achieved, have been widely recognised. Lack of detailed information at the lower administrative levels, especially that relating to the structure and characteristics of agricultural holdings has often proved to be a serious handicap in the formulation of policies and the proper allocation of resources so as to cover all sections of the farming community. With the advent of planning from the bottom and setting up of the District Planning Boards, detailed information about the structure of agricultural holdings and its interrelationship with the characteristics of holdings are not only essential but also a pre-requisite.

Maharashtra has been a deficit State, particularly in foodgrains. Strenuous and sustained efforts are being made to step up the agricultural production in general and the foodgrain production in particular. The adoption of the new strategy in agriculture involving the implementation of the High Yielding Varieties Programme and the multiple cropping schemes for achieving higher yield rates of crops, as also higher monetary return per unit area, represents the State's determination to reach the goal of self-sufficiency in agriculture soon. Since last year, a new experiment in agriculture has been initiated by guaranteeing certain minimum yields of cereal crops per unit area in the Pilot Project Blocks with assured irrigation and/or rainfall. The scheme met with a tremendous success. Again, a planned effort is being made to involve in a big way the landless labourers (to whom surplus lands have been distributed recently), small farmers and weaker sections of the farming population in the implementation of the agricultural development projects. Apparently the success of all such programmes depends to a large extent on the enthusiasm, interest and active participation of the individual operators or tillers who constitute the decision-making units at the field level. It is in this context that the Agricultural Census data pertaining to individual tillers or operators will prove to be of great help in planning farmer-oriented programmes of development.

I am, therefore, very happy that for the first time, the data for individual operational holdings have been collected under the Agricultural Census by the method of complete enumeration in the State and also in the country. The holdingwise information will be of considerable utility, in planning agricultural production programmes and in the proper utilization of the available resources. It is hoped that the information will be helpful in assessing the credit requirements and distribution of production inputs of the right kind, in right quantum, to the right type of people and for the right purpose.

The conduct of the Census proved to be a much more stupendous task than what was originally thought. I am, however, very glad to mention that in spite of the numerous difficulties and the voluminous work involved, the officers, the supervising staff of the various departments and particularly the field staff (v'z., the talathis) carried out the work ungrudgingly, in a spirit of team work and helped in the completion of the project.

I trust that this Report on the Agricultural Census in Maharashtra would be of considerable use not only to the Government departments, but also to research workers, economists and others associated with agricultural planning and development.

Bombay,
6th September 1976

S. G. PAWAR,
*Minister for Agriculture,
Command Area Development and Khar
Lands, Government of Maharashtra.*

PREFACE

Maharashtra State, along with other States of the Indian Union participated in the Third World Agricultural Census (1970-71) sponsored by the Government of India at the instance of the Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations. The Census was conducted by complete enumeration of all the land holdings in the State by retabulation of the information available in the basic land records of the villages. The long-felt demand for the detailed information about the structure and characteristics of the operational holdings in the State—the decision-making units—has now been realised and the data of about 50 lakh holdings in the State are available.

As a complete Census of all land holdings in the State was undertaken for the first time, taking into consideration the magnitude and complex nature of the work involved, two organisations were set up, one for the field operations and the other for the processing of data. For the field operations, Deputy Commissioner (Agricultural Census) was appointed in the Directorate of Agriculture. He was assisted by a small census cell and the entire work was planned, organised and controlled by that Officer. The Director of Economics and Statistics was nominated as the Deputy Agricultural Census Commissioner (Mechanical Tabulation) for planning and organising the tabulation of the voluminous data.

The entire burden of the field work involving the collection of basic data under the Census was borne by the talathis of the revenue department, under the supervision of Tahsildars while for training of field staff, providing technical guidance and supervision of the field work, the assistance of various agencies in the districts was taken.

A Study Group consisting of the following members was appointed for drafting the technical report on the results of the Census under Government letter No. Sankhiki/4074/2652-B, dated the 14th August, 1974 :—

1. Director of Economics and Statistics, Bombay.
2. Dr. C. H. Shah,
Professor of Agricultural Economics, University of Bombay.
3. Shri V. G. Sharma,
Deputy Commissioner (Agricultural Census) and Chief Statistician,
Department of Agriculture, Maharashtra State, Pune.

In drafting the report, the Study Group was assisted by Shri N. P. Joshi, Statistician (Agricultural Census) of Agriculture Department and Shri N. V. Mohod, Deputy Director of the Directorate of Economics and Statistics, Bombay.

The results of the Agricultural Census for State and districts are presented in this report. The report is divided into two parts. Part I consists of five chapters dealing with the historical background, organisational arrangements, concepts and definitions. The chapter IV gives the analysis of the Census results and the conclusions derived therefrom. The last chapter (V) deals briefly with the suggestions for future censuses. Part (II) contains the statistical tables giving the summary of these Census data presented in the form of six tables for the State, divisions and each district and according to size class of holdings.

The Census has shown that there were 49·51 lakh operational holdings in the State in 1970-71, with an area of 212 lakh hectares or about 68 per cent of the total State area of 308 lakh hectares. It has clearly brought out the preponderance of the small holdings (i.e. those below 2 hectares or 5 acres), it being to the extent of 43 per cent and that most of them are located in the paddy growing areas of the State; but the area under these holdings was only 9 per cent of the total area under all the land holdings. Further, 37·50 lakh operational holdings or nearly 76 per cent did not possess any irrigation facilities.

Of the total net sown area of 173 lakh hectares in the State, the net area under irrigation was 12·4 lakh hectares (or 7·1 per cent) and the rest (i.e. 92·9 per cent) was dependent exclusively on rainfall. It is of interest to note that about one-seventh (or 30 lakh hectares) of the total operated area in the land holdings comprised land not put to cultivation (i.e. excluding net sown area and area kept fallow during 1970-71).

The conduct of the Census involving the collection of statistical data for each parcel of land covering nearly 5 million land holdings in the State was a colossal task. The talathis, who were entrusted with this responsibility, did a splendid job particularly since they had to attend to this work in addition to their normal duties. The higher revenue Officers right from the Secretary to Government, the Commissioners, Collectors, Deputy Collectors, Tahsildars and down to the level of Revenue Inspectors gave the necessary support in getting the work done properly. The officers and staff of the Statistics Division of the Agriculture Department, Directorate of Economics and Statistics and Land Record Department rendered necessary assistance in the satisfactory conduct of the Census. I would like to express my thanks to all the Officers and staff.

Shri V. G. Sharma, Deputy Commissioner (Agricultural Census) was responsible for the successful planning and organisation of the Census. Shri M. A. Telang, former Director of Economics and Statistics and Deputy Agricultural Census Commissioner (Mechanical Tab.) and Shri V. D. Mahajan, Additional Director of that Directorate, handled the work of planning and organising the tabulation of the voluminous Census data efficiently. Shri N. P. Joshi Statistician (Agricultural Census) put in considerable efforts in rendering the requisite assistance to both the Deputy Commissioners, in the organisation of the Census and subsequently in the processing of the data. I would like to place on record the excellent services rendered by all these officers.

I take this opportunity to express my deep gratitude to Shri I. J. Naidu, Agricultural Census Commissioner (now Secretary, Rural Development Department) Government of India and other officers of that Government for their valuable guidance and help in the conduct of the Census.

I would like to express my thanks to the members of the Study Group for drafting this Report on the Agricultural Census which will be found useful by all those associated with agricultural research and development, directly or indirectly.

Bombay,
6th September 1976

B. K. CHOUGULE, I.A.S.,
*Agricultural Census Commissioner
and Secretary (Agriculture) to
Government of Maharashtra.*

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