



GOVERNMENT OF MAHARASHTRA

REPORT OF
AGRICULTURAL CENSUS

1976-77

MAHARASHTRA STATE

PART I & PART II

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

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P R E F A C E

Maharashtra State along with other States of the Indian Union, participated in the Sample Agricultural Census of 1976-77, sponsored by the Government of India. Though the next World Agricultural Census is due in 1981, Government of India desired that an interim Sample Census should be carried out to assess the changes in the structure of agricultural holdings, subsequent to the Third World Agricultural Census of 1970-71, due to the vigorous implementation of the Land Ceiling Act during the period 1974-76.

While the number of operational holdings and their size (i.e. area) were obtained by complete enumeration of all the land holdings in the State, information on four more items, namely:—

- (i) tenancy and tenure, (ii) land utilisation, (iii) source-wise irrigated area, (iv) area under crops (irrigated and unirrigated),

was collected in respect of each holding in a random sample of 7,693 villages selected for the Sample Agricultural Census. In addition, for the first time, data were also collected on (1) the number of farmers growing each of the crops, (2) number of farmers having irrigation-facilities according to each source, (3) number of wells in use and that fitted with pumps, (4) number of wells not in use.

The Deputy Commissioner (Agricultural Census) was responsible for the Census work. He was assisted by a small Agricultural Census Unit created in the Directorate of Agriculture, at Pune. For the first time, electronic processing of the Census data was also undertaken by Agricultural Census Unit itself. The technical guidance of the computer experts of the National Institute of Training in Industrial Engineering (NITIE), Powai, Bombay, was fully taken for the development of the computer programme and processing of the data. As a part of the Agricultural Census Unit, one Mechanical Tabulation Cell was created with the Deputy Director (Mechanical Tabulation) as the officer-in-charge to attend to the processing of the data under the guidance of the NITIE experts.

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

The results of the Agricultural Census for the State and districts are presented in this report. The report is divided into two Parts. The first Part contains five chapters. The first three chapters deal with the historical background, organisational arrangements, concepts and definition. Chapter IV deals with the analysis of the Census results and the conclusions drawn therefrom. The last Chapter V deals with the suggestions for the future Censuses. Part II contains the statistical tables giving the summary of the Census data, printed in the form of six tables for the State, regions and each district, according to 13 size classes of holdings.

The Census has shown that in 1976-77 there were 57.64 lakh operational holdings with a total operated area of 211.05 lakh hectares in the State. The average size of holdings was 3.66 hectares. As compared with the results of the Agricultural Census of 1970-71, the number of holdings in the current Census had increased by 8.13 lakh (or 16%) while the operated area was lower by 0.74 lakh hectares (or 0.4%). The average size of holdings in the previous Census was slightly higher being 4.28 hectares. The Census of 1976-77 has clearly brought out the preponderance of small sized holdings (i.e. those of size below 2 hectares or 5 acres), it being to the extent of 47 per cent (as against 43 per cent in the previous Census); but the area under these holdings was hardly 11 per cent of the total operated area in the State (while it was 9 per cent in the last Census). Further, out of 57.57 lakh holdings covered by the Sample Census—i.e. excluding the

institutional holdings and those of Pune City, taluka of Pune district 13.05 lakh (or 22.7%) had irrigation facilities, the net irrigated area being 13.32 lakh hectares (or 7.8 per cent of the net cropped area).

It is of interest to note that 96 per cent of the farmers in the State owned the lands they tilled, while the area of lands taken on lease for cultivation formed hardly 2.8 % of the operated area. Further, about one-eighth (or 28 lakh hectares of the total operated area in the agricultural holdings comprised land not put to cultivation (excluding net sown area and area kept fallow in 1976-77).

The report contains the details of the above and other findings of the Census for the State, regions and districts. I trust that these results for Maharashtra would be of considerable utility not only to the Government departments but also to the Research workers, Economists and others associated with agricultural planning and development. The results of the Census would be of considerable help also in the policy formulation and assessment of the impact of the Agricultural Projects.

The conduct of the Census involving collection of statistical data for each parcel of land covering nearly 6 million land holdings in the State was a colossal task. The talathies who were entrusted with this responsibility did a good job, particularly since they had to attend to this work in addition to their normal duties. The higher revenue officers right from the concerned Secretaries to Government, Commissioners, Collectors, Tahsildars, Block Development Officers, down to the level of Revenue Inspectors gave the necessary support in getting the work done properly. The officers and the staff of the Statistics Division of Agricultural Department, Directorate of Economics and Statistics, rendered assistance to the extent possible in supervising the Census field work. I would like to express my thanks to all these officers and staff.

Shri V. G. Sharma, Deputy Commissioner (Agricultural Census) was responsible for the planning and organisation of the Census and he has also drafted the detailed Report on the Census. Prof. S. K. Singh and Shri A. D. Raut, computer experts of the NITIE, Bombay, took personal interest and strain in the development of the computer programme and in giving guidance in electronic processing of the data. Shri N. P. Joshi as the Deputy Director (Mechanical Tabulation) put in commendable efforts in rendering necessary assistance in the development of the computer programme and in attending to the actual processing of the data on the computer. I would like to place on record the excellent services rendered by all these officers.

I would like to express my gratitude to the officers of the Agricultural Census Division, Government of India for their guidance and help in the conduct of the Census.

Bombay-32
20th May, 1980

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CONTENTS

PART I

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Para No.		PAGE
1.1	Historical background	1
1.4	Contents of report	1
1.5	Methodology	1
1.6	Scope	2
1.7	Organisation	2
1.8	Findings of the Census 1970-71	2
1.9	Uses of last Census data	3
1.10	Administrative divisions and districts	4
1.11	Physical features	4
1.12	Crop season	5
1.13	Agro-climatic zones	5
1.14	Population	5
1.15	Contribution of Agriculture to State Income	5
1.16	Land use	5
1.18	Forest	7
1.19	Crop pattern	8
1.20	Irrigation	9

CHAPTER II

AGRICULTURAL CENSUS 1976-77

2.1	Need for the present Census	10
2.2	Sanction of the scheme	10
2.3	Decision on complete Census	10
2.4	Technical programme	10
2.5	Scope	10
2.6	Sampling and estimation procedures adopted for the Sample Census	11
2.7	Methodology	11
2.8	Organisation	11
2.12	Appointment of State Advisory Committee	12
2.14	Preparatory work done prior to the Census	13
2.15	Schedules prescribed for collecting Census data	14
2.16	Printing of Schedules	15
2.17	Arrangements for processing of data	15
2.18	Publicity	16
2.19	Training	16
2.24	Dates of commencement and completion of the Census enumeration	17

CHAPTER III

CONCEPTS AND DATA SOURCES

3.1	Concepts and definitions	18
3.2	Land not covered by the Census	21
3.3	Source of data	21
3.4	Criteria adopted for determining an operational holding	21
3.5	Joint holdings	22
3.7	Procedure adopted for listing of operational holdings	22

PAGE No.	CONTENTS	PAGE
3.9	Complete and incomplete (or part) holdings	23
3.12	Posting the Census data in final Census return	24
3.13	Units for reporting area statistics	24
3.14	Field work	24
3.15	Supervision of the Census operations	25
3.19	Scrutiny of returns	26
3.20	Technical deficiencies in the field work	26
3.21	Steps taken to remove technical deficiencies	27
3.22	Despatch of returns	27
3.23	Number of villages covered by Census	27
3.24	Proportion of plural holdings	28
 CHAPTER IV ANALYSIS OF CENSUS RESULTS		
4.1	Introduction	29
4.3	Levels for which results are given	29
4.4	Contents of the Census tables	30
4.6	Limitations	30
4.7	Coverage of the Sample Agricultural Census	30
4.8	Comparability of the results of the two Censuses	30
4.9	Discussion of results	31
 SECTION I		
4.10	Coverage	31
4.12	An overview	32
4.15	Number of crop growers	32
4.17	Size distribution of number of holdings and operated area in the State in the two Census years.	33
 SECTION II		
4.22	Districtwise findings	34
4.23	Number of operational holdings and area operated	34
4.26	Average size of holdings	37
4.29	Joint holdings	38
4.30	Proportion of smaller holdings (of size less than 2 ha.)	38
4.31	Tenure and Tenancy	38
4.34	Land use	38
4.39	Irrigation	39
4.40	Irrigated holdings and area irrigated (in the State)	39
4.44	Distribution of Irrigation (in districts)	40
4.47	Number of irrigated holdings	41
4.49	Source of Irrigation	41
4.50	Additional information	42
4.52	Irrigation by Wells	43
4.53	Estimated number of wells in use	43
4.54	Irrigation by canal	44
4.55	Irrigation by tanks	45
4.56	Irrigation by lift	45
4.57	Cropping pattern	46
4.60	Cropping pattern in the districts	47
4.69	Irrigated area under crops	48
 SECTION III		
4.70	Analysis of Census data according to size of holdings	48
.71	Proportion of number of small size dholdings (i.e. of size below 2 ha.)	49

vii

Para No.	CONTENTS	PAGE
4.73	Proportion of big holdings (of size 10 ha. and above)	50
4.76	Joint holdings	51
4.77	Tenancy	51
4.78	Land use	52
4.79	Irrigation	52
4.81	Irrigation by canals	53
4.82	Irrigation by wells	54
4.83	Irrigation by tanks	55
4.84	Area under lift irrigation	55
4.85	Relative importance of different sources of irrigation	56
4.88	Intensity of irrigated cropping according to size class of holdings	57
4.89	Cropping pattern according to size class of holdings	59
4.92	Comparison of official statistics with those of Census in respect of importance crops	61

CHAPTER V

SUGGESTION FOR FUTURE CENSUSES

5.1	Introduction	63
5.2	Need for legislation on Agricultural Census	63
5.3	Suggestions for streamlining the work	63
5.4	Need for co-ordination at different levels	64
5.5	Advance planning	64
5.6	Further analysis of census data	64

CHAPTER VI

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

6.01 to 6.11	} .. Summary of findings	65
Annexure-I	.. Districtwise distribution of population in 1971 and 1977	67
Annexure-II	.. Sampling procedure used in the Sample Agricultural Census	68
Annexure-III	.. Estimation procedure	69
Annexure-IV	.. Explanatory Notes on concepts and definitions	70
Annexure-V	.. Statement giving the districtwise number of villages covered by the Census	72
Annexure-VI	.. Map of Maharashtra State showing boundaries of six regions	73
Annexure-VII	.. Multiple Bar Diagram showing number of operational holdings by size class based on Agricultural Censuses 1970-71 and 1976-77.	75
Annexure-VIII	.. Multiple Bar Diagram showing area operated by size class based on Agricultural Censuses 1970-71 and 1976-77.	77

APPENDICES

Appendix-I	.. Contents and clarification of the tables	79
Appendix-II	.. Table Numbers 1 to 23	80