Agrarian change is a topic of great relevance in the field of social sciences, and agrarian studies in particular. A central focus in agrarian studies has been to understand the nature of the agrarian question in the countryside (Byres, 1986 & 1995; Ramachandran, 2011). In many developing countries like India, the central and distinguishing characteristic of economic backwardness is the unresolved agrarian question (Byres, 1986). Thus, the development of capitalism in agriculture is studied under the larger rubric of studying the ways, means and routes through which the “agrarian question” in rural areas is resolved (Byres, 1986). According to Ramachandran (2011), the term “agrarian question” absorbs within it three aspects of changing agrarian relations. The first aspect deals with the nature, extent and degree of development of capitalism in agriculture in rural areas. The second aspect deals with the study of classes that emerge on the basis of the nature of landlordism, the forms of differentiation of peasantry, the nature of moneylenders and merchant capitalists, and the socio-economic characteristics of the rural labour force. The third aspect is concerned with class struggle: of the means and methods of alliances across different classes to be mobilised to resolve the agrarian question (see also Bernstein, 1996; Akram-Lodhi, 1998).

Since the post-independence period, Indian agriculture has been undergoing a process of change at different levels. These are due to periodic shifts in its structure, resulting from processes like green revolution, new economic policies, commercialisation and crop diversification. In the context of commercialisation, change refers to the shift from subsistence agriculture to commercialised agriculture through linking up with larger market structures (Sable, 1994; Satyasai and Vishwanathan, 1996). Commercialisation is a historical process that tends to convert multiple things into commodities, draws more people into market exchange, converts social transitions into commercial transactions, and interprets value of commodities through prices. It expands the geographical reach of trade, and makes markets pervasive. It also transforms human experience by establishing commercial transactions in settings where markets had previously been absent.
Commercialisation of agriculture is a phenomenon identified closely with the development of capitalism in agriculture (Bharadwaj, 1985). In fact, commercialisation expands as capitalism advances. Writing about United States, which was rapidly commercialising in the early part of the 20th century, Lenin wrote that “the growth of capitalism in agriculture consists above all in a transition from natural agriculture to commercial agriculture. This is being constantly forgotten, and must be brought up again and again” (Lenin, 1915). The term commercialisation is often misunderstood as the growth of non-food crops in the cropping pattern. However, it is defined in the literature as a larger phenomenon of expansion of trade and markets in the rural areas. About the period of colonialism in India, historian Irfan Habib (2006) wrote that:

The term 'commercialisation of agriculture' is used to describe the extension of trade and money relations in India's countryside that followed the construction of railways. The word 'extension' in our explanation underlines the fact that trade and money relations were, by no means, absent in earlier times (Habib, 2006:59).

There are two aspects to Habib’s definition. First, trade and markets have always been present in the history of rural India, and the discussion on commercialisation refers to its further growth over time. Secondly, commercial agriculture can develop even when food crops predominate the cropping pattern1. This was a phenomenon that Lenin also noted in his work on the United States; he noted that even while commercialisation expands, it might involve shift from one food crop to another:

Commercial agriculture, it should be noted, does not develop along the 'simple' lines imagined or projected by bourgeois economists, namely, through an ever greater output of the same products. Not at all. Commercial agriculture very frequently develops by shifting from one type of product to another, and the shift from hay and grain to vegetables is very common (Lenin, 1915:32).

According to Harriss (1984), “commercialisation is understood as the increasing exchange of agricultural commodities for cash, and it is a part of a wider process of

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1 However, commercialisation initiated in the colonial period was 'forced', and not genuine or progressive commercialisation. This forced commercialisation could not break the feudal form of production relations that bound tenants and landless labourers to landlords, usurers, and rendered labourers unfree; hence, it remained a major constraint to the development of capitalism in agriculture.
appropriation of surplus, i.e., the transfer of ownership or control of labour, cash and kind above what is needed for agriculture.”

In countries like India, there are also region-specific peculiarities in the way commercialisation proceeds. For instance, wheat crop is generally considered less commercial in Maharashtra than in Punjab. As noted by Raj (1985), the process of commercialisation and its historical outcome, whether culminating or not in the pervasive dominance of capitalist relations, has not been uniform, neither across countries nor, within India, across different regions and historical time.

Commercialisation of agriculture can develop both on the output side of production with increased marketed surplus, and on the input side with increased use of purchased inputs (Braun and Kennedy, 1994). It has been argued that commercialisation can develop without technological changes in agriculture, but technological changes without increased commercialisation are unlikely because the increased use of purchased input and specialisation have always been inherent elements of most technological innovations in agriculture (ibid).

Growth of commercialisation, thus, is a specific phenomenon we study under the larger process of the growth of agrarian capitalism. Within the Marxist literature, there is extensive discussion of what constitutes the advent and advance of capitalism in agriculture. It is widely accepted that the most important indicator of the development of capitalism is the creation of and expansion in the size of the hired labour force, where the workers are free to choose their employers in the rural labour market. According to Lenin:

Hired labour is the chief sign and indicator of capitalism in agriculture. The development of hired labour, like the growing use of machinery, is evident in all parts of the country, and in every branch of agriculture. The growth in the number of hired labourers outstrips the growth of the country’s rural and total population. The growth in the number of farmers lags behind that of the rural population. Class contradictions are intensified and sharpened (Lenin cited in Byres, 1996:24).

Lenin here, clearly, lists out the major changes that accompanied the development of “commercial and capitalist agriculture” in the United States.

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2 In a wider context, Mukherjee (1985) focused on two aspects i.e., agricultural produce and commercialisation of land. She defines commercialisation as development of production in agriculture and of land markets. However, she excludes labour and credit markets in her definition.
While the growth of the hired labour force is a critical indicator of the development of capitalism, two further processes also mark the advance. In the Indian case, for instance, the debate on the “mode of production” in the 1960s involved an extensive discussion on this theme. Patnaik (1986) noted that the evolution of hired labour was a necessary condition, but not a sufficient condition for the growth of capitalism in agriculture. According to her, as capitalism advances, two further phenomena emerge: a) increasing production for the market, and b) increasing accumulation of surplus from agricultural production to re-invest into agriculture. Alongside, capitalism and commercialisation involve another change: “displacement of small-scale by large-scale production in agriculture” (ibid.). The classification of farms simply on the basis of acreage ceases to be a meaningful indicator of class differentiation. Instead, the 'size of the economic unit' (the value of production per acre) emerges as the major differentiator in the place of 'size of the land plot'. According to Lenin (1915):

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\text{Capitalism grows not only by accelerating the development of large-acreage farms in extensive areas, but also by creating, in the intensive areas, enterprises on smaller tracts whose operations are on a much larger scale and are much more capitalist. As a result, the concentration of production in the large enterprises is actually much greater—and the displacement of small-scale production actually goes farther and deeper—than is indicated by ordinary data about farms grouped by acreage (Lenin, 1915:39).}
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According to Bhaduri (1985), commercialisation of agriculture is a social process that cannot be captured by statistical indices, or by simply looking at the importance of monetary transactions in an agrarian economy. The process engages with different rural markets, such as in production, labour, land and credit. Moreover, it involves greater dependence on particular markets by peasants and producers, where the terms and conditions may differ with respect to different historical contexts.

1.1.1 British Rule and Acceleration in Agricultural Commercialisation

In India, commercial crops like cotton, jute and sugarcane were largely grown even before British rule. In the period of Mughal and Maratha rule, land revenue was paid in cash and the prices of cash crops were relatively higher than food grain crops (Raj, 1985). According to Habib (2006), trade and money relations existed even then and the peasant

\[\text{\footnotesize 3 Specifically, Patnaik (1986) notes that production for the market must not be confused with capitalist production; the “former antedates the latter and though necessary, is not sufficient for its development (p.23).”}\]
used to pay their substantial share of revenue by selling agricultural output in the local market. Further, larger landholdings were dominantly under the control of upper caste landlords. The cultivation of such big land holdings was largely dependent on wage labourers.

However, Raj (1985) has also pointed out that such commercialisation in agriculture in the early period only corresponded to the requirement of a traditional 'revenue economy' where the main form of revenue payable happened to be an indistinguishable mix of tax, tribute and land rent. Along with this, considerable economic differentiation that could be observed within the peasantry at that time reflected not so much the impact of market forces as the power of 'command' and 'custom' within the framework of traditional societies. Hence, commercialisation in pre-colonial period existed only in embryonic form (ibid).

In the true sense, commercialisation was a policy initiated under the British government for boosting the supply of raw materials for British industry. Several efforts were made to increase the production of cotton in India to provide raw material for textile mills in England. In 19th century, industrial revolution in England increased the demand for Indian raw materials. Indigo, tobacco, tea, jute production was encouraged to be grown in India. Additionally, the American civil war had an impact on the supply of cotton for British textile mills. America was the prime exporter of cotton to England; however, due to the Civil War, demand for cotton shifted to India. At the same time, the rising class of Indian capitalists set up textile mills in India, and as a result, domestic demand for cotton also accelerated considerably. Higher demand resulted in higher price for the agricultural produce, which induced the peasant to substitute cash crops for food crops. The growth of commercialisation of agriculture was further intensified by the development and expansion of railway network in India after 1850 (Thorner, 1955). Expansion of railways linked the interior of the country with ports and harbours, urban marketing centres and hence the Indian agriculture market began to produce for the world market (Desai, 1948; Washbrook, 1994). On the other hand, the same railways that carried commercial crops from the various parts of the country also brought back the foreign manufactured goods to India.

Importantly, permanent land settlement had a significant impact on the process of commercialisation. Introduction of the new land tenure system in the form of permanent settlement and ryotwari made land a freely exchangeable commodity (Raj, 1985 and Padhi,
Legal recognition was given to sale, mortgage and leasing as rights associated with ownership. By giving rights to the Zamindar and an intermediary class in the countryside, it created a class of wealthy landlords, who involved more in land sale and purchase. This also led agriculture to be not just a way of life but also a business enterprise. It created market for land, credit and labour along with agricultural produce; a growing proportion of income in agriculture was appropriated as rent, interest and profit in addition to land revenue. It also led to a break-down of customary relationships and conventions within village societies; transfer of land through sale, mortgage or leasing; increased rural indebtedness; forced sale of produce to meet revenue needs; eviction of peasants; and changes in the contractual arrangement with labour (Raj, 1985). It also worsened the existing disparities in wealth and power (Robb, 2002). The process of 'de-peasantisation' was initiated, where large number of small land holders became share-croppers and tenants or were forced to sell their labour power to others.

Sumit Guha's paper on the Deccan economy under colonialism argued that the central and southern parts of Deccan had neither any reserve of cultivable land, nor the ability to raise productivity. In such areas, agrarian relations were marked by the interlocking of land, labour and credit markets, which further enabled the moneylenders to enlarge and intensify their command. In the cotton growing region of Khandesh, a combination of heavy taxation, low prices and poor communication had in the mid-nineteenth century forced the peasants into a state of dependence on a group of wealthy landlords who dominated the market for both commodities and credit (Guha, 1985).

Agrarian transformation and commercialisation accelerated by irrigation has also been studied by Rao (1985) in the Krishna district of Andhra Pradesh. Paddy as major staple food crop could be transformed into a commercial crop. This was made possible by assured irrigation, expanding markets, rising prices and improvements in transportation from the late eighties and early nineties of the 19th century. However, such transition had a profound impact on credit, land and labour markets. In the process of commercialisation, surplus extracting peasants or rich farmers appeared as traders and moneylenders in the credit market. It had also influenced land prices.

Atchi Reddy's historical study (1985) on the commercialisation of agriculture in Nellore district of Andhra Pradesh mainly dealt with wages, employment and tenancy. His study shows a drastic decline in the ratio of annual farm servants to casual daily labourers, a sharp decline in the wage rates of farm servants compared to daily labourers and an
increase in tenant cultivators. The mode of payment of wage shifted from monthly to daily and further from kind to cash. This shift in the mode of payment stimulated the monetisation of rural economy and resulted into decline wage rate.

India's experience of commercialisation, thus, begins in nineteenth century with the legal entitlement for land rights, differentiation of peasantry, revenue transaction in cash, use of credit, shift to cash-crops, development of transportation, irrigation etc. These developments induced a remarkable growth in the degree of monetisation, trade and market. However, this did not further lead to the eventual dissolution of pre-capitalist or feudal relations.

Nadkarni (1979) argues that commercialisation in India has been occurring without a genuine capitalist development of agriculture. Though capitalist development involves commercialisation, it is not necessary that commercialisation leads to growth of capitalist development. The necessary condition for the development of capitalism is peasant differentiation which converts small peasants into the hired labour force. For such a labour force, creation of home market for commodities and marketable surplus are necessarily required. Finally, the accumulated surplus from the peasants needs to be invested in agriculture and industry. In reality, however, the de-peasantised rural labour continued to be left in agriculture without adequate employment. Marketable surplus cannot accelerate when large part of cultivated area continues to be in the hands of few who are not in a position to generate net positive surplus (Nadkarni and Vedini, 1996).

1.1.2 Trajectories of Change in Agriculture

In the specific case of India, the development of capitalism in agriculture has been marked by two features. First, the extent of implementation of land reforms, which would weaken landlordism and create the initial conditions for a comprehensive development of capitalism, has been limited. Secondly, yet, there has been considerable development of capitalist relations in agriculture, particularly from the period of the green revolution in the 1960s. As a result, capitalism in Indian agriculture exhibits specific characteristics. It is not premised up on the weakening of old forms of landlordism; it continues to subsume many features of the “old” even as the “new” has advanced.

Detailed and intensive village studies in India in the 2000s have shown that landlordism, and its concentration in a few upper caste households, continues to constitute an
important barrier to the expansion of human freedoms, as well as agricultural production. From a series of village surveys in different States, Ramachandran (2011) concluded thus:

The basis of the power of the landlords and big capitalist farmers is their control over land. Even where the main source of income is not agriculture, and even where landlords are in debt and running a balance-sheet loss, land is still the foundation of their power. However, land is not the only resource controlled by landlords and big capitalist farmers, nor is it their only source of wealth. Many are also involved in lucrative business activities, including, for example, money lending, grain mills, dairying, trade and speculation in food grain and other agricultural, horticultural and silvicultural commodities, cinema theatres, petrol pumps, lodging houses, transport, the sale and lease of agricultural machinery, receiving incomes from financial assets, and so on. Landlord families seek entry into the institutions of state power – Panchayati Raj institutions and the higher legislature, the bureaucracy and police, and the legal profession – and are generally the first to take advantage of opportunities for higher education and modern organised-sector employment. This class is very clearly the main pillar of the class power of the ruling classes and the state in the villages. It follows, then, that it is the mainstay of the power of political parties of the ruling classes in the villages, and the class to which all bourgeois parties turn to deliver them the rural vote (Ramachandran, 2011:59).

On the other hand, with the development of capitalism and commercialisation, older labour relations have also undergone transformation. Summarising the findings of the more recent studies of rural labour markets in India, Rao (1999) has noted that shifts from the old to the new has involved shifts from:

…from caste based or personally bonded labour, sometimes secured by debt frequently extending across generations, to long- and short-duration credit contracts apparently with no such tying; from informally defined and open-ended obligations to formal contractual arrangements; from relations based on 'extra-economic' sanctions to ones based on voluntary agreements; from a reliance on intra-village labour exchanges to the conjoint employment of local and migrant workers; and from permanent farm labour to casual labour. These shifts seem broadly to be correlated also with the growth of non-agricultural employment (Rao, 1999:243).

After the WWII, in response to the food scarcity across the world, a technological innovation in agriculture to increase the production and productivity, especially to meet this food shortage, came to be known as green revolution. The green revolution, transformed agricultural practice and introduced chemical fertilisers, pesticides and mainly high yield verities (HYVs) in developed countries (Fujita, 2010).
Similarly, in India too, food shortage was major problem after partition of India and Pakistan in 1947. To be self-sufficient in term of food grain and mitigate food shortage problem, India accepted new agriculture strategy (NAS) under the tag of ‘green revolution’. In India, the green revolution programme was introduced in mid 1960s. Under this, India accepted new and modern agricultural technology, introduced high yield varieties of seeds especially rice and wheat, increased an application of fertilisers and pesticides, expansion of irrigation system, extension of credit and banking. The main focus of green revolution, as Dhanagre (1987) writes:

> It was hoped that with improved farm production, not only the lasting solution would be found for the perpetual problems of rural poverty and hunger but also it would generate a new resource base – a launching pad for rural industrialization that would create new employment opportunities and would improve the quality of life at the grass roots in an appreciable measure (Dhanagare, 1987:137).

Certainly, the production and the productivity during mid 1970s was accelerated and India achieved food self-sufficiency by 1980s. The implementation of green revolution led to a massive transformation of Indian agriculture. High yield varieties of seeds, fertilisers, pesticides as well as electrification and mechanisation have transformed forces of production, which in turn created a significant impact on the rural society.

However, green revolution was limited to certain regions, crops and economic class of the rural India. New technology resulted into increase in production of wheat and rice, particularly in Punjab and Haryana. The control over the technology and machinery was mainly confined to landlord class. It could not benefit to the landless and small and marginal landholders of the peasant society but widened the gap between two extreme classes, rich and poor (Griffin, 1979; Jodhaka, 1994).

As Griffin pointed out, the new varieties of seeds and the accompanying technology have not resulted in a faster rate of growth of agricultural production per head or reduced malnutrition. The green revolution accelerated the development of a market-oriented capitalist agriculture in Asia and Latin America. It has encouraged the growth of wage labour, and therefore helped to create a class of agricultural labourer. It has also increased the power of landowners, and this in turn has associated with the greater polarisation of classes and built conflict. Green revolution has had deeper impact on the attached labour. Jodhka (1994) noted that:
...attached labourers did not enjoy the kind of status that made them privileged among the poor nor did they see their position as being so. Attached labour functioned more as a labour mortgage system where the labourer, in some sense, had to give up his freedom in order to avail an interest free credit (Jodhka, 1994:106).

The developmental fruits of the green revolution could reached only in certain pockets of India and benefited only to big and capitalist farmers substantial class of small and marginal farmers left affected by this program and hence poverty multiplied in this period.

1.1.3 Commercialisation and Agrarian Change: Review of Empirical Studies

Many scholars have analysed the process and impact of commercialisation in agriculture in India on different markets, such as land, labour, production and credit. Few empirical studies need to be considered in the present context.

Epstein’s (1962 & 1973) intensive study based on field work carried out in 1954-56 and later 1970 in two villages of earlier Mysore state offers a vivid picture of the economic and social change. The study is a detailed inquiry of economic changes in the villages over fifteen years. As she argued: “Wangala and Dalena, situated so near each other, were in the same culture area and used to be almost identical in all aspects of their economic, political and social life.” The study describes what happened after the introduction of canal irrigation in the 1930s, which created a regional economy in which Wangala and Dalena assumed distinct and complementary roles. The new irrigated land facilitated the cultivation of commercial crops, especially sugarcane. Epstein noted:

The advent of irrigation in Wangala prior to the outbreak of war in 1939 enabled farmers to venture into cash cropping. Previously their land had been mainly dry: only one-eighth of the cultivable area was irrigated from the village tank, and many a year the tank failed to provide sufficient water to irrigate this limited area (Epstein, 1973:34).

Irrigation brought new economic opportunities into the village. The economic expansion in the region, which had started as a result of introduction of canal irrigation, continued at an increasing pace. Higher agricultural productivity led to better standard of living. In her second round of the field work in the same villages, she observed massive changes. Changes were observed in terms of cropping pattern, input and cost of cultivation, land holding size, rural co-operative societies, new business ventures etc.
Kathleen Gough’s (1989) study in Thanjavur district of Tamil Nadu in the 1950s and 1960s help us understand the historical transition in the socio-economic status of labourers in the village society.

Nagaraj (1985) in his study on the market structure in South Kanara district of Karnataka provides rich analysis of market structures interacting with micro-regional differences in cropping pattern (across paddy and arecanut), landholdings and relations to production. The study showed that poor peasants and agricultural labourers were marginal sellers of paddy. Further he stated:

...a total view of their, as well as their purchase, clearly indicates that sales represent neither any plan behind them nor any genuine surplus of the products as such with them. On an annual reckoning they remain in deficit in the food balance (Nagraj, 1985: 257).

In the interior zone, paddy was the major crop and traditional landlords were dominant. The control of these traditional landlords over the marketed surplus was the result of their command over land and the credit market. Their participation in the labour market was less significant than in the land and credit markets. On the other hand, in the areca growing area, commercialisation led to differentiation between large producers and poor peasants and tenants.

Based on the AIRCS (All India Rural Credit Survey) data, Raj (1985) came out with some important findings on land, labour and credit. The incidence of leasing out land was less among the subsistence than in commercial regions. There was also a higher intensity of labour input required and a higher value of gross produce per cultivator family in commercialised regions. He argued that “the relative share of the top decile of cultivation families in the total outstanding debt was almost uniformly lower than their relative share in the total area of land in cultivator holdings (p. xii).”

An intensive village restudy of two villages in the Andhra Pradesh (cited in Rao and Nair, 2003) showed that in one village, commercialisation of the agriculture took place with the introduction of cash crops, such as turmeric and vegetables. The study argued that land ownership patterns among the caste groups changed. Due to shift from the canal irrigation to tube-wells, the productivity as well as profitability increased. The forces of the production in the village advanced rapidly. The sources of employment in non-farm sector expanded. Attached labour relations turned to casual labour relations. The
traditional caste economy had virtually broken down. In the second village, the important change was the growth of palm-gur (jaggery) industry, which transformed agriculture in a big way. The introduction of electricity and advanced technology made agriculture more profitable. Because of intensive cash crop cultivation and higher rate of wages, labourers shifted from the palm-gur industry to cultivation. However, socio-economic inequalities became wider, upper-caste communities owning large amount of land became richer and more powerful; on the other hand Dalit and landless households continued to live in conditions of poverty.

In a recent study (Ramakumar et al., 2009), it was argued that the introduction of Bt-cotton in a Vidarbha village in the 2000s increased the number of days of employment in cotton cultivation.

There are two interesting features of the growth of agriculture in the State of Maharashtra in western India. On the one hand, in the State as a whole, the value of output per hectare is lower than the Indian average. Between 2000 and 2006, according to data analysed by Bhalla and Singh (2010), the value of output per hectare in Maharashtra was Rs 5,960 while the corresponding figure for India was Rs 8,460. In other words, the growth of commercialisation in the State as a whole was slower than in India. A large part of the gross cropped area in the State continues to be occupied by jowar. In 2013-14, around 15.3 per cent of gross cropped area of the State was under jowar (GoM, 2014). On the other hand, there are regions within Maharashtra where commercialisation in agriculture has grown much more rapidly than in India. Between 2000-01 and 2009-10, in some pockets of the State like Western Maharashtra (Pune) and Marathwada (Aurangabad), sugar cane has largely replaced jowar. In these two major divisions, area under sugar cane increased, respectively, from 28,700 hectares to 43,500 hectares and 16,700 hectares to 23,000 hectares between 2000-01 and 2007-08 (GoM, 2008).

1.2 RESEARCH QUESTION

1.2.1 Rationale of the Study

In this study, my effort is to understand the nature of growth of commercialisation of agriculture in one village in Jalgaon district – Maskawad – and the shifts in the village economy that the process of commercialisation was associated with over a period of about 50 years. Jalgaon district is one of the most commercialised districts in
Maharashtra, where the cropping pattern is dominated by banana, which is a high value crop. In 2005-06, about 42.4 per cent of the gross cropped area of Jalgaon was cultivated with three major cash crops i.e., Cotton (34.8 per cent), Banana (5.9 per cent) and sugar cane (1.7 per cent). Within the district, Raver taluka is considered as the ‘go-down’ of banana, accounting for 44 per cent of total area under banana in the district. Put differently, about 23 per cent of gross cropped area in Raver taluka was under banana in 2011.

Most of the studies on agricultural commercialisation carried out by historians and economists have focused on the colonial period. However, Indian agriculture has undergone a number of changes after independence. The limited land reforms programme, state’s five year plans, green revolution and, more recently, the new economic policies adopted after 1991 have had a profound impact on the rural society in general, and agriculture in particular. In this context, the present study would be a contribution to the understanding of long-term village-level changes in post-independence India from the inter-disciplinary approach. Further, there are very few village-level studies in Maharashtra on commercialisation, especially based on primary data. The present study would try to fill this gap.

1.2.2 The Research Problem

The present study is an effort to analyse the extent to which commercialisation in agriculture was associated with changes in the relations and forces of production in a commercialising region of Maharashtra. I try to understand the multiple dimensions of such association between two time periods, 1957 and 2010. The method adopted is the resurvey of one village as the site. Maskawad village, located in the Raver taluka of Jalgaon district, was studied earlier by another scholar in 1957, and I use the results of that study as a benchmark to historically assess the contemporary agrarian conditions as shown by the resurvey of the village in 2010.

1.2.3 Objectives of the Study

The broad objectives for the present study are as follows: firstly, to understand the role and nature of commercialisation as driving factor of development of capitalism in agriculture; secondly, to explore the changes in agrarian conditions with respect to land, assets, labour, credit, production, employment and income. The sub-objectives are listed below.
To examine changes in the distribution of ownership and operational landholdings, land transactions and tenancy among the village households and across social groups;

To study the changes in the cropping pattern, irrigation and use of technology in agriculture;

To assess changes in the production, productivity, profitability and cost of cultivation across different crops and social groups;

To analyse the extent of labour absorption in the cultivation for different crops;

To understand the changes in the size and composition of different occupational groups in agriculture;

To estimate the level of household income and poverty and inequality across social groups;

To investigate the levels of indebtedness and distribution of credit;

To study the extent of spread of non-agricultural employment and social mobility;

To survey of ownership of assets, livestock and surplus investment in agriculture.

1.3 METHODOLOGY

1.3.1. Village Studies in India

The history of village studies in India goes back to about one century. The existence of severe poverty in the countryside and agrarian crises forced the colonial state to take serious note and appoint the first Royal Commission on Agriculture. The concept of village studies came into existence since “facts and figures could be gathered for an objective understanding of how the rural folks live, what are their wants, and why they are obliged to lead a sub-human existence” (Mukherjee, 1963: 1). Along with the freedom struggle in the early 1920s, the issues of peasants in different parts of the country created an interest among the social scientists and academicians. As a result, a series of village studies were carried out, mainly by western scholars. Patel (cited in Mukherjee, 1963) describes the situation:

With the end of the First World War, the beginning of an agrarian crisis was accompanied by the entry of peasant into the political arena, as exemplified during the Champaran and Kalra campaigns led by Gandhiji. As a result, the cultivator of the soil began to attract considerable attention from students of Indian society. G. Keatings and Harold Mann in Bombay, Gilbert Slater in Madras, and E. V. Lucas in the Punjab, initiated intensive studies of particular villages and general agricultural
problems. The results of these investigations evoked great interest and stressed necessity for still further studies (Patel, 1952: 1).

There were many organisations and individuals who had very keen interest in village studies in the 1930s. Many social scientists, administrators and social workers took interest in village studies. For example, the Punjab Board of Economic Enquiry, the Bengal Board of Economic Enquiry, the Indian Statistical Institute, Visva Bharati University, University of Madras, Gujarat University, Gokhale Institute of Politics and Economics initiated village studies. The main focus of these studies was to understand economic life of the people. Slater (1918) wrote:

Villages came before towns, and even in the most industrial countries, where the economic questions tend to be studied from an urban point of view, it is well to be reminded that the economic life of a town or a city cannot be understood without reference to the lands which send its food and raw materials, and the villages from which it attracts young men and women, the importance of rural activities and of village life in India. In view of enormous preponderance of its agricultural population over that engaged in mining, manufacture, commerce and transport, it is not likely to be overlooked; and least of all in Southern India, which has no coal mines and no great industries like cotton manufacture in Bombay and jute in Bengal (Slater, 1918: 1).

Mann and Kanitkar (1921) wrote in preface of his second study of a Deccan village:

The study of rural conditions by close enquiry into the circumstances of a single unit, be it village, parish, or estate, has come to the front prominently in recent years as a method of social and economic investigation. And by the use of this method, if the villages to be studied are well chosen, a very much more intimate acquaintances with the actual conditions of life then by any other method can be obtained (Mann and Kanitkar, 1921: iii).

1.3.2 Two Approaches or Disciplines to Study Village

There were two main approaches in social sciences to understand socio-economic structure in India. The first was the economic perspective of village studies to understand the economics of the rural society, which took an important disciplinary role since the 1940s. There has been long tradition of village studies in India by economists, predominantly by western economists which can be classified as village surveys since they did census type household surveys in different villages in different parts of the country. These scholars had keen interest in the cost of cultivation, revenue, productions, tenancy relations etc. For instance, Gilbert Slater and Harold Mann surveyed different
villages in Deccan and Southern India. The government also established the Agro-
Economic Research Centres (AERCs) in the post-independence period. Along with this,
Farm Management Studies (FMS) were also initiated with support from the Government
of India for development programmes and policies. In the 1960s, FMS were widely used
by the social scientists, particularly economists for testing various hypotheses.

The second approach was predominantly carried forward by social anthropologists and
sociologists concentrating their attention on the role of ‘caste’ in the village,
Sanskritisation of rural subjects etc. (Srinivas, 1978; Jodhka, 2000 & 2012). Social-
anthropologists treated the village as a unit hierarchically structured and interpreted rural
life as based on kinship ties, caste-wise integration, and jajmani system (Jodhka, 2000).
These studies can also be classified as ‘village studies’.

By the time of Independence, these village studies helped formulate plans, policies and
programmes for rural development. The programmes, such as the National Income
Committee- 1949, five years plans, National Sample Surveys-1950 etc. were initiated in
this period. The first five year plan launched was in 1951, immediately after
independence (Mukherjee, 1963).

1.3.3 Agrarian Studies: New Approach

Both these approaches enrich the knowledge of the socio-economic structure and village
transformation. In the 1970s, another approach gained popularity in India especially
among the economists: agrarian studies. These studies began with enquiring into the
changes in agrarian relations, particularly production relations, accumulation, distribution,
marketing of agricultural surplus and rural power structure (Jodhka, 2000). Most of the
theoretical and conceptual categories were derived from the Marxist traditions of political
economy. Fieldwork remained an important source of data collection. The agrarian
studies combined both the methodological perspectives that enriched knowledge of
village transformation and social organism (Mukherjee, 1963). Without converging these
two approaches, it is not possible to obtain a composite understanding of village life and
a balanced view of the dynamics of village society. The methodological framework used
in the present study draws from this viewpoint.

1.3.4 Village (re)studies/resurveys: Significance

All over the world, there is a renewed interest in understanding the specific problems of
villages in developing countries. Historically, “village studies” was the method used by scholars to study the different aspects of social change in villages; that is, study of specific problems of one village, or a group of villages, taking into account the overall socio-economic situation of the village(s). As defined by Dasgupta (1978), village surveys involve census of households in the village covering a wide range of socio-economic aspects. Village study, on the other hand, is an in-depth social-anthropological technique that involves a grounded understanding of the village as a unit. In other words, village surveys analyse more quantifiable variables and village study examines the processes of socio-economic changes.

As scholars (Dasgupta, 1978, Connell and Lipton, 1977) have argued, the reason for selecting a village as the unit of analysis is the understanding that every village economy represents a specific socio-economic system, the organisation of which influences the socio-economic relationships within the village. It is an important administrative and social unit; the village environment influences the behaviour of its residents. Dasgupta (1978, p. 1) argued that “the case for studying villages largely rests on its being close to people, their life, livelihood and culture, and on its role as a focal point of reference for individual prestige and identification.” Moreover, village is as an entry point to illuminate various theoretical and conceptual issues but not as an isolated case (Sahay, 2002). According to Breman (1997), “Village studies offer an excellent opportunity to record the consequences of shifts in the balance between the public and private dimensions of poverty and poverty reduction (p. 28).”

Dube (1967), Connell and Lipton (1977) and Dasgupta (1978) provide a basic framework of Indian village. According to Dube:

…a territorial as well social, economic and ritual unit, the village is a separate and distinct entity. The resident of this settlement recognize their corporate identity, and it is recognized as such by others. It is not uncommon to find in them a sentiment of attachment towards their own settlement site (Dube, 1967:7).

Connell and Lipton (1977) distinguish between “village studies” and “studies in villages.” While “village studies” are intimately linked to the village environment and the complex web of social relationships that exist in the village, the “studies in villages” consider the village the environment to be lesser importance. In latter, the systems of gradation in the village hierarchy, the vertical ties that exist between families and individuals, and the
constraints imposed by the socio-economic system of the village are not analysed in any importance.

Within the tradition of village studies, village restudies have also formed an important part. As sociologist Andre Beteille (The Hindu, September 3, 2002) pointed out recently, ‘…the 1950s and 1960s may be described as the great age of village studies…we now have restudies of villages first studied in 1950s and 1960s. It will be safe to say the research on the village in India is fuller and deeper than on villages anywhere else in the world.’

The proposed study is a restudy of a village in Jalgaon district of Maharashtra that was earlier studied in the 1950s. A village re-survey can indicate changes in rural life in terms of quantifiable variables, while re-studies can also help to analyse processes of socio-economic changes.

1.3.5 Village Studies in Maharashtra

Maharashtra has the distinction of having been the site of a number of village studies in the 20th century. These surveys provide detailed qualitative and quantitative information on land and asset ownership, forms of caste discrimination, settlement pattern, cropping pattern, cultivation practices, credit relations and modes of tenancy. The data can be used as some sort of benchmark in our understanding of the socio-economic characteristics of the village population in the contemporary period. They provide detailed qualitative and quantitative information on land and asset ownership, forms of caste discrimination, settlement pattern, cropping pattern, cultivation practices, credit relations and mode of tenancies etc.

1.3.5.1 Site of the study village

During 1950s and 1960s, scholars and students from the Gokhale Institute of Politics and Economics, Pune undertook intensive village studies in different agro-ecological zones of Maharashtra to understand socio-economic conditions of villages. Maskawad was one of the villages studied along with other two villages (Maskawad Seem and Waghode Budruk) in 1956-57 (see, Mulla, 1957). For the present research study, Maskawad village was selected. The previous study of Maskawad village is an important
benchmark to examine and understand the level of commercialisation or development of
capitalism in agriculture in the village between the intervening period i.e., 1957 and 2010.

Maskawad belongs to the banana growing irrigated region of Jalgaon district (see Figures 1 and 2). In May 2010, Maskawad was surveyed as part of a larger research project under the leadership of Professor R. Ramakumar at the Tata Institute of Social Sciences, Mumbai. I was a member of survey team that re-surveyed the village. In this survey, efforts were made to record, describe and explore the village agrarian economy. Data was collected on a number of basic socio-economic variables regarding each household. Using structured questionnaires, we tried to track the dynamics of social and economic change in the village with respect to multiple indicators such as output, labour, land and credit. By focusing on a single village in the region, the main focus was to achieve a degree of detail and to capture a range of issues involved in the understanding of the process of change that may not have been possible otherwise.

After the survey, I visited the village in December 2013 and later in February to March 2014 to collect qualitative information. As a part of the qualitative field work I interviewed cultivators, agricultural labourers, village level leaders and government officials dealing with land, credit, extension service and marketing. I met many older-generation cultivators, agricultural labourers and village women labourers to understand how they have pursued changes in the cropping pattern, changes in the technology and mechanisation and changes in cultivation practices.

*Figure 1 Map of Maharashtra State in India with Jalgaon district shaded*

![Map of Maharashtra State with Jalgaon district shaded](http://www.mapsof.net/map/political-map-maharashtra)
1.3.5.2 Survey Method and survey period

In the month of March, 2010, two principal investigators visited Maskawad village to get some primary information such as number households, major crops, irrigation, caste groups, wage rates or male and female etc. Cropping pattern and detailed agricultural operations for each crop were also listed. In many villages, one does not find an updated household list; however, the ICDS workers update their household database listing every year. For the census survey in this study, the study relied on the Anganwadi household list in Maskawad.

The principle objective of the survey was to undertake a study on agrarian change as a whole in Maskawad village. The next visit with around 10-12 field investigators was in the second week of April 2010 for the detailed survey. For this census type household survey, a structured questionnaire was used for each household. In the interview schedule, the main points of information gathered from each households in the survey related to: demographic details of the household, history, caste, age, education and literacy status, occupational structure of each household member, ownership and operational holdings, type of land, forms of tenancy, land transaction, agricultural production and sale, input and cost of cultivation, input including labour, cost of cultivation, agricultural extension service, agricultural and non-agricultural employment,
income from wages, business activity other than agriculture, productive assets other than land, indebtedness, basic household amenities, housing, and PDS.

The reference period of the survey is the agricultural year of 2009-10; for indicators of data associated with a point in time – land holdings, asset holdings and indebtedness – the reference period is the date of the interview. The reference year 2009-10 was a poor agricultural year in terms of rainfall.

1.2.5.3 Organisation of chapters

1. INTRODUCTION:

   This chapter deals with the research question, the primary objectives of the study and methodology used.

2. VILLAGE IN CHANGE: 1956-57 TO 2009-10:

   This chapter deals with the agrarian transformation, which in turn define the nature of development of commercialisation in agriculture.

3. LAND AND TENANCY:

   The present chapter tries to describe and analyse the pattern of land holding and tenancy and changes therein between 1957 and 2010.

4. COST OF CULTIVATION AND PROFITABILITY

   It deals with costs of cultivation and profitability in major crops in the agrarian economy.

5. SIZE OF LABOUR FORCE

   The focus of this chapter is to capture changes in the occupational structure of the rural population.

6. DEMAND FOR AGRICULTURAL LABOUR

   Chapter deals with the demand factors those influence labour absorption.
7. SOME FEATURES OF EMPLOYMENT

This chapter is associated with the number of days of employment agriculture and its relationship with changes in production conditions.

8. INCOME, ASSETS AND INDEBTEDNESS

It examines the levels and distribution of household income, distribution of assets, rural credit and level of indebtedness.

9. CONCLUSION