CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION
The cropping pattern and farming techniques adopted in a region reflect the agricultural situation prevailing in a locality. It projects the degree of agricultural development achieved in an area and will help to identify the level of development in that area in comparison with others either similarly or differently endowed. These two aspects of agriculture are considered as important in assessing the agricultural economy in general, and its soundness in particular. It is needless to say that the type of farming in an area is influenced by the facilities available like irrigation, transport, credit, market etc. When these facilities are available, there is a likelihood of commercial farming coming up, otherwise there would be only subsistence agriculture. Further, the cropping pattern and the farming techniques practised in a locality, are the product of agricultural evolution over many years. It is presumed that the traditional farmer is rational in choosing the farming techniques and cropping pattern and in utilising the agricultural resources for maximising the personal income. With the advancement of technology, effective functioning of extension agencies, availability of credit facilities and provision of irrigation, the cropping pattern and farming techniques are liable to change.
and so will not be good for all times to come.

The National Commission on Agriculture also expressed the view that though the scope for changing the cropping pattern may not appear bright, at the outset, yet the possibilities would not be found wanting, on close examination. The Commission is of the view that possibilities to change crops as well as the cropping pattern are greater in the southern parts of the country where there are two peaks of rainy periods.

The symposium on cropping patterns in India conducted by the Indian Council of Agricultural Research in 1968 had expressed the view that the economics of cropping patterns had not been studied and the same needs to be investigated.

In this context, a study of the cropping pattern and farming techniques of a chronically drought-prone district like Anantapur should be interesting. Anantapur district of Andhra Pradesh State (India) situated between

3. Ibid p.12
13°35' to 15°13'N and 76°42' to 78°27'E is not a geographical or ethnical entity, but is only a creation of administrative convenience as in the case of many other districts in the state. This district is identified as chronically drought affected by the Government of India and is one of the six core districts in that category (the others being Jodhpur and Nagaur in Rajasthan, Ahmednagar and Sholapur of Maharashtra, Bijapur of Karnataka) which received financial assistance from the World Bank to mitigate the hardships of drought.

The district is considered as the haunting ground for famines, for there is a long dismal history recorded to this effect, dotted by periodic famines. The district considered as backward due to paucity of resources and absence of investment opportunities, has no mineral or other resources that can support an industry. Hence agriculture has become the mainstay for the majority of the population of the district and extreme dependence on