I Classification of Farm Groups

The classification of farmers based on the size of their landholdings differs among researchers from place to place. Baldev Singh (1974) classified farms as small, marginal, Big and Large when the operational holding is up to 7.5 acres, 7.5-15 acres, 15-30 acres and above 30 acres respectively in Haryana. Singh (1989) classified farmers as marginal, small, medium and big farmers when the holding is below one hectare, 1-2.5 hectare, 2.5-5 hectare and above 5 hectares in Uttar Pradesh. Duraisamy (1984) classified farm households into marginal, small, medium and big when the landholding is less than 2.5 acres, 2.5-5 acres, 5-10 acres and above 10 acres respectively in Tamil Nadu.

A question that arises at this stage is with regard to the standard size classes of land holding described as marginal, small, medium and big farms. The definitions of these categories in terms of area should not be taken as uniform, regardless of varying conditions that are material for agricultural productivity. When the associated parameters change, the values (land size) of these categories may also change. A person who cultivates on one hectare of near Ooty should not be considered as a marginal farmer. On the other hand, a person who cultivates 10 hectares of land in an arid zone may not qualify to be called as big farmers. There may be broad differences between the farms of the same size class in different regions.

Keeping all these arguments into consideration, in this study farmers (heads of the household) were classified into marginal, small, medium and
big farmers based on the size of their land holding. They are defined as follows:

- **Marginal Farmers** - Upto 1 hectares.
- **Small Farmers** - 1 to 2 hectares.
- **Medium Farmers** - 2 to 4 hectares.
- **Big Farmers** - Above 4 hectares.

In order to treat dry lands on par with wet lands, the dry lands were weighted by 0.5 hectare of wet land. This weight was based on the land value prevalent in most of the sample villages. The value of one hectare of dry land was nearly equal to the value of half acre of wet land (Refer Appendix-A.3 for landholding-wise distribution of sample farmers).

### II Classification of Educational Levels of Farmers

The farmers in India by and large do not have formal training and specific education in agriculture. Those farmers who have had the benefit of formal schooling have, almost without exception, received general education (Chaudhri, 1968). In this study, the classification of educational levels of the heads was made on the basis of their levels of formal education only. The levels of education were classified into six groups, as given below:

- **E0** - Illiterate - No schooling
- **E1** - Just Literate - Upto 4 years of schooling
- **E2** - Primary - 5 to 7 years of schooling
- **E3** - Middle - 8 to 9 years of schooling
- **E4** - Secondary - 10 to 11 years of schooling
- **E5** - Hr. Sec. and above - More than 11 years of schooling
Similar type of definition and classification was followed in the studies of Chaudhri (1968), Baldev Singh (1974), Randhwa (1983), Duraisamy (1984), and Nautiyal (1985). In these studies, classification of education levels was based on formal education only. Our classification is exactly similar to Nautiyal (1985). (Refer Appendix-A.4 for education levelwise distribution of sample farmers)

The highest level of education (schooling) of the head of the farm household, the decision maker on agricultural activities, was taken as education. In the case of failure, the previous standard of successfully completed education was taken into account.