CHAPTER VIII

CONCLUSIONS
The physical and socio-economic factors influence the general landuse and cropping pattern of the region. The proportion of cultivated land is relatively low in the western part of the region than in eastern part. In the overall landuse pattern, cultivated area comprises only half of the total geographical area of the district and comes first, whereas non-agricultural land comprising forests and area not available for cultivation ranks second followed by potential agricultural land.

Over ninety percent of the cultivated area is normally sown every year. The predominance of foodgrains in the cropping pattern is notable throughout the region. In kharif season rice is a leading cereal crop and its share is relatively higher in the western part than the eastern part. Rice fields are left fallow in rabi season. The area under rabi cropping is smaller in comparisons to kharif crop season. Wheat and gram are the main rabi crops grown in the region but the hectarage under them is very negligible. The other cereal crops of region are ragi, jowar, nagli and sawa. Pulses are relatively insignificant in the region's cropping pattern. Sugarcane is the major cash crop of the region and has a concentration along river banks and around sugar factories. Vegetables and fruits are raised on a small scale and their share is insignificant in overall cropping pattern. Oilseeds,
particularly groundnut, are largely confined to south­eastern part of study area and mostly grown as a kharif crop. Tobacco is grown in eastern part on a very small scale. Grasslands are more widespread in western part of the region.

The study of landuse survey in selected villages of the district reveals the existing and changing pattern of landuse in the region. In every village the percentage of cultivated land is appreciably high but in each village some amount of cultivated land lies unproductive owing to various factors. The percentage of unproductive land is high in villages located in western part than the villages in eastern part. The general landuse patterns do not deviate much in the villages with different locations, it is the cropping pattern which vary considerably.

Foodgrains dominate the cropping pattern in all the villages except those which are located on river banks where the sugarcane dominates the landuse scene. In rain­fed villages there is a greater variety of crops than in the irrigated villages. Further, in all villages the net cultivated area in kharif season is higher as compared to cultivated area in rabi season. In the landuse study of selected villages, it is observed that the poor and medium quality lands yield only one crop a year, especially where irrigation is not available.
The expansion in the extent of agricultural land has been largely from the reclamation of potential cultivable land, and the losses are largely through the conversion of agricultural land into non-agricultural uses. With the analysis of landuse change in different landuse categories two change regions are recognized, first, the western section of the district, occupying about three fourths of the total geographical area and the second comprises the remaining eastern part of the district.

The changes in cropping pattern have occurred in response to many forces. The intensity of cropping has decreased over most of the region. The general trend in cropping pattern is from low yielding low value crops to high yielding high value crops. The major shifts are in cereals pulses which depict considerable loss. The other declining crops are tobacco and cotton. But a significant increase is achieved by sugarcane. Rice is being replaced by sugarcane which is growing in importance in the region. Based on these changes the region may be grouped into four categories of crop pattern change viz. very high, high, medium and low.

Regional disparities exist in the pattern of agricultural landuse change. Changes in agricultural landuse have occurred in few areas of district where irrigation water was
available. But the change was less in rainfed areas. Changes in agricultural landuse have occurred in areas along river banks and they are less away from river bank. On river banks the soil is fertile loam or loamy clay and irrigation facilities are also satisfactory, while away from river bank, the soil is less productive and irrigation facilities are meagre.

Thus, agricultural landuse patterns are changing in the region and these changes are mainly due to many improvements in agricultural technology. But in this change process there is a sequence of events in which the introduction of the first event prepares the necessary ground for the next.

The process of agricultural change in Kolhapur district has its roots as far back as the period of Chhatrapati Shahu Maharaj. The first dam was constructed on Bhogawati river with the objective to provide water for agriculture and increase the food production to meet the increasing demands of the growing population. But the planned development in district’s agriculture occurred after 1951. Many programmes and plans were introduced at different time periods which provided the essential background to promote the agricultural change in the region.
The first Five Year Plan was initiated in the district in April, 1951 and started to build a base for a developing economy. Subsequently, Maharashtra State Government introduced various measures to improve agricultural production in the State. These largely included the land tenure reforms, a ceiling on land holdings, consolidation of holdings and the building up of various development agencies. The community development programme was the first of its kind and this was followed by the National Extension Programme and Block Development Programme. This process of agricultural expansion received additional support from the increased farm credit and finance institutions, co-operative movement and marketing federation limited, introduced in the district. The major objective of these programmes was the expansion of agricultural production and to provide an integrated structure of marketing of farm production and supply of farm inputs.

Efforts to improve agricultural production were also made during Second Five Year Plan period (1956-61), whereas the Third Five Year Plan period (1961-66) marks the beginning of induced agricultural change. Having realised the inadequacy of the community development programme in achieving the desired results a new extension approach 'Intensive Agricultural District Programme' was launched
in the country in 1961. This scheme was adopted in district and it altered the agricultural landscape of region in response to technological changes.

Many co-operative sugar factories were set up during the last decade and now there are nine sugar factories in the region. These sugar factories have given the high prices to cane growers. As a result, much of the irrigated area which was previously under rice and other cereals and pulses crops was brought under sugarcane. Presently this district is well known for its jaggery not only in the State but all over India. Thus, sugar factories have played prominent role and in a way forced to make some vital alterations in the agricultural landuse of the region.

Another important feature of the district was the establishment of the College of Agriculture at Kolhapur. This provided a sound base for agricultural extension in the district and promoted innovations and advised the farmers of district in many ways.

The most important linkage in the stages of this development process was the developing spirit of the farmers in Kolhapur district. The farmers of Kolhapur district appear to be more progressive than the farmers in other parts of the State. This dynamic element of farm population brought about many changes in agricultural
landscape of the region.

To sum up, major changes in the agricultural landscape of this region have occurred through the implementation of these programmes, plans and other institutions which provided some essential linkages in continuing the progress of agricultural development of the region.

But in this agricultural landuse change irrigation, along with other innovations, has played a significant role. The increased farm credit provided the opportunity to the farmers to instal pipelines and pumping sets for the assured supply of water. As a result, irrigated farming in many parts of district was started. The percentage of irrigated land in the region is greater than State average. This development of irrigation enabled the farmers to accept the other innovations. These included the increased use of fertilizers, improved seeds, pesticides and new implements. A real breakthrough in the region's agriculture came with the introduction of high yielding varieties in 1966-67. These innovations were largely responsible in breaking the old structure of farming in the region. Subsequently farmers are changing their techniques of farming and allocation of land to different crops. As a result of these innovations a change has emerged.