CHAPTER – VII

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, SUGGESTIONS AND CONCLUSION

7.1 INTRODUCTION

In this chapter, an attempt has been made to recapitulate the key findings of the present study and based on these findings a few suggestions have been offered. The study was conducted in Erode district and the study aimed at measuring the extent of income generation through farm related subsidiary activities. It also studied the problems faced by the respondents during the course of cultivation, the execution of works related to subsidiary activities, and marketing their produce obtained from those tasks.

7.2 FINDINGS

1. The study reveals that, 39.4% of the respondents rely on canals (Lower Bhavani Project) alone for irrigation.

2. It is inferred from the study that, the respondents who own more than 5 acres of land make the maximum use of canals and those who own upto 3 acres make the maximum use of almost all water bodies viz. well, borewell, lake.

3. 64% of the respondents use electricity as a power source.

4. 41% of the total respondents cultivate sugarcane and turmeric which are cash crops that give annual yield.

5. Live stock rearing, poultry farming, horticulture, sericulture, floriculture and olericulture (cultivation of vegetables) are the subsidiary activities practised by the respondents of the study.
6. 52.4% of the respondents are involved in intermittent crop cultivation.
7. Onion, tomato, brinjal, chillies, ladies finger, pumpkin, cluster beans, yam, pulses and castor bean are the intermittent crops raised by the farmers to enhance income.
8. 23.7% of the respondents cultivate onion as inter–crop, and 39.6% of the respondents gain an additional net income of Rs.10,000 p.a through intermittent crops.
9. 50.8% of respondents allot 2-5 cents of land solely for cultivation of vegetables.
10. The survey shows that, 62.8% of the respondents cultivate up to 3 vegetables in their lands.
11. The study found that expenses for pumpkin, cluster beans, castor beans are less, when compared to all other vegetables.
12. The study reveals that 31.2% of the respondents cultivate plantain in their lands followed by coconut. It is found that tamarind trees require less expenses but net income is the highest when compared to all the other trees.
13. It is found from the study that 45.8% of the respondents involve in floriculture.
14. 22.7% of the respondents cultivate jasmine in their lands, and 55.8% of the respondents get up to Rs. 200000 p.a. as net income from flower cultivation.
15. The study found that majority (84.8%) of the respondents does not involve in sericulture and those who involve allot more than 1 acre of land for mulberry crop cultivation. Through that, they earn an income of Rs.80000 a year, even after spending for labour and initial expenses.
16. It is interesting to note that 53.2% of the respondents prefer both machine and manual harvesting and almost 94.4% of the respondents opined that labourers are insufficient at the time of harvest.

17. 45.8% of respondents self harvest due to lack of labourers.

18. 87% of the respondents definitely suffer from loss due to non availability of labourers, and the loss accounts to 20%.

19. It is found from the study that 66% of the respondents do not feel the wastage due to machine harvesting.

20. The study reveals that 23.4% of the respondents own tractor, and 60.7% of those respondents mainly keep it for ploughing their own lands.

21. Of the 500 respondents surveyed with questionnaire 68.4% of them seek the departmental advice on crop cultivation.

22. The study brings forth the fact that 55.2% of the respondents are not adopting new techniques in cultivation.

23. Nearly 50.4% of those who adopt hybridization techniques.

24. The survey highlights that majority (65.2%) of the respondents get up to 25% value of excess benefits by using new techniques.

25. Milchcows, milch buffaloes, oxen, goats and sheep are reared by the respondents of the survey. 37% of the respondents own milch cows in the study area.

26. The survey found that maximum (75.8%) number of respondents choose to retain the female calves with them and 63.6% of the respondents do not spend their money for the purpose of procuring cattle feed.

27. It is inferred that majority (64.8%) of respondents use home bred chicken for domestic use.
28. The study brings forth the fact that a good majority (78.8%) of the respondents avail loans from banks for agri-related activities.

29. 65% of the respondents are getting loan from co-operative societies and 49.7% of the respondents avail crop loan for their cultivation.

30. The study reveals that majority of the respondents opt for short term loans, and 73% of the respondents do not repay loans with in the stipulated time. 57% of the respondents avail loan only once in a year.

31. 83.4% of the respondents were affected due to drought and monsoon failure, for a period of 2 years (2010 – 2012).

32. The survey found that, of the affected respondents 52.8% have collected funds from the government for crop loss.

33. The study through chi-square analysis projects the fact that among the socio economic variables, Location, Age, Marital Status, Occupation, Community, Family Members, Nature of Land, Vehicles Owned by the respondents, Nature of Soil of the land, Amount of land used for cultivation, Modes of Irrigation, Other sources of income and Level of satisfaction have close relationship with the income through subsidiary activities.

34. The chi-square test also points out that among the demographic variables Nature of Residence, Sex, Educational Qualification and Type of Family have no positive influence on income through subsidiary activities.

35. Garrett Ranking Technique was applied to rank the problems faced by the respondents during cultivation. Among the problems ‘Non availability of labourers’ and ‘Power cut’ are ranked as the first and second problem. ‘Pest attack’ secured the third position. The last in the list is the problem of ‘Lack of technical assistance’.
36. Among the problems faced by respondents during the period of marketing their produce as the problem ‘Delay in settlement of sale amount’ is ranked first and ‘Unstable price’ the second and ‘Lack of communication’ is given the last rank.

37. It is found from the Correlation Analysis that among the 19 selected factors 6 variables like Nature of soil, Types of Land used for cultivation, Types of Irrigation, Other sources of income activities and Level of satisfaction of farmers have good positive relationship with the income through subsidiary activities.

38. Multiple Regression Analysis indicates that Location, Age, Sex, Educational Qualification, Occupation, Annual Income, Type of family, Nature of Land Holdings, Types of Land, Land used for Cultivation, Types of Irrigation and Level of Satisfaction of farmers are positively associated with income through subsidiary activities.

39. It is clear from Discriminant function analysis that the variables viz. Land used for cultivation, Nature of land, Annual Income, Nature of Soil are discriminating at 1 percent level with the low and high income through subsidiary activities.

7.3 SUGGESTIONS

The most heartening facts revealed in this study is, the farmers of Erode are turning scientific, tech-savvy, innovative and experimental. The research reveals that 69% of the respondents seek departmental advice on crop cultivation and 50% of them adopt hybridization techniques which have become profitable by giving 25% excess benefit. They do away the problem of lack of labours for harvesting by choosing machine harvesting. They are judicious in choosing the type of harvesting depending upon labour
availability. It is well established with the fact that 53% of the sample adopt both machine and manual harvesting. Still they have a long way to go regarding opting sericulture and horticulture as ways of beneficial farming. Sericulture, which, as a cash crop, (puts a net profit of Rs.80000 a year per acre) can be, raised both in dry and wet lands. This is yet to take off, because a meager 14% of the study sample practices it. Keeping orchards is still in a low key since only 30% of the respondents grow trees such as tamarind, papaya, mango, guava, sapotta. Trees such as drumstick and tamarind need water and care to some extent during the initial years of their growth. But the yield lasts for many years to come and the initial expense turns in to multiplied profits The farmers of Erode should take a leaf out of the success stories of Namakal district (Sankari is the best example where the barren rocky lands of laterite soil are turned into orchards of sapotta and mango). Bee keeping is a non starter. Officials of agriculture department should make Erode district look at that direction.

That, loan in any form or any name will be waived either fully or partially over a period of time however huge in size it is, by government formed by any party, is entrenched in the mindset of Indian farmers and Erode district is not an exception. It is reflected in the finding of the study that, out of 78% of the sample of the study who avail loans for agri related activities only 27% of them pay loans within the stipulated time. History stands testimony to the fact that farmers do not reciprocate the goodwill of government in the form of loan waiver to haul the poor peasants out of the quick sand of debts. When viewed in totality the peasantry in India may be riven with poverty and inequality, not the farmers of Erode. This sort of tendency exasperates the treasury and earns the resent of the common public
in general. The onerous task of retrieving this community out of this self destructive thinking and to set them on the path of progress and prosperity lie on the shoulders of the government and the departments concerned. Government must insist the payment of crop loans by the way of holding a share on the yield. The share can be directly collected from the farm and auctioned in regulated markets to get back the loan.

The respondents ranked labour shortage as the most worrisome problem followed by power cut. Labour shortage has occurred due to the migration of farm labourers into construction sites where they get better wages for their works like laying tiles, painting and polishing. Instead of waiting for labour and incur the loss up to 20% of the total yield, farmers can go in for mechanization as there are machines for every stage of cultivation like preparing soil, sowing, developing, spraying, applying manure, harvesting. The machines shaped in laboratories to ease and aid the agriculturists should land in the fields to fill the gap between land and laboratory, or else the previous land will be lost forever. It has already started up as one can see huge industries, educational institutions and sky rising apartments amidst lush green fields of rice and sugarcane in canal fed areas of Erode district.

Among the problems faced by the respondents during marketing their produce, delay in settlement of sale amount tops the list followed by unstable price. After spending a good amount on lands to raise a crop and sweating out every other day to protect it from pests and rodents they sell the yield in the market, but they are not paid immediately. The unstable price is another blow. Setting up of cold/aerated storages to stock/store the produce
till the market is favorable, yet remains a distant dream. It is high time the government both at center and state woke up to address this problem. The strengthening of the hands that feed the country is a must or else we still have to starve.

7.4 CONCLUSION

*He that by the plough would thrive
Himself must either hold or drive*

- Benjamin Franklin

Gone are the days of Benjamin Franklin, the scientist, when the farmer himself directly involved in the works of field. But today’s farmer and his/her family keep themselves away and expect others to carry out all the activities which make him/her unable to know the pulse of farm. Farm management may be considered a science but still it is an art in the hands of the practitioner who can manipulate the availability of water, finance and patience to paint prosperity on the canvas of his soil. When it is left to the employees, they cannot maintain the health of the crop as they fail to sense and feel what is required. This is what is happening to many of the farming families in Erode District. This sort of attitude leaves them to grumble that labour shortage is the main problem.

Erodians can be cited as the best reference sources regarding allied activities of agriculture to raise funds for household management. Every sample of the study follows one or the other subsidiary activities to compensate the loss of gap in income through regular cultivation activities. They, at present, follow mixed cropping rather than mono crop but they
slowly switch over to mono crops like sugarcane, coconut and plantains. It is due to the fact that, the labour requirements will be less when compared to other short term crops. But the recent past has given them a lesson to learn. The department should set up/organise many counseling centres and symposiums to encourage and educate the need to involve in more relevant but less expensive subsidiary activities of farming. They can even take the farmers a tour around Kerala where (expect in estates) farmers could earn 1-2 lakhs out of an acre through mixed farming and subsidiary activities.