ABSTRACT

The present work is an agrographic investigation of contemporary Syria, carried out in a comparative methodological framework. It deals with yearwise trends in area production and productivity and also examines the sources of variation in levels and growth of agricultural productivity. The work has been carried out within the framework of environmental technological and institutional factors.

Within the country as a whole the productivity levels vary from one region to another. It is high in some parts, while as it is low in various other parts of the country. However in spite of variations in growth and productivity levels there is ample scope to get more land under cultivation. Keeping in view the fluctuations in growth and productivity levels possibilities to minimize these variation do exist. There is much scope to increase the area under cultivation for which different methods can be adopted. In spite of small area of the total land area under cultivation the country is primarily agricultural, because historically agriculture has been the mainstay of Syrian economy.

Its contribution to Syrian economy is significant. The agricultural sector engaged 29 per cent of the working population and contributed 20 per cent to Gross Domestic Product during 1983. Its share to GDP has shown a decreasing tendency as compared to the period 1962 and 72, when it was 32 and 25 per cent respectively. However during 1983 the share of
agriculture to GDP was more than the other sectors of economy like mining and industry. These sectors contributed only 16.6 per cent to GDP showing thereby the increasing share of agriculture to GDP.

It has been found out that Syrian agriculture is beset with grave institutional and environmental problems such as, unequal distribution of land and regional variation in levels and growth of agricultural productivity. Accordingly, with a view to solve these problems such suggestion as, increasing of yield level, accelerating of growth level, minimizing the gap between the big operational land holdings and changing of cropping pattern were formulated. Even then the main problems such as low yield level, low growth rate in food production, low yield level in large number of states, low level of agriculture inputs, etc. do remain.

In spite of variations in yield per unit, the increase in area production and yield also varies from one region to another, therefore the magnitude of regional imbalances have also been studied. Along with variations in increase in area production and yield, the levels and characteristic of agricultural productivity as well as growth characteristics in terms of existing variations have also been analysed.

An analysis of the present growth in foodgrain production reveal that the country can not do without importing
foodgrains at a large scale. Moreover the problem is bound to be aggravated because the per capita income is increasing which will increase the demand of better quality of food-grains and food items. In such a situation the different aspects of the country require to be analysed in order to cope with the present shortage of food.

Therefore keeping in view the varied dimensions of the problem like low growth levels of productivity, low level of farm technology, low farm income and wide fluctuations in agricultural output due to vagaries of nature following objectives are broadly outlined.

(i) To analyse the levels of production of each foodgrain crop
(ii) To examine the relationship between output and input levels and between growth and input levels
(iii) To analyse whether area increase is more responsible for increase in total production or yield increase is more responsible for increase in total production.
(iv) To study the various factors: environmental, technological and institutional for the present problem and how far these factors are responsible for these variations.
(v) To examine the productivity relationships with positive and negative areas of food availability.
For the present problem data has been collected from various sources. The main sources of data collection include FAO production yearbooks published by United States and Syrian Agricultural Abstracts. Data for the Climatic variations have been collected from world statistical yearbooks. The other sources of data collection mainly include.

(i) Statistical Abstract published by the office of Prime Minister in Syria.

The methodology used with a view to solve these problems is also of varied nature. Each chapter has a different methodology. For example to measure the trends in area, production and yield, simple percentage value and percent growth techniques have been applied. In this chapter five years average data have been put together in order to obviate the environmental discrepancies that we might encounter from a mere yearwise tabulation.

Secondly for measuring the growth and levels of productivity, percent annual growth rate techniques have been used. To find out the growth rate in area production and yield percent annual growth rate methods have been applied. Similarly a simple category method has been applied for finding out the yield level for each region and for the country as a whole. In this way the
per cent area as well as per cent production being occupied by each crop has come out.

The present study is divided into six chapters. The chapter entitled "Trends in Area Production and Yield" deals with growth in area and yield broadly of cereals and pulses and it has been fully assessed that either area or yield increase is more responsible for the growth in production. Growth in production, which can be obtained by the increase in yield has mostly been highlighted in this chapter.

In the second chapter i.e. "Cropping Pattern and Productivity Levels" Cropwise situation and the productivity levels have been framed out. For this purpose all the foodgrain crops were analysed in terms of growth in area yield and production.

In another chapter i.e. "Levels of Agricultural Productivity and levels of Agricultural Growth" the productivity per hectare and overall growth of foodgrains have been described. Various factors like environmental technological and institutional were taken into consideration in order to find out the truth behind the existing situation. Firstly the environmental factors were analysed with rainfall as one of the important variable. The country has been divided into number of physical units (Relief, Soil and rainfall ) and the yield level was correlated with these regions. The factors like relief and soil were held
lesser responsible than rainfall in affecting the yield and uncertainty in production. The technological factors, various irrigation machines, fertilizers etc. were analysed in relation to yield level and growth level and the concentration of these inputs was analysed in terms of percentage share of each state as well as amount of these inputs per thousand hectare of cultivated area. In institutional factors, it was realised that land holding, tenancy and agriculture labourers were held more responsible in affecting the agricultural productivity. A detailed analysis of the size of land holdings and yield was made to find out the degree of relation and it was concluded that small size land holdings are more important for agricultural development.

Lastly the thesis has been concluded and possible suggestion have been formulated. Agricultural regionalization has been made and accordingly the priority regions having better future agricultural prospects have been generalized. Low priority agricultural regions have also been pointed out.