CHAPTER - I
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INTRODUCTION

The Syrian Arab Republic lies in the Western Asia, with Turkey to the North Iraq to the east. Lebanon and Israel are lying to the South West. Before 1918 the term Syria was rather loosely applied to the whole of territory, now forming the modern states of Syria, the Lebanon and Jordan. To the Ottomans as to the Romans, Syria stretched from the Eupharates to the Mediterranean and from Sinai to the hills of Southern Turkey as a smaller province of this wider unit.

Continuous periods of political instability have badly affected the economy of the country. As a 'confrontation state' a portion of whose land has been under Israeli occupation since 1967, Syria was bearing a heavy expenditure on defence, which consumes up to one-third of its annual budget. The continuing involvement in Lebanon combined with the threat of outright war with Israel and the history of bad relations with Iraq, all have affected the Syrian economy. In 1976-77, for example, Iraq

decided to stop pumping petroleum through Syria to Mediterranean coast, thus depriving the government in Damascus of valuable transit revenues and the benefits of easily accessible petroleum supplies at a favourable price. This affected the overall economic structure of the country.

Despite periods of political instability attention was paid towards the development of agricultural economy in the country. For example, the Eupharates Dam project constructed during the Third Five Year Plan (1971-75) has brought large area under irrigation. It was estimated that about 6,40,000 hectares of land were irrigated by the project. The project has thus played a wider role in the reclamation of land. After 1976, the Fourth Five Year Plan also aimed at the overall development of agricultural sector. Like its predecessor the Fifth Five Year Plan (1981-85) also brought a progressive change in the agricultural sector. In this plan priority was given to agricultural industry. The annual growth rate target for agricultural sector during this plan was set at 7.8 per cent as compared with a projected 8.7 per cent under the previous plan and an annual average growth rate target of 7.7 per cent of the economy as a whole.\(^2\)

\(^2\) Ibid., p. 756.
The contribution of agriculture in Syrian economy is very significant. Agriculture was for many years the mainstay of Syrian economy, in spite of the existence of traditionally strong trading sectors and more recently relatively successful attempts at industrialization. The agriculture sector engaged 29 per cent of the working population and contributed 20 per cent to Gross Domestic Product during 1983. Its share to gross Domestic Product has shown a decreasing tendency as compared to period 1962 and 1972, when it was 32 and 25 per cent respectively. However during 1983 the share of agriculture to GDP was more than 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 Gross Domestic Product.

The Problem:

Syria occupies an unique position in terms of its agricultural productivity. About 45 per cent of the total geographical area of 185,180 sq. kms is cultivated. However, the productivity in some parts of the country is high in spite of the low share of cultivated area to the total geographical area. On the other hand, there is a scope to increase the area under cultivation by increasing the area under irrigation, or by adopting the dry farming techniques. In spite of the little area under cultivation, the country is primarily agricultural, because
agriculture for long has been the mainstay of Syrian economy. Since then we are aware of the problems of the agricultural development especially the self-sufficiency in agricultural production in general and food production in particular. The achievement of self-sufficiency implies that the level of domestic production is at least adequate to meet the basic needs of existing population.

But this sector of the economy have different dimensions of the problems i.e., the growth of foodgrain production is not keeping pace with the growth of population. Besides there exists a regional variation in levels and growth of foodgrain production. The most aggravating situation of agricultural economy is an unequal distribution of agricultural land, which has resulted into variation in foodgrains productivity in the country as a whole. The major suggestions so far made were to increase the yield level, to accelerate the growth rate, to remove the regional imbalances, to minimize the gap between the small and big operational land holdings and to change the existing cropping patterns etc. But at national level to achieve more additional production following suggestions were repeated by a number of agencies.

(i) Expansion of cultivated area.
(ii) Increasing labour input.
(iii) Introduction of higher yielding crops.
(iv) Adoption of more intensive systems.
(v) Change to a new system.
(vi) Adequate farm credit.
(vii) Adequate supply of essential production needs.
(viii) Incentive to educational, technical and farm management.

But still the food production problem to achieve the basic food for the well-being of the people is unsolved and the Syrian agriculture presents the following problems:

(i) Low yield level.
(ii) Low growth rate keeping in view the high growth of population.
(iii) Low yield level in large number of states.
(iv) Low level of agricultural inputs.
(v) Lack of institutional facilities.

Within the country the yield level per unit is not uniform as well as increase in area, production and yield varies from one region to another. Therefore, the main objective of the proposed work is to study the magnitude of regional imbalances in agriculture i.e. the increase in area, production and yield, so that corrective measures are adopted to augment the agricultural production in an uniformly high level. In this way the farmers will not feel themselves deprived of the present gains of the
agricultural developmental measures. Therefore, the present problem will deal with the present levels and characteristics of agricultural productivity as well as the growth characteristic in terms of existing variations at micro level both in space and time. Secondly, the problem will also analyse the various sources responsible for such a situation i.e., existing imbalances at regional level in yield and growth in area, production and yield.

Keeping in view the present level of foodgrains import and growth in foodgrains production as well as the present rate of population increase, it appears that country is importing much foodgrains. Moreover, the problem is bound to be aggravated because the per capita income is increasing which will lead to the demand of better quality of foodgrains and food items. In such a situation the different aspects of the country's requirement to be analysed in order to cope with the present shortage of food.

Therefore, in order to increase the production, the contribution of increase in area as well as increase in yield should be measured. In this way we can find out the existing potentiality to increase the area under cultivation as well as to suggest possibilities of increasing the technological mechanisms.
Aims and Objectives:

The space of economic development and economic transformation has an important implication in the role and strategy of agricultural development. On the one hand the space of transformation is the key determinant of the size and rate of change of agricultural labour force, which in turn effects the labour and capital productivity. On the other hand the extent and rate of transformation and specific nature of agricultural sector determines the extent to which economic development depend upon capital formation in agriculture and transfers of capital from agriculture to other sector.

It is likely that the production in the agriculture sector can be expanded at least in production to the increase of labour and capital input. Indeed there are probably significant external economies and economies of sale in the non-agricultural sector. Hence a successive investment in the non-agricultural sector reinforces each other. It is quite likely that production expands more proportionately with increase capital and labour input.

Keeping in view the complexities of economic development, it becomes necessary to study the aims and objectives of concerned problem. Diagnosis of development policy and recommendation

concerning future policy requires measurement of success of past programmes and the choice of measure of success is in time dependent upon explicit understanding of goals and objectives. The general objectives of economic development is to raise the average level of living standard of human population. Level of living is a per capita concept rather than one of the aggregate of the economy. Hence increasing the level of living require that the total production of goods and services in a society should expand more rapidly than the population.\textsuperscript{4}

It is thus obvious, that the interplay between the development means and development objectives is more important. The initial size and backwardness of agriculture suggests wide scope for raising GNP through agricultural development. The factors also provide scope for the rural sector to combine income distribution objectives with development objectives through plans, which increase production and income across a wide spectrum of agricultural sector. Planning requires a wide set of objectives. But achieving a set of objectives does not necessarily require planning. Planning makes a positive contribution only if it causes the objectives to be reached more rapidly and more efficiently. On the other hand planning carried within a correct information is likely to give no better results.\textsuperscript{5}

\textsuperscript{4} ibid., p.26.
\textsuperscript{5} ibid., p. 379.
The present study requires an analysis in the growth of area production and yield in a regional framework. This will be undertaken after finding out the various sources responsible for such a situation. However, keeping in view, the varied dimensions of the present work, like low level of productivity, low level of farm technology, low farm income and wide fluctuation 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 either area increase is more responsible for the increase in total production or yield increase is more responsible for the increase in total production.

(iv) To study the various factors such as environmental, technological and institutional for the present situation and how for this relation is related with these sources.

(v) To examine the surplus, marginal and major areas of food production.

(vi) To examine the productivity relationship with positive and negative areas of food availability.
(vii) To find out priority regions for planning.

Database sources and Limitations:

For successful planning and analysis of various problems in the decision of agricultural policies data are essential. Agricultural development is a complex problem, therefore, reliable collection and sources of data are necessary for decision making and for future planning. For the present problem data has been collected from various sources; main sources of data collection include FAO Production Year books published by the United States, and Syrian Agricultural Abstracts. Data for the climatic variations have been collected from world statistical year books and various Syrian Agricultural Abstracts. Other sources of data collection include:

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


Due to limitation and nature of the present problem data has been collected from secondary sources. In order to know the changing pattern both in yield level and growth data for the point of time has been collected. Next in order to know the annual change data of each year has also been collected. However, all types of data needed for the present problems are available through secondary sources.

Methodology:

Keeping in view the varied dimensions of the problems the methodology used is also of different nature. Each chapter has a different methodology. For example to measure the trends in area, production and yield, simple percentage value and per cent annual growth techniques have been applied. In this chapter five years average data has been put together in order to avoid the environmental abnormalities. Secondly for measuring the growth and levels of productivity, per cent annual growth rate technique have been applied. Thirdly to measure the role of environmental and technological determinants rank co-relation technique has been used.

To find out the growth rate in area, production and yield per cent annual growth rate technique has been used. Similarly a simple category method has been applied for finding out the yield level for each region and for the country as a whole.
This has been done at each crop level also. In this way per cent area as well as per cent production being occupied by each level of yield has come out. Growth level and yield level situations have been shown by maps and graphs.

A Critical Account of the Work Done so far:

Studies based on similar problem and approaches have been done by number of Social Scientists either on state level, or on the country level as a whole. There are some studies, which have been conducted for the country as a whole but it could not cover all the aspects responsible for the present problems. Few studies have been conducted at smaller unit. But the approaches used were not interdisciplinary. Generally, the economists and sociologists are not well aware in knowing weightage of the geographical factors responsible for the high and low growth and low yield level of agricultural productivity. Similarly, the geographers were quite ignorant to include the socio-economic variables responsible for the present state of Syrian Agriculture. However, it has been planned to produce such a study on food production, which may cover all the related aspects and the use of all variables for the country as a whole. The studies done so far can broadly be grouped in the following manner:

(i) Agricultural land use pattern.

(ii) Cropping patterns.

(iii) Level in productivity - A Regional Variations

(iv) various inputs and Agricultural Development Determinants of Agricultural Development.

(v) Agricultural Development and Planning.

(vi) Co-operatives and Credit in Agriculture.

(vii) Technological Inputs.

(viii) Land Reform Policies.

(ix) Food Demand - Supply and Agricultural Regionalization for Planning Purposes.

Some literature in the form of books and articles has served the methodological as well as general picture of the agriculture in the country. No study of regional imbalances in the field of agricultural has been made so far.

The literature so far available provides information on the various agricultural characteristic of the region like crops and their production and productivity as well as per cent area under each crop. While as the study like growth trend in area,
production and yield in relation to growth in production and future need has not been made so far in the country. There are some studies which have been conducted for the country as a whole, but it could not cover all the aspects responsible for the present problem. Therefore, the proposed work has provided a picture regarding the variation in the agricultural productivity in the country as a whole.

The present study is divided into six chapters. The chapter entitled trends in area and production deals with growth in area and yield broadly of cereals and pulses and it was held responsible that either area or yield increase is more responsible for the growth in production. It has been seen that growth in production can be availed only through the increase in yield, mostly, from those regions and states, where yield level is very low, because of the unavailability of the infra-structural facilities needed by the crops. Therefore, to increase the production, the control over the environment is needed through the factors like technology and institutions in the weaker regions.

In the second chapter i.e. cropping pattern and productivity, crop-wise situation and their productivity levels have been analysed. For this purpose all the foodgrain crops analysed in terms of growth in area, yield and production. In this chapter agricultural situation was calculated to find out the per cent
share of area and production in each yield categories.

In another chapters i.e. levels of agricultural productivity and levels of agricultural growth, the productivity per hectare and overall growth of foodgrains has 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 a number of physical complexes (Relief soil and rain fall) 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, like tractors, various irrigation machiners, 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 agricultural labours were held more responsible in effecting the agricultural productivity. A detailed analysed of the size of land holdings and yield was made to find out the degree of relation and it is concluded that small size of land holdings are more important for agricultural development.
Lastly, the thesis has been concluded and possible suggestions have been formulated for solving the problems of the present study and accordingly future assumptions have been postulated. An 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 and ways for the development and better planning of these regions have also been pointed out.