

P R E F A C E

The study of agrarian condition of a spatial unit in a developing country has an important bearing on development planning because it gives insight to some of the problems associated with agriculture, the predominant occupation of the people. The present study aims at critically examining the varied aspects of agriculture pertaining to the district of Hooghly which is at the same time one of the highly industrialized district of West Bengal.

The first chapter deals with location, administration set up and broad ecological condition of the district in a nut shell.

The second chapter discusses the basic considerations underlining the importance of agriculture in the economy and the position, the district occupies as a producer of individual crop in the state.

Successful cultivation presupposes suitable conditions ecological and social. Among the ecological conditions drainage has considerable influence on agriculture. The drainage channels do not only provide irrigation, transport but also controls hydrological condition. The third chapter concerns with the description of the drainage and its association with agriculture. This chapter also highlights the relation between hydrological condition and crop cultivation.

Of all the components of environment the most uncertain is the thermodynamic behaviour of the atmosphere of the phenomenon called climate which greatly dictates the type of crops to be grown. Fluctuation in yield and production is also tuned with this physical factor. The fourth chapter examines the relationship between climatic rhythm and cropping season and dependence of paddy yield on climate.

The fifth chapter deals with the relationship between agriculture and soil. This chapter analyses spatial variation of some important physical and chemical properties of soil which have great impact on crop cultivation. Dependence of paddy yield on all those properties of soil has been carefully examined with the help of correlation co-efficient. In this chapter an attempt has also been made to divide, the district according to variation in fertility characteristics.

In addition to the suitable environmental conditions successful crop cultivation requires some infrastructural facilities like irrigation, improved seed and fertilizers. Supplying water to the fields by irrigation during the dry period helps to augment crop production. The sixth chapter traces the spatial variation in intensity of irrigation, sources of irrigation, and the temporal change in irrigation intensity in relation to the change in net area sown. Relationship between irrigation and cropping intensity has also been highlighted in the chapter.

The seventh chapter relates to the spatial variation in land utilization in the district. The trend of agricultural land utilisation has been carefully analysed along with spatio-temporal variation in intensity of cropping and crop diversification in this chapter.

As regionalisation of spatial unit is the key-note of any aspect of economic-geographic studies an attempt has been made in the eighth chapter to divide the district in to crop combination regions. Spatial variation in the dominance of a particular crop has also been discussed in the chapter.

In the ninth chapter the author has endeavoured to critically analyse the trend of production and yield of the chief crops in the district.

Greater the agricultural productivity, the greater is the return to the farmers. As such an attempt has been made in the tenth chapter to divide the district into agricultural productivity regions with a view to suggesting some measures for increasing the productivity of those regions which are backward in this respect.

In order to achieve progress in agriculture improved seeds, fertilizers and machinery are essentially required.

With the advent of Green Revolution in India achievement in this respect has been made possible to some extent in this district. Achievement relating to seeds and fertilizer technology in the district has been highlighted in the eleventh chapter.

The concluding chapter has underlined the problems associated with agriculture in the district and the probable measures to tide over them.

The statistical tables on the basis of which the present study has been made has been included in the appendix.

Jaydev Kumar Kolay