CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Agriculture occupies a key position in the economy of developing nations of Asia, Africa and Latin America. Almost in all the developing countries more than half of the population is engaged in agricultural activities. In a predominantly agricultural country like India, agricultural production holds the key to the peace, progress and prosperity of the nation. However, the recurrence of famine conditions in several parts of the country and subsequent import of food grains to face the food scarcity amply testify that the yield potential of the newly evolved high yielding varieties of crops are not being fully exploited by the farmers (Ambastha, 1986).

Modern scientific farming heralds a situation of uncertainty and is more hazardous to the peasants and acceptance of innovation involves greater risk -- "The peasant's natural conservatism is compounded by the fact that in this realm he is risking his family's subsistence when he is innovative" (Lewis, 1962). Cultivators are reluctant to accept a new technique because to do so would compromise their way of life (Myrdal, 1968).

Farmers all over the world are working as managers of their farms, irrespective of the economic, social, cultural, physical and technological environment. The farmer manages a production system to get a return from it. Consciously or unconsciously, management of farming is an important pre-requisite to achieve success in agriculture.
Output from the farm, which may be in the form of products or money, is crucial to the farmer, as on it depends the extent to which the farmer meets the goals of the family. In a highly competitive world, the challenge before the farmer is how well he can manage the farm to enhance the return on a sustained basis. To enable the farmer to meet the challenge effectively, it is imperative to develop the managerial ability of the farmers (Bora, 1989).

The progressive farmers have been made the lynchpin of all agrarian development (Jetley, 1977). Most of the innovations are accepted by them which are expected to uplift their socio-economic conditions. However, the yield potential of the newly evolved, high yielding varieties of crops and other innovations are not fully exploited by all the farmers. The main problem in this respect is not only the lack of technology but also the different farming practices; the variance in ability to adopt new agricultural innovations and different levels of managerial ability of the farmers are also influencing factors.

Farming in most of the developing countries do not keep pace with the fast developing innovations. Guba (1968) points out that there was a tremendous gap between knowledge and knowledge-utilization.

The Government of India has introduced various programmes and implemented various policies for the upliftment of the farmers. In addition to this, the government has drawn Five-Year Plans and allocated more funds for the development of
agriculture. Besides, the voluntary agencies have also taken various measures for the development of agriculture in rural areas. Inspite of the efforts of the government and the voluntary agencies, agricultural progressiveness is only confined to limited number of farmers. All the farmers are not adopting innovative agricultural practices, with the result, they are not progressive, which in turn leads to loss of agricultural production to the nation. Sangle (1984) has stated that the agricultural development includes various factors which are physical and non-physical in nature. Lack of irrigation facility is generally considered to be the obstacle in modernizing agriculture and the areas which lag behind in agricultural production are those whose irrigation potential is the least. Several studies have indicated a clear advantage of assured irrigation in using modern farm inputs in the context of increasing agricultural productivity and raising the level of rural living (Charan, 1976; Ren Huang, 1972; Venkatarayappa, 1973 and Yoshiko Shirai, 1972).

However, even within the irrigated areas, all the farmers are not alike and very few persons are progressive in agriculture by adopting the new innovations. On the other hand, in un-irrigated regions considerable number of farmers are also progressive in agriculture. It shows that the adoption of innovations is an individual effort and does not depend upon the physical nature of the lands. Large number of previous researches have emphasized the importance of motivational variables and their impact on agricultural progressiveness (Chaubey, 1974;

"Progressiveness in agriculture" can also be brought by way of (i) changing the farmers' attitudes and values (ii) reducing ritualism, superstition and increasing social activities, and (iii) influencing the adoption of innovation. Moreover, the progressiveness in agriculture is influenced by mass media, motivation and managerial ability of the individuals (Chamala, 1981; Chaubey, 1974; Jetley, 1977; Fliegel et al., 1968; Kivlin et al., 1971; Mohammed and Majeed, 1979; Moulik, 1975; Murthy and Singh, 1974; Nandapurkar, 1982; Patil, 1972; Mulay and Ray, 1973; Rogers et al., 1971; Salim, 1986; Sangle, 1984, Singh, 1971; Sinha, 1969; Sinha, 1972 and Waghmare and Waghmare 1987).

1.1. IMPORTANCE OF THE PRESENT STUDY

An overview of the literature reveals that most of the researches in agricultural progressiveness conducted so far were in the fields of social change, mechanization, modernization, communication behaviour, impact of community development programmes, etc. In general, the agricultural progressiveness was studied only with limited variables like the level of adoption of high yielding varieties and factors determining the adoption process and communication behaviour. Further, the above studies were confined to a single location where similar agro-ecological and socio-economic conditions exist. But so far no attempt has been made to verify whether the geographical location is an influencing factor with regard to adoption of
agricultural innovations in different agro-geographical conditions. In order to fill the lacuna the present research has been carried out by choosing three different agro-geographical locations to assess how far the personal attributes influence the adoption of agricultural innovation, irrespective of their geographical location.

1.2. SCOPE OF THE STUDY

In this study, the researcher has taken both progressive and less-progressive farmers from three different agro-geographical conditions, having different levels of agricultural development.

The main aim of the research is to understand how far the personal and demographic variables influence the agricultural progressiveness, irrespective of the geographical location.

1.3. CHAPTERIZATION OF THE REPORT

The thesis is organised into five chapters. Chapter one Introduction - underlines the importance of the study and agricultural progressiveness.

Chapter two is devoted to the review of related previous research studies.

Chapter three dwells on research methodology. In this chapter objectives and hypothesis are formulated. The major factors include the feature of the universe, concepts and variables, sampling techniques, tools for data collection, reliability and validity of the tools, results of the pilot
study, frame work for main data collection, and statistical techniques used for analysis are also presented.

Chapter four is devoted to the description of personal profile of the respondents and analysis of variables.

Chapter five gives a description of the findings and conclusion drawn based on the findings.