INTRODUCTION

Iran is one of the oldest societies in the world, and has long history of agriculture. Throughout the centuries she has gone under several changes. More faster has been right from the beginning of 20th century onward where, entire Iranian economy was in the slow process of changes a result of socioeconomic and political forces within and outside the country. In the beginning of 20th century Iran was totally agrarian society where, more than 85 percent of total Iranian population was engaged in agricultural activities. There was no much change in the composition of rural society even at the time of land reform programme in 1960's where, this sector of economy could still supply the self-sufficient level of food stuff within the country.

The major intervention of Government in this sector started during land reform programme (1962-71), the impact of which on the whole was destructive. The policy towards agricultural growth during the said period and later on failed to achieve its goal because of its wrong decisions and neglect of giving enough
importance to this sector, specially after 1965. On the contrary modernizing was directed towards industry by huge investment with the help of oil revenue and foreign loans, headed by U.S.A.

Not only the land reform programme did not lead to better life for majority of rural population but also, it was a strong cause for migration of peasants to urban centers for the search of job. The population of urban centers rose by 50-60 percent during the decade 1966-76. The agricultural sector which had fundamental importance in the whole of Iranian economy failed to achieve the growth process by the side of other sectors of economy. The final outcome was that, within a short period, Iran became a net importer of food items from abroad. These changes led the economy of the country into a system of dependent capitalism, particularly after 1971. Later on, when as a result of oil boom in 1973 large amount of money flew into the country, the agricultural activities were still neglected due to lack of proper and rational economic planning. Decline in agricultural population, labour force and agriculture's share in G.N.P. from 40 percent in the early 1960's to

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18 percent in the mid 1970’s reveals the fact that agriculture sector had not received proper attention. Another important fact is that, in spite of highest portion of labour force in this sector, compared to industrial and service sectors, it has the least contradiction to the G.N.P. such contradiction itself indicates that Iranian agricultural sector has not become mechanized.

Objectives:

The following are the main objectives of the present study:

1) To present a clear picture of the Iranian economy in general and that of agriculture in particular.

2) To analyze the performance of agriculture in Iran and the changes that this sector of economy has undergone during 1941-79.

3) To examine the role of oil policy as well as economic planning in development of agriculture sector in Iran.

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Research Methodology:

Present study is based on analysis of secondary data collected from most valid and reliable sources such as bulletin of Central Bank of Iran, Bulletin of Plan and Budget Organization of Iran, Bulletin of Economic Survey of Iran, Statistical Center of Iran, etc.

The data regarding total population, income, employment, production, etc. have been collected form above mentioned sources. Simple statistical tools are used for analysis of these data. For my earlier chapters I have applied a sort of historical analysis for which the data is collected from the most empirical and authentic past studies on Iranian economy and agriculture.

Scheme of Chapters:

The present study is divided into seven chapters; summary of each is given below:

In the 1st chapter, we dealt mainly with geographical condition which have very important role in the agriculture of the country. We have also
investigated about different crops and the quantity in which they are produced along with the methods of production. There is also reference to the country's population as different identities living in different regions.

The 2nd chapter, explains how socio-economic and political forces brought the country under changes where, agriculture and related activities were strongly influenced. It goes further to explain how the foreign powers and local traders came to control the agricultural activities and paved the way toward commercialization of this sector, where certain agricultural products were in great demand by foreign countries. It also refers to the living condition of urban-rural labour force right from the beginning of the 20th century up to 1941. Though as a result of centralization more attention was paid to industries yet agriculture remained as a major sector of Iranian economy.

In the 3rd chapter, we basically refer to the landlord-peasant relation prior to the land reform programme of 1962. This chapter goes further to discuss (xv)
how a minority of big absentee landlords headed by the Shah himself, hold all means over the whole rural society and let the sufferage of the peasants families who, on the other hand are contributing the major population of the country.

The 4th chapter covers the land reform era of 1962-71 and there after. In this chapter, which is rather more important one, we have discussed about land redistribution among the peasants from the beginning to the end of it. It extend the discussion of how and why land reform was brought into Iranian rural society. While going through this chapter one may find the obstacles of land reform programme and the response to it by land reform Organization under the supervision of Shah. In this chapter we also study about the new organization which was the result of land reform programme.

The role of five years planning and agricultural performance comes under 5th chapter, which gives further information about the government policy and its revenue distribution among different sectors of
economy with special reference to agriculture. In this chapter too we come across the unwillingness of Central authorities who had no keen interest being self-sufficient in this sector, hence; their planning policy pushed the country towards dependent capitalism more favourable to those who had great interest in it.

In the 6th chapter, we discuss the oil boom and its impact on Iranian agriculture. The sudden rise of government revenue as a result of oil boom was followed by more and more investment in both private and public sectors which created huge shortage in raw materials, capital goods as well as professional technical labour, Further more it let rural population migration toward big cities in search of bread.

The 7th and the final chapter summarizes the findings of the present study and suggests suitable policy measures based on these findings.