CHAPTER VI

PROBLEMS AND SUGGESTIONS

6.A PROBLEMS:-

The study region is presently facing several problems, some of which are common to the rest of India as well as Maharashtra. The problems confronting the farmers of Nashik district in general and the agricultural land-use in particular may be considered as follows:

6A.1) ENVIRONMENTAL PROBLEMS:-

i) Physical Environmental Problems

ii) Soil Erosion

iii) Uncertainty of Climate

i) PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENTAL PROBLEMS:-

The first problem of the study region is physical difficulties arising from natural environmental setting of Nashik district.

Soil depletion is a major physical problem particularly in the western part of the district. It has been settled and farmed for so long a period that the soil cover has been subjected to modification. Grassland and deficiencies of vegetal cover have agricultural implications. In many parts of the district, the lack of forest cover reduces the infiltration of moisture leading to increasing run-off and thus giving rise to soil erosion. Although the extent of the soil erosion is not yet determined, the western part of the district is a victim of this scourge.

ii) SOIL EROSION:-

Soil erosion is also a main problem of agricultural development in the district, particularly in the western talukas (Igatpuri, Surgana, Peint and the west part of Kalwan and BaglanTalukas). It is hilly and in the steeply sloping area receiving very high rainfall (above 2500 mm) soil is very poor and thin. So the physical erosion has resulted in heavy loss of fertile soil cover. Particularly in the western talukas (Peint, Surgana and Igatpuri) underproductive soil is very little. Cultivation takes place even on gentle slopes. Especially gully erosion is more rapid, so it is necessary to conserve the soil by using all measures of soil conservation.
The department of soil conservation has adopted many measures to control soil erosion. Soil loss is heavy, but efforts are poor. To stop soil erosion, Nalabunding, counter bunding, terraces, percolation tanks, afforestation and pasture land development should be implemented.

iii) UNCERTAINTY OF CLIMATE:-

Overall uncertainty of climate is also a major problem of the study region. The all-too-familiar climatic uncertainty often expressed in the commonly held view that “Agriculture in India is a gamble against the monsoon is the most outstanding problem in the category. The monsoonal rains, in Nashik district, generally show considerable variation in their time of arrival, amount and duration. Such variations are clearly brought out in the first chapter and represented in Fig. No.1.8. The results of such erratic behaviour of the monsoon are clearly visible in the yield and output of the main crops in Nashik district.

Shortage of arable land is also a major problem in the study region particularly in the western part of the district.

All these physical problems though not insurmountable, have certainly hampered the growth of agriculture especially when it is remembered that majority of farmers in Nashik district lack financial resources. It is only since the beginning of the planning era that the government has made some efforts to overcome some of the physical problems through soil conservation schemes, construction of the medium and minor irrigation works etc. However, these efforts, being relatively recent, their impact on agricultural development in the region is yet to be felt and assessed.

6A.2) CULTURAL ENVIRONMENTAL PROBLEMS:-

The socio-economic pattern of development in Nashik district bears the influence of physical characteristics. The spread of civilisation and modernisation has been checked by the hill ranges and plateaus, particularly in the western part and north eastern as well as southern part (Sinnartaluka). This barrier has been so formidable that cultural patterns have remained distinct from those of the changing cultural patterns of the rest of Maharashtra state.
Rural inefficiency resulting from farm fragmentations is a serious problem in Nashik district. Quite a lot of time and efforts are needlessly spent in travelling to and from the scattered plots and in lifting heavy ploughs and scarifiers over the bunds when moving from one small field to the next field. Scarce and valuable land is also wasted in the bunds separating the numerous tiny plots, and in the extra irrigation channels needed to supply them water at several places. Moreover, many plots are too small to allow any degree of mechanisation at all.

Literacy is also a problem facing the farmers of the district. Low levels of literacy in the countryside also inhibit agricultural programmes by restricting the use of written material and necessitating direct contact between the limited number of agricultural extension workers and farmers of the district living in the isolated rural areas. Other problems are of cultural nature—some religious beliefs ingrained conservatism of majority of the peasant farmers and lack of capital.

6A.3) PROBLEM OF IRRIGATION:

The farmers of the district are facing this problem. It is a very serious problem because day by day the rainfall is decreasing. So it is a major problem, particularly in the western part. Irrigation facilities are very limited and are found only in the eastern and central parts. Because of the lack of irrigation facilities agriculture is poorly developed. The agriculture of some talukas of the district depends on the monsoon rainfall. Thus only one crop is taken in a year. Now some measures are being taken by authorities. There is implementation of some new schemes like digging common well, lift irrigation, pipelines etc. in the drier part and western part resulting in the development of agriculture.

AVAILABILITY OF MARKETS:

It is also a very serious problem and farmers of Nashik district face this problem for agriculture products. There is not a big market in the district for marketing agricultural products. Nashik, Malegaon, Lasalgaon are the only markets for agricultural products. These market centres are far away from the rural area, so it is difficult for farmers to send their agricultural products to markets.
AGRO-BASED INDUSTRIES:-

The farm produce does not fetch good prices. There are very few agro-based industries. Thengoda (Baglantaluka) has the only cotton industry in the district. In Nashik district no other agro based industries are established except sugar factories.

AGRICULTURE PRICE STRUCTURE:-

Fluctuation in agricultural prices is also a major problem of farmers in the study area, which is common in Indian agriculture. According to Sir Roger Thomas “Next to rain, price changes have been the greatest enemy of the farmer”. Agriculture produces foodstuffs and raw materials, the demand for which in the aggregate relatively fluctuates widely from year to year, and from one part of the year to another, on account of the variations in the yields, due to weather conditions, variations due to supplies being more abundant in certain months of the year and changing marketing conditions. These fluctuating supplies constitute the most important factors responsible for the wide fluctuation in agricultural prices. So most of the farmers of the district cannot ordinarily adjust in response to the changes in the price level.

6A.4) PROBLEM OF DRY FARMING:-

Dry land farming in the western part of the district is much handicapped as compared to irrigated farming of the central and eastern parts of the district, in the matter of full exploitation of land and other available resources. In the western talukas of dry land, multiple cropping is not possible. Because of dry farming the level of fertilizers input is extremely low, consequently productivity per unit of land, labour, power and other capital resources remains low. In other words, uncertainty as well as instability of production and low yields are hallmarks of dry land in the study area.

MAGNITUDE OF LOSSES DUE TO PLANT PESTS AND DISEASES:-

It is also a serious problem of agriculture in the study region. In Nashik district crops are damaged not only by insect’s pests and diseases of crops, but also by small and wild animals and natural calamities. The crops suffer from insects, nematodes, fungi, bacteria, viruses, parasites, weeds, rodents and other animals like snakes, snails and snugs.
Besides, rodents also cause an enormous loss during pre and post-harvest periods when the crop is still in the field. Beside animals, pest and animals like monkeys, birds like crow’s, sparrows stray cattle, Flying Foxes, Rabbits, Parquets, Parrots, Sparrow’s, Goats and Sheep also damage standing crops to a large extent.

6A.5) PROBLEM OF LOW YIELDS:-

The position of Nashik district is not very satisfactory in so far as the yield of crops per hectare is concerned. The productivity of agriculture in the district is very low. So the farmers cannot get sufficient returns.

AVAILABILITY OF LOAN FACILITIES:-

Loan facilities are not sufficient to the farmers of the Nashik district. The procedure of sanctioning the loan of co-operative banks or commercial banks is time consuming and complicated. The rate of interest is also high. So farmers are not ready to take a loan. Officers of that particular department are not ready to give co-operation to farmers. Because of this situation of the institutional finance, the farmers prefer to take a loan from local money lenders and landlords. The rate of interest of these sources is very high. Because of high rate of interest farmers cannot return the loan in stipulated time. So the indebtedness of the farmers is increasing day by day.

6A.6) OTHER PROBLEMS:-

Besides these, there are many other problems like low land holdings, low use of agriculture inputs and technology, rural electrification, low use of manures and fertilizers, lack of improved seeds, draughts, floods, lack of modern implements and mechanization, labour charges, agricultural taxes, lack of agro-based industries etc.

6.B SUGGESTIONS:-

Considering the effects of the environmental factors on agricultural land use the following important suggestions can be made for the development of agriculture in Nashik district

1) Crop yields are important for farmer’s economy. But except some most crops are attacked by ad diseases. The natural calamities ruin all the crops. Hence, it is suggested that crops insurance against natural calamities should be made available to
farmers. At present, New India Assurance Company has come forward for this purpose. But its efforts are found inadequate. Some private Sanghas (Maharashtra RajyaDrakshaBagaitdarSangh) give some amount only for grapes. Hence it is suggested that the government of Maharashtra should formulate a general policy in this regard.

2) Ware Houses and Cold storage facilities be made available for small as well big farmers.

3) Day by day there may be shortage of water sources. Hence, the need for economic use of water is felt. As such, it is suggested that farmers should start drip irrigation instead of flood irrigation for fruit crops.

4) The produce of the small and medium farmers be purchased by organizations like marketing federation or such other institution so that they get higher prices.

5) Loans be made available at low interest to the farmers to buy farm implements.

6) Maharashtra government should make transport available at cheap rate for the farmers to take their agricultural products to the markets.

7) Hundred percent loan should be given to the farmers to buy various farm implements by co-operative or commercial banks.

8) High yielding varieties of seeds should be discovered and provided to the farmers at the cheapest possible rate.

9) Steel, cement etc. should be made available at subsidized rate for growing grapes.

10) Maharashtra government should fix well in advance the base prices of food grains like Jowar, Bajara, Wheat in proportion to cost of production.

11) Rates of electricity fair be reduced for farmers.

12) In case of natural calamities if farmers do not get good harvest, the loans taken by the farmers or at least the interest should be wair.

13) The Maharashtra government should get all the crop insured on behalf of farmers.
14) During the field work and survey of the selected villages, it has been observed that there is common practice among the rural community to encroach upon the fertile land for construction of residential houses and also for keeping livestock. It is suggested that this practice should be checked. The social workers and the village level workers should convince the villagers not to do so.

15) For irrigation Problems it is very imported thing use traditional systems. For proper irrigation farmer must use Sprinkle, Thibak and Drips.

16) A better integrated rural development programme should be initiated, wherever the population is very dense. New planned colonies should be developed on the uncultivable lands. Efforts should be made to minimize the distance of farms from settlements. In order to achieve this goal, it is suggested that co-operative farm houses should be constructed on the outer margins so that neglected and poor land may be utilized properly, yielding better returns to the farmers.

17) The important point which needs implementation relates to a range in the attitude of villagers towards agricultural land practices, for such a change will surely help farmers to adopt those practices which may insure better returns to them. For bringing about a change in attitude, social workers and village level workers can play an important role.

18) Loan at minimum interest rate should be provided for Drip Irrigation, Pipeline, Sprinkals, Net Steel roads(ThibakSinchan set) etc for vegetables and fruits and flowers.

19) 24 hour electric supply is essential for farmers so the government of Maharashtra should provide 24 hours electric supply.

20) The government of Maharashtra should provide loans for purchasing modern implements of farming.

21) The union government and State government should fix the base price for all agricultural products and also insure all agricultural products on behalf of farmers.

22) Labour is very difficult problem for agriculture so the government must look into it or give subsidy for labour cost.
23) Migration from rural to urban zone is a serious problem in the study area. The government should make all facilities available to farmers.

24) Weekly markets or dairy market facilities are essential for the rural area.

25) For bringing about a change in attitude of the social workers and agricultural workers in rural area.

26) Landless labourers and other agricultural labourers need work through the year, small farmers require labourers for some time in a year so the government should make provision like RojgarYojana scheme to farmers in peak seasons.

27) Small farmers require capital for investment in land, lack of capital prevents small farmers from experimenting. They require capital for purchase of better seeds, fertilizers and farm appliances. So the government should provide loan at low rate interest.

28) Excessive water has created some problems in some talukas of the eastern central part of the study area, good agricultural lands are affected by salt efflorescence. These lands are not suited for cash crops, so crop rotation is important. Give proper guidance to farmers through proper government agencies.

29) Environment is changed. Rainfall depends on nature. Nowadays rainfall is very uncertain. So farmers face the problems of changes in climate and rainfall and for this problem farmers must change their mentality of irrigation and use modern techniques like drip irrigation and other modern techniques.

30) There are various other socio-economic problems of irrigation and labourers. The number of total agricultural workers is very high. Cultivators are relatively small in number. Many labourers migrate to the urban area. If work is provided to labourers throughout the area, an automatically migration of labourers will stop.

31) Development of dairy farming, poultry, piggery pisci culture and sericulture will go a long way in improving the lot of the farmer of the study area. So gold should provide loans to farmers.