

**SOIL DEGRADATION IN KRISHNA CANAL COMMAND AREA
(MAHARASHTRA): A Micro Level Analysis.**

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ABSTRACT:

Irrigation plays an important role in agricultural development. It helps farmers to grow two or more crops from the same field within a year and it increases the productivity of the land. However, due to misuse of water and chemical fertilizers, the problem of soil degradation is arising in irrigated tracts. In view of this, present investigation aims to analyse the causes and consequences of improper management of soil by taking the case study of Krishna Canal in Karad Tahsil. The entire investigation is based on empirical data collected by employing schedule and questionnaire techniques. It is also supplemented by data collected through secondary sources. The collected data have been processed and presented in the tabular form whereas other related aspects are shown by graphs and coropleth maps. Sugarcane is the main cash crop cultivated without following the rotation system. Owing to excessive use of water and chemical fertilizers and unsuitable soil management practices, the problem of soil degradation is emerging rapidly in canal irrigated sugarcane tracts of the region. To combat this problem of soil degradation, physical, chemical and agronomical site specific measures recommended need to be implemented immediately.

KEY WORDS: Krishna canal, Irrigation, Soil degradation, Salinity, Water logging.

INTRODUCTION:

Irrigation is an integral part of sound infrastructure and it is one of the basic ingredients of agricultural inputs. To be successful and well developed, agriculture requires supply of water at regular interval and in required quantities. Importance of irrigation as an essential input, hardly-needs any emphasis. Moreover it is a pre-requisite for the adoption of new technology in agricultural sector. The availability of adequate irrigation facilities transforms the subsistence agricultural landscape gradually into commercial one making agrarian economy market oriented. Simultaneously, it creates healthy atmosphere to develop several agro-based industries providing employment opportunities to rural masses (Pawar, 1989). However, due to the excessive use of water and chemical fertilizers and unsuitable soil management practices, the problems of soil degradation are arising in irrigated tracts. The