

## **PREFACE**

The agricultural sector is one of the most fundamental instruments for economic development and poverty reduction in India, but the Indian agriculture sector was facing underdevelopment in the pre-independence period. There is a massive need for adequate agricultural credit as majority of Indian farmers are very poor. Therefore, institutional credit facilities have the capacity to accelerate the agricultural development through injecting requisite amount of credit for the increase in production, storage and marketing facilities. Consequently, the Government of India encouraged Commercial Banks to provide more and more credit to agriculture sector and ensuring access to institutional credit in rural areas.

In the present research process, we have carried out an empirical study on the role of the Commercial Banks in agricultural development in India in the 21<sup>st</sup> century at macro level. We have also chosen the Jalpaiguri District, West Bengal as an area of our case study to assess the prevailing situation at present existing here.

The present study is entirely based on secondary data for the period of 2001-02 to 2018-19 and it has been discussed in seven chapters. The first chapter is composed of prelude, the significance of the study, objective of the study, research questions, research hypotheses, research methodologies and limitation of the study. Chapter two expressed the existing literature on the role of commercial banks in agricultural development in India. Chapter three highlighted the need and major sources of institutional credit for agriculture in India such as Commercial Banks, Regional Banks (RRBs), Co-operative Banks and National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD). Chapter four has given an overview of the status of institutional credit facilities to agricultural sector in India and also made an assessment of progress in agricultural credit in India. Chapter five analysed the growth and importance of different credit institutions and evaluated their performance in terms of Ground Level Credit (GLC) to agriculture sector in West Bengal. The chapter six is the key chapter in our study which is committed to a

case study of role of Commercial Banks in agricultural development in Jalpaiguri District, West Bengal.

Finally, in chapter seven, it has been witnessed throughout the study that the growth performance of Cooperative Banks has lost their share of Ground Level Credit (GLC) to agriculture sector in India and the Commercial Banks have played the dominant role. The present study reveals that still in 21<sup>st</sup> century the agriculture sectors do have a greater role to play for economic development in India and the Commercial Banks are the key factor to develop the agriculture and allied sector.

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