

Crop Diversification: Contribution to Agricultural Growth in Eastern and Bundelkhand Regions of Uttar Pradesh

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ABSTRACT

Agricultural diversification towards high-value crops can potentially increase farm incomes, especially in regions where demand for high-value food products has been increasing more quickly than that for staple crops. Farming community of Uttar Pradesh is dominated by small and marginal farmers, and researchers have long debated the ability of a small and marginal holder dominated subsistence farm economy to diversify into riskier high value crops. Agriculture diversification recommended as effective strategy for improving incomes, generating employment round a year, stabilizing the flow of income over the season and conservation and augmentation of natural resources. The aim of study was to understand the nature of crop diversification and the contribution of area, yield, price and diversification in gross crop income or agricultural growth in Uttar Pradesh. The results showed that the variations in crop diversification was found across crops as well as regions of state and crop sector has been diversifying towards high-value crops albeit slowly. The temporal changes in the cropping pattern in both Eastern and Bundelkhand regions bring out the process of crop diversification towards cash crops (sugarcane, potato, onion and tobacco). The decomposition analysis of gross cropped income revealed that the price effect on gross income was found stronger than yield effect in both the regions of the state.

largest total food grains and wheat producing state in India. Agriculture is main source of livelihood to majority of the population of U.P. more than 70 per cent population of the state directly or indirectly depends on agriculture and allied sectors. U.P. accounted for 13.32 percent of the gross cropped area (194.40 hectares) in the country in 2013-14. The state produces 28.35 percent of India's wheat, 11.66 percent of paddy, 38.54 percent of sugarcane, 19.17 percent of bajra, 30.48 percent of lentil, 9.22 percent of rape-seed, 10.02 percent of Fruits, 14.11 percent of vegetables and 4.25 percent of spices. U.P. is the largest potato producer in the country. Therefore, Uttar Pradesh is popularly known as the granary or bread-basket of India (Anonymous, 2015a).

Since 1990s Indian agriculture has experienced a significant change with diversification from traditional food crops to commercial crops, plantation and horticulture crops (Joshi *et al.*, 2004). Though, after the introduction of green revolution technologies, the scene has completely changed about the Indian agriculture and it was transformed from food grains importer to self-reliance and net food grains exporter. This has become possible because of technological changes, as more and more agricultural land are brought under cultivation with the help of improved and assured irrigation facilities, availability of chemical fertilizers and supply of high yielding variety of seeds to the farmers (Ahmad and Haseen, 2012; Shah and Singh, 2004). But agriculture traditionally burden with some associate problems. Dominance of marginal and small