

Research
Paper

Cropping pattern changes and crop diversification in Wardha district of Maharashtra

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ABSTRACT

The present study was based on secondary data collected from different Government publications for a period of 32 years *i.e.* 1970-71 to 2001-02. This study has examined the growth rates of area, production and yield of major crops, changes in cropping pattern and the trend in crop diversification and cropping intensity in Wardha district of Vidarbha. The compound growth rates of area, production and yield of major crops were estimated for two sub-periods *viz.*, period I (1970-71 to 1985-86) and period II (1986-87 to 2001-02). The results showed that in Wardha district the area growth rates declined significantly for rice (-2.99 per cent), bajra (-5.64 per cent) and other crops were stagnant during period I. Where as the growth rates of production declined significantly with respect to rice (-16.97 per cent) and bajra (-6.74 per cent). Except soybean, the yield growth rates of all the crops were stagnant during period II. In the cropping pattern dominating crops were cotton (32.72%), soybean (31.55%), pigeonpea (12.10%) and *Kharif* jowar (10.04%) constitute the major portion of cropping pattern (86.41 per cent). During the study period, the trend of crop diversification and cropping intensity increased significantly.

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Key words : Growth rates, Cropping pattern changes, Crop diversification

INTRODUCTION

Diversification suggests that although the changes in the sartorial composition are taking place in the accepted pattern but the pace is slower than the several countries. The share of agriculture in the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) of the country has progressively declined indicating that more resources in the economy are being diversified to non-agriculture sectors. The share of agriculture workforce is declining in the secondary and tertiary sectors. Diversification in agriculture is taking place in terms of move away from crop production to other agricultural activities. The more significant changes are taking place within the cropping sector. The area under commercial crop has doubled since 1960 and now being equals half of the area under food crops. (Vyas, 1996)

The International Food Policy Research Institute predicted that the country will face serious food shortages by the year 2030. Holistic approach therefore is needed to develop agriculture and allied sectors to prevent this

calamity of food shortage. The strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats of each agroclimatic region should be worked out carefully and proper micro-level planning exercise be thought to promote specific cropping pattern in the farming systems of the different zones. Cropping pattern of western and middle zone of Vidarbha is dominated by cotton-sorghum while eastern zone is dominated by paddy followed by *Rabi* crops. There is a strong need to bring out diversification as viable alternatives. In this context, an attempt, has therefore, been made to analyze the growth of agricultural crops, cropping pattern changes and crop diversification for last three decades in Wardha district of Vidarbha region of Maharashtra with the following objectives : to examine the growth rates in area, production and yield of major crops, to examine the changes in cropping pattern and to study the trend of crop diversification and cropping intensity.