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Analysis of the Extent and Constraints faced by farmers in the adoption of crop diversification in Ballia District of Eastern Uttar Pradesh

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ABSTRACT

In this study, Analysis of Constraints to crop diversification of Ballia district. The primary data were collected from Ballia district through personal interview methods by using a pre-tested schedules and questionnaire. Multi stage stratified random sampling technique was used to select the block, the villages and cultivars. Nawanagar and Baria Block was taken purposively on the criterion of higher population pressure on land. Finally 120 respondents were selected randomly for study purpose and the study showed identify the major constraints for adopting crop diversification and extent of crop diversification. The Herfindahl Index (HI) is a commonly used measure to assess the concentration or diversification of a system, in this case, the agricultural land distribution among different crops. It helps to determine how concentrated or diversified crop cultivation is in a given region In the present study, respondent land holding are classified on the basis of criteria laid down by National Commission on Agriculture, Government of India.

Key Words: Sex, Age, Land holding, Extent of diversification, constraints.

INTRODUCTION

Agricultural businesses face risks related to pricing, production uncertainty, and input supply challenges. In this context, profitability is the key factor influencing farmers' decisions when adopting new enterprises or techniques. Farmers who manage their farms as commercial ventures consider all possible business aspects. Rather than focusing on a single profitable activity, they seek the most advantageous combination of enterprises to maximize farm revenue by leveraging the benefits of complementary and supplementary operations. Diversification involves shifting from subsistence farming to a more commercial approach, transitioning from low-value to high-value food and non-food crops, and replacing native varieties with high-yielding ones while integrating activities such as animal husbandry, fisheries, and horticulture. Economists and scholars advocate for an integrated system approach to rural diversification to foster rapid, balanced, and inclusive economic growth in rural areas. As global challenges like climate change, population growth, and environmental degradation intensify, crop diversification offers a critical solution for agricultural

sustainability. It enhances resilience to extreme weather, mitigates greenhouse gas emissions, and strengthens food security, shifting priorities from short-term yield maximization to long-term viability. This study systematically examines the barriers to adopting diversified cropping systems in Ballia, an ecologically vulnerable region, and investigates the factors influencing farmers' decisions. By addressing the trade-offs between short-term costs (e.g., new inputs, learning curves) and long-term benefits (e.g., risk resilience, soil health), the findings aim to inform targeted policy interventions for eastern India and refine diversification strategies for smallholder contexts (Rao *et al*., 2018). In India, agriculture is the primary source of income and employment, supporting livelihoods for approximately 65–70% of the population and employing 52% of the workforce (NITI Aayog, 2020). In Ballia, where smallholder farmers predominate, understanding the extent and determinants of diversification is critical due to the region's exposure to climate shocks, declining groundwater tables, and fluctuating market prices (Chand *et al*., 2018). Diversification at the agricultural sector level is therefore consistent with specialization at the farm or unit of production level (Pingali and Rosegrant, 1995) The present study was conducted in the Ballia District of Eastern Uttar Pradesh with a purpose to identify the major constraints for adopting crop diversification and extent of crop diversification in the study area.

We are following objectives:

- To measure the extent of crop diversification in the study area.
- To identify the major constraints for adopting crop diversification in the study area.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The primary data for the study were collected from Ballia district eastern region of Uttar Pradesh. A survey of farmers was conducted through personal interview technique using a pre-tested schedules, questionnaire was adopted of relevant information from heads of household. For selecting the household three stages stratified random sampling technique was used during present study to select the block, the villages and cultivars or households. A list of the 17 block of Ballia district was prepared arranged in ascending order of area under production holding size. Nawanagar and Bairia Block were taken purposively on the criterion of higher pressure of people on land. Finally 120 respondent were selected randomly from twelve selected villages namely Sikiya, Mahro, Issar, Jajauli, Rasri, chandi, Mirzapur, Sonbarsa, Bhagwanpur, Cheta chhapra, Madhubani and Bhikha chhapra were six village selected from each block for the study purpose and total number of the sample farms were equally distributed. Secondary data was collected from the Government records, newspapers, magazines, journals etc. the present study is pertaining to the Agricultural year 2021-2024. Crop diversification was examined with the Herfindahl Index. (HI) is a commonly used measure to assess the concentration or diversification of a system, in this case, the agricultural land distribution among different crop.

- $HI \sum_i^{p2}$
  Where Pi proportionate area of the i^{th} crop in the gross cropped area.

The Herfindahl Index ranges from 0 to 1, where: A value of 1 indicates complete concentration and Garrett's ranking technique used.

Garrett's ranking technique

Garrett's ranking technique will be use to various constraints of crop diversification. This technique will used to evaluate the problems faced by the researchers. The orders of merit given by respondents were converted in to rank suing the formula. To find out the most significant factor this influenced the respondent. As per this method, respondents have been asked to assign the rank for all factors and the outcome of such ranking has been converted in to score value with the help of the following formula:

Percent Rank given for the i^{th} available by j^{th} respondents

Percent position = 100 (Rij-0.5)/Nj

Rij = Rank given for the i^{th} available

by j^{th} respondents

Nj = No. of variables ranked by jth respondents

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The table represents the gender distribution of respondents in a study with a total sample size of 120. The majority of the respondents, 85%, are male, while 15% are female. This indicates a significant male predominance in the sample, suggesting that men are more actively involved or represented in the study compared to women.

Sex	**Frequency (n=120)**
Male	102
Female	18

The respondents are categorized into three age groups: young (less than 36 years), middle-aged (37-42 years), and old (more than 42 years). Among them, 61% of the respondents belong to the old age group, indicating that half of the sample consists of older individuals. The middle-aged category accounts for 46% of the respondents, representing those in their mid-years. Meanwhile, the young age group comprises 13% of the sample, showing that a relatively smaller proportion of respondents are above 36 years. This distribution

suggests that the majority of respondents are old age, followed by middle-aged individuals, while the least number of respondents fall into the young age category

Sr. No.	Age	Frequency (n=120)
1.	Young (Less than 36)	13
2.	Middle aged (37-42)	46
3.	Old (More than 42)	61

The table presents the distribution of respondents based on total landholding size in a study with a sample size of 120. The majority of respondents fall into the small and marginal landholding categories, indicating a prevalence of small-scale farming. Among the respondents, 61% own marginal land holdings (less than 1 ha.), while 55% have small landholdings (ranging from 1 to 2 ha.). This suggests that most farmers in the study operate on relatively small plots of land. Only 4% of respondents fall into the medium category (2.1 to 4 ha.), this distribution highlights that a vast majority of the respondents are small and marginal farmers, with very few owning medium or large farms.

Sl. No.	Total land holding (acre)	Frequency (n=120)
1.	Marginal (Less than 1 ha.)	61
2.	Small (1-2 ha.)	55
3.	Medium (2.1-4 ha.)	04

The Herfindahl Index (HI) is a commonly used measure to assess the concentration or diversification of a system, in this case, the agricultural land distribution among different crops. It helps to determine how concentrated or diversified crop cultivation is in a given region. The Herfindahl Index ranges from 0 to 1, where: A value of 1 indicates complete concentration, meaning only one crop is grown on all available land (i.e., no diversification).Values closer to 0 represent a more diversified cropping system, where land is more equally divided among multiple crops. In this context, the Herfindahl Index serves as a useful tool for evaluating the degree of crop diversification in a particular area, such as Ballia district, or any other agricultural region. When farmers rely heavily on a small number of crops, they face increased risks due to climate change, pest infestations, and market fluctuations. Conversely, diversified farming systems help to spread these risks across different crops, increasing agricultural sustainability and resilience. In the case where the Herfindahl Index is **0.23047619,** it indicates a moderate to high level of crop diversification. The value suggests that the agricultural land in the region is relatively well distributed among several crops, but not to the extent where the land is equally divided. The closer the value is to zero, the more diversified the cropping system. In this case, with an HI of 0.23047619, we can interpret the following:

- The land is divided among a variety of crops, but a significant portion of the land is still concentrated on a few primary crops.
- While not completely dependent on a single crop, there may still be a few dominant crops that account for a larger proportion of the total area. This suggests that farmers are partially diversifying their cropping systems but still face some risk due to the dominance of particular crops.
- A Herfindahl Index of 0.23047619 represents a reasonably diversified agricultural system, though there is still room for improvement. For example, if a few crops are occupying more than half the total land area, diversification could be increased by reducing the land allocation for dominant crops and introducing more varied crops.

For a region like Ballia, where agriculture is the backbone of the local economy, a Herfindahl Index value of 0.23047619 signifies that although there is some level of diversification, more effort could be made to reduce the concentration of land devoted to a few key crops.

Constraints faced by the farmers in practicing crop diversification in the region

SL. No.	Constraint	Frequency	Rank
1.	Technical knowledge	90	I
2.	Poor transportation facilities (roads, vehicles)	73	II
3.	Lack of warehousing or cold storage	67	III
4.	Lack of access to quality seeds and modern farming equipment	62	IV
5.	High input costs (seeds, fertilizers, labor)	60	V
6.	Price fluctuations and low profitability of alternative crops	53	VI
7.	Limited access to credit and capital	52	VII
8.	Distance from markets	43	VIII
9.	Inadequate crop insurance and subsidies for diverse crops	30	IX
10.	Lack of support from extension services or government programs	25	X

The constraints analysis table identifies and ranks various challenges faced in an agricultural context, particularly focusing on the factors that hinder the growth and sustainability of farming practices. In the table, each constraint is presented along with its frequency of occurrence and a rank that reflects its significance or impact on agricultural productivity. The data is essential for understanding the issues that farmers encounter, providing insights into which areas require intervention to improve overall farming conditions.

Technical Knowledge**:** -Technical knowledge stands as the most critical constraint, as indicated by its top rank and high frequency of occurrence. The lack of technical knowledge can also hinder the adoption of new technologies, such as precision farming tools, which could significantly enhance productivity.

Poor Transportation Facilities**:**-Poor transportation facilities, particularly in rural areas, pose a significant challenge in agriculture. This constraint involves inadequate infrastructure such as unpaved roads, lack of reliable vehicles for transporting goods, and long travel distances to markets.

Lack of Warehousing or Cold Storage**:** -The lack of proper storage facilities is a major constraint for farmers, particularly in the context of perishable goods like fruits, vegetables, and dairy products. Without proper warehousing or cold storage, farmers face post-harvest losses due to spoilage, pest infestations, and inadequate preservation techniques. This constraint is ranked third due to its direct impact on the profitability of farming enterprises.

Lack of Access to Quality Seeds and Modern Farming Equipment**:-**The availability of quality seeds and modern farming equipment is essential for increasing productivity and ensuring the quality of produce. Farmers often rely on traditional, low-quality seeds and outdated tools, which limit the potential for high yields and quality crops. This constraint is ranked fourth due to its importance in modernizing farming practices.

Distance from Markets**:** -The physical distance between farms and markets is another critical constraint. Farmers who are located far from urban centres or major markets face additional costs and logistical challenges in transporting their goods. This limits their ability to sell directly to consumers or retailers, often leading to lower profit margins as they rely on middlemen.

CONCLUSION

Analysis of Constraints to crop diversification of Ballia district..The results of the study clearly highlight that crop diversification plays a crucial role in enhancing the economic well-being of farmers, particularly in regions like Ballia district where agriculture is the main source of livelihood. Diversification not only helps in augmenting income levels but also contributes to better resource utilization, employment generation, and nutritional security. By growing a mix of crops, farmers can improve the productivity of their land, reduce dependence on a single crop, and shield themselves from price and yield fluctuations. In conclusion, crop diversification is a key driver of sustainable agricultural development and rural prosperity. With proper policy

support, infrastructure development, and institutional backing, it can transform the agricultural landscape of Ballia district and significantly uplift the socio-economic status of its farming community.

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