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RESEARCH ARTICLE

TREND OF LAND UTILIZATION IN HIMACHAL PRADESH

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ABSTRACT

The agrarian society has been the root cause of evolution of the industrial society. This has emerged as one of the reasons for migration of people to work in the industries and the development opportunities in the agrarian sector became sparse. The pattern of landholding consists of three categories of the land holdings. These include; land owned by the households, land possessed by the households and land cultivated by the households. The official records depict total land holdings and the net sown area and the residual component of the land which is considered as the fallow land where land used for other purposes like homestead etc., are not segregated. This is an emerging issue in land uses and searching opportunities of development as well as employability in this sector which is pertinent in context to meet-out the consumption demand and the economy. The research paper highlights trend of land utilization in Himachal Pradesh including the trend of operational holdings.

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INTRODUCTION

India is an agrarian based country. The great majority of the population and land is in villages and rural areas where agriculture, horticulture, livestock rearing and other agri-based activities are performed. The agrarian social set-up of the Country is characterized by its contribution in the national economy as well as catering to the consumption demand of large emerging and growing population. The agrarian society has been the root cause of evolution of the industrial society as in the initial stage when agriculture was the only occupation, people used to cultivate and use land for meeting-out the consumption demand. At that time, involvement of people in use of land for employability was such that it helped all to get the produce available through barter system. The size of the population at that time was not thick. So per capita land holding was high. Households had substantial land for use. But people having strength used to dominate others and captivated larger areas of land. Thereby society was divided into two social groups including those who had enough land and those who had very limited land area for use. Ultimately those who had very limited land for use, were unable to meet-out even their subsistence needs and worked for the other strata of the society who had enough land. The society had dominating and dominated groups. The dominating group though having low number of people used to take the services of the other group for cultivation and other uses of their land. They became rich. They had sufficient of capital through use of land and that capital they used later on for setting industrial enterprises. This has emerged as one of the reasons for migration of the other group of people to work in the industries and the development opportunities in the agrarian sector became sparse. Now at this juncture, still the pattern of landholding consists of three categories of the land holdings. These include; land owned by the households, land possessed by the households and land cultivated by the households. Interestingly, those who are cultivating the land in most of the instances have not the right of holding due to which, the official records does not define land holding structure as per the ownership clearly. The land holding which is owned by the households is consisting of the ownership in the land revenue records. The operational land is being hold by those who possess the land area and the cultivated land is generally being dealt by those working on the land. The official records depict total land holdings and the net sown area and the residual component of the land is considered as the fallow land where land used for other purposes like homestead etc., are not segregated. This is an emerging issue in land uses and searching opportunities of development as well as employability in this sector which is pertinent in context to meet-out the consumption demand and the economy. The issues pertain to loans and subsidies, minimum support prices, crop insurance, regulatory relaxations, employability avenues etc. the scenario of such issues prevails in all states and regions

of the Country. The Country had at the time of independence, three major systems of land holdings in prevalence and these were; Ryatwari system, Mahalwari system and Zamindari system. However, the scenario of land holding structure in the states varies as per these systems. The pattern of land utilization and operational landholding has been influences in the states and has changed over the years. The present research is endowed to study the trend of land utilization and operational holding in Himachal Pradesh.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Meenakshi (2018)[1] views in 'Diversification of the Existing Farming Systems under Marginal Household Conditions in Kangra District of Himachal Pradesh' that agriculture and allied enterprises are the main occupations of a majority of agriculturists, land utilization pattern has been stated such that a great majority of the total farm holdings is under cultivated land followed by plantation land. She finds that farming system provides maximum income followed by livestock. The study reveals that use of local varieties; inadequate nutrient application and untimely weed control are the main constraints in farming. She suggests that government should provide a suitable rate of minimum support price for the farm produce and farmers need to be educated regarding benefits of mineral mixture supplementation and feeding.

Chandrakant (2020)[2] opined in 'Diverse Needs of Farmers from Agricultural Extension System in Changing Agricultural Scenario in Maharashtra' that majority of the farm households are above the average rank in wealth ranking, extension services related to seeds, soil management, weather & climate updates, nutrient management, income generating activities, training on crop production technology & management and exposure visits towards successful small business enterprises run by small farmers being highest. The author suggests that farmers' need-based strategies/ policies and redesigning of operational procedures of extension functionaries should be done with a more flexible approach. Verma (2021)[3] analyzed in the research on 'Cost and Returns of Wheat Cultivation in Hardoi District of Uttar Pradesh' that cropping is decreasing with increasing size of farms except medium farms and highest cost of cultivation which is mainly due to higher irrigation charge. He found that the gross income per hectare is highest on marginal farms due to intensive cultivation & more use of human labor and number of irrigation on farms. The author suggests that there is a need of financial support, fertilizers and seed availability and providing marketing facilities.

Herrero, et. al. (2023)[4], have in their study 'Exploring Future Changes in Smallholder Farming Systems by Linking Socio-economic Scenarios with Regional and Household Models' identified how different types of farming systems might increase or diminish in importance under different scenarios using a land-use model sensitive to prices, opportunity cost of land and labour, and other variables. Trajectories of intensification, diversification, and stagnation for different farming systems are identified by the scholars. As per their findings, diversification with cash crops is a key intensification strategy as farm size decreases and labour costs increase. Dairy expansion, while important for some trajectories, is mostly viable when land available is not a constraint, mainly due to the need for planting fodders at the expense of cropland areas.

Bojago, et. al. (2023)[5] have asserted in 'Small-scale Irrigation (SSI) Farming as a Climate-Smart Agriculture (CSA) Practice and its Influence on Livelihood Improvement in Offa District, Southern Ethiopia' that small-scale irrigated farming has been offered as a climate-smart agriculture (CSA) technology to boost production and diversify livelihood scenarios as an option to mitigate climate change. They find that household socio-demographic factors; household socio-economic factors, and household institutional factors significantly and statistically affect the adoption SSI. Households who owned more land holding size, access to credit services, get agricultural extension service, who near to the district market, who have middle age, who nearest farm sight, have farming experience, have access to irrigation, and have good health status were more likely to benefit from the use of small scale irrigation. According to them participation in small-scale irrigation has a positive effect on household livelihood diversification, and expanding irrigation schemes improves rural farm households' livelihoods. They recommend that policymakers and other stakeholders should prioritize small-scale irrigation technologies as CSA to improve rural household livelihoods.

The existing researches reveal that development opportunities to the farmers are limited as farming is unable to provide sufficient income due to inadequate nutrient application, untimely weed control, high cost of cultivation, lacking irrigation facility and lack of market access. Availability of land holding and its use as well as the operational land holding aspect have not been paid much attention and the present research is endowed to focus on this dimension.

Objectives

- To study the trend of Land Utilization in Himachal Pradesh
- To examine the trend of Operational Holdings in Himachal Pradesh

Scope and Methodology: The research has been carried-out by using secondary data analyzed by applying percentages and trend analysis. Data since 2013-14 to 2019-20 has been taken from Statistical Outline of Himachal Pradesh and Manual of Land Records, Govt. of Himachal Pradesh as well as Annual Season Crop Report, Directorate of Land Records, Kasumpti , Shimla -9. The research is backed with the literature review also. Further, the trends have also been diagrammatically depicted.

DISCUSSION

The results of the study are analyzed and discussed as under:

Trend of Land Utilization in Himachal Pradesh: The interest of the cultivators is assumed to be declining to grow crops in more land area due to multiplicity of challenges. It is assumed that the production of crops is declining which is a threat to meet-out the consumption demand of the highly rising population of India and that of Himachal Pradesh. Attempt has been made to examine the trend of production of different fallows and cropped area of the State. The following table 1 reveals the trend of land utilization in Himachal Pradesh.

Table 1 Trend of Land Utilization in Himachal Pradesh (in Hectare)

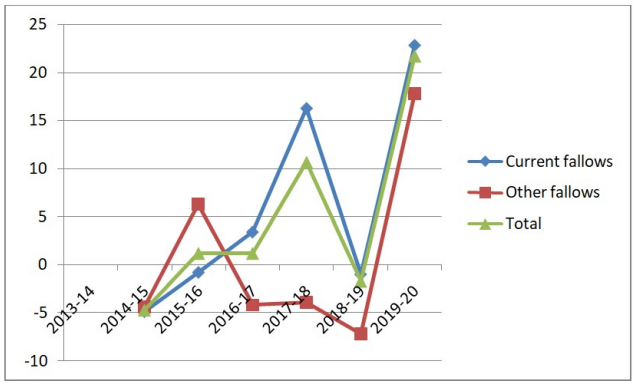
Year	Current fallows	% G	Other fallows	% G	Total	% G	Net area Sown	% G	Total Cropped area	% G	Area sown More than Once	% G
2013-14	57101	-	21955	-	79056	-	548578 (58.4)	-	939807 (100)	-	391229 (41.6)	-
2014-15	54320	-4.9	20978	-4.4	75298	-4.7	548396 (59.7)	-0.03	918203 (100)	-2.3	369807 (40.3)	-5.5
2015-16	53896	-0.8	22306	6.3	76202	1.2	551307 (59.1)	0.5	932592 (100)	1.6	381285 (40.9)	3.1
2016-17	55754	3.4	21367	-4.2	77121	1.2	547556 (57.1)	-0.7	959223 (100)	2.8	411667 (42.9)	8.0
2017-18	64850	16.3	20526	-3.9	85376	10.7	544023 (59.3)	-0.6	917393 (100)	-4.4	373370 (40.7)	-9.3
2018-19	64847	-001	19053	-7.2	83900	-1.7	543547 (59.5)	-0.1	914014 (100)	-0.4	370467 (40.5)	-0.8
2019-20	79632	22.8	22445	17.8	102077	21.7	530420 (59.5)	-2.4	891926 (100)	-2.4	361506 (40.5)	-2.4
$\bar{x}$	61485.7		21232.8		82718.5		544832.4 (58.9)		924736.8 (100)		379904.4 (41.1)	
σ	9246.0		1184.7		9358.4		6905.2		21471.9		16888.0	
CV	15.0		5.6		11.3		1.3		2.3		4.4	
CG		6.1		4.4		4.7		-0.5		-0.8		-1.1

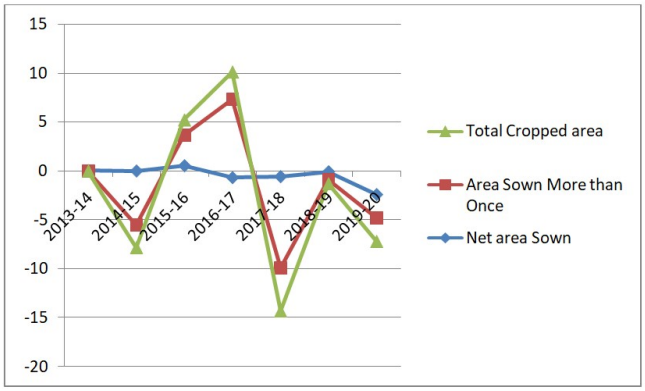
Source: Statistical Outline of Himachal Pradesh and Manual of Land Records, Govt. of Himachal Pradesh.

Table 2. Trend of Operational Holdings in Himachal Pradesh

Year	Marginal (less than 1.00 hect.)		Small (1.00 to 2.00 hect.)		Semi- medium (2.00 to 4.00 hect.)		Medium (4.00 to 10.00 hect.)		Large (10.00 hect. &above)		Total All Sizes	
	No. of holding	% G	No. of holding	% G	No. of holding	% G	No. of holding	% G	No. of holdin g	%G	No. of holding	% G
1995-96	555632	-	173455		95057		34019		4734		862897	
2000-01	614942	10.7	174230	0.4	89873	-5.4	30899	-9.2	3970	-16.1	913914	5.9
2005-06	636619	3.5	175651	0.8	88447	-1.6	29136	-5.7	3530	-11.1	933383	2.1
2010-11	670425	5.3	174596	-0.6	84868	-4.0	27606	-5.2	3270	-7.4	960765	2.9
2015-16	712204	6.2	173456	-0.6	82265	-3.1	25920	-6.1	2964	-9.4	996809	3.7
Av.G		6.4		0.003		-3.5		-6.6		-11.0		3.7

Source: Statistical Outline of Himachal Pradesh and Annual Season Crop Report, Directorate of Land Records, Kasumpti , Shimla -9.





Out of 5567300 hectare land area of Himachal Pradesh, on an average 924736.8 hectare land area is used for cultivation of different crops in the State which is 16.6 percent of the total land area. The cropped area consists of 58.9 percent Net Area Sown against 41.1 percent area sown more than once. The results reveal that the current fallows have registered a compound growth of 6.1 percent during the years from 2013-14 to 2019-20. On the other hand the compound growth in other fallows has been recorded less than the growth of current fallows (4.4 %) during the same research period. This implies that the fallows have registered an average of 4.7 growth during this period.

Interestingly, there has been recorded a drastic growth in the production of current and other fallows in the year 2019-20 from the preceding year which has shoot-up the average growth of their production. The growth in fallows increased while the cropped area, net sown area and area sown more than once have registered a declining trend of production of the crops during the past seven years from 2013-14 to 2019-20. The study finds that there has been an average decline by negative values of 0.5 percent in net sown area, 0.8 by total cropped area and 1.1 of area sown more than once. Therefore, it can be analyzed with regard to the cropping area that though there has been decline in the cropping area in Himachal

Pradesh, there has been growth in the production of current and other fallows. However, change in production of different fallows has been found inconsistent in comparison to the change in the different cropped area as the values of standard deviation of current fallows, other fallows, total fallows, net sown area, total cropped area and area sown more than once have been recorded 9246, 1184.7, 9358.4, 6905.2, 21471.9 and 16888 respectively. The values of their coefficients have been calculated 15 percent, 5.6 percent, 11.3 percent, 1.3 percent, 2.3 percent and 4.4 percent respectively.

Trend of Operational Holdings in Himachal Pradesh: With the motive to know about the reason of decline in the number of cattle rearing and involvement of land holders operating land in the State, the trend of operational holdings has been examined as per the following table 2. The above table 2 asserts that there has been a population growth influence on the trend of operational land holdings in the State. The results reveal that since 1995 till 2015-16, there has been recorded a drastic decline in the medium and large land holdings. The medium land holdings declined during this period by recording negative average growth of -6.6 percent and the large land holdings declined by showing negative average growth of -11 percent. Similarly, semi-medium land holdings have also declined by recording negative average growth of -3.5. On the other hand, the marginal and small land holdings shoot-up by average growth of 6.4 and 0.003 percent. This implies that apart from other factors, population can be one of the major factors responsible for distribution of the land holdings which were semi-medium, medium or large into the marginal and small land holdings in Himachal Pradesh. Thus, in the present scenario, the number of marginal and small land holders has increased. Since the land area is the same, obviously it has been due to decline in the number of medium and large land holders.

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS

The existing researches reveal that development opportunities to the farmers are limited as farming is unable to provide sufficient income due to inadequate nutrient application, untimely weed control, high cost of cultivation, lacking irrigation facility and lack of market access. Availability of land holding and its use as well as the operational land holding aspect have not been paid much attention and the present research is endowed to focus on this dimension. It can be concluded with regard to the cropping area that though there has been decline in the cropping area in Himachal Pradesh, there has been growth in the production of current and other fallows. However, change in production of different fallows has been found inconsistent in comparison to the change in the different cropped area as the values of standard deviation of current fallows, other fallows, total fallows, net sown area, total cropped area and area sown more than once have been recorded 9246, 1184.7, 9358.4, 6905.2, 21471.9 and 16888 respectively.

Apart from other factors, population can be one of the major factors responsible for distribution of the land holdings which were semi-medium, medium or large into the marginal and small land holdings in Himachal Pradesh. Thus, in the present scenario, the number of marginal and small land holders has increased. Since the land area is the same, obviously it has been due to decline in the number of medium and large land holders. Based upon the conclusion and the research findings, the following measures have been recommended to identify and improve development opportunities from use of land through growing crops:

- The practice of giving land for landless villagers or on compassionate grounds should be encouraged so that such people settle and engage in utilizing land for cultivation. However, the grazing land should not be given to them as it badly influences cattle rearing.
- The marginal and small land holders engaged in using land should be supported financially as well as in other ways so that they get motivated and employable without feeling insecurity in this sector.

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