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# CONTENTS

Sr. No.	TITLE & NAME OF THE AUTHOR (S)	Page No.
1.	RECENT SCENARIO OF INVESTMENT IN INDIAN MUTUAL FUND INDUSTRY <i>R. D. SIKCHI &amp; ROHIT</i>	1
2.	COMPARATIVE STUDY OF CROPPING PATTERN IN TRIBAL DISTRICTS OF HIMACHAL PRADESH: A CASE STUDY OF DISTRICT KINNAUR AND LAHAUL & SPITI <i>DR. DEVENDER SHARMA &amp; HEERA BHAGTI</i>	6
3.	REVIEW OF LITERATURE ON INDIAN DAIRY INDUSTRY <i>E. VENU MADHAVI &amp; DR. B. K. SURYA PRAKASA RAO</i>	10
4.	WOMEN ENTREPRENEURSHIP DEVELOPMENT IN INDIA: ISSUES AND CHALLENGES <i>FLORIN SHELOMITH SOANS &amp; SHRIPATHI KALLURAYA K.P.</i>	15
5.	IMPACT OF BUSINESS RISK, GROWTH, AND LIQUIDITY ON THE CAPITAL STRUCTURES: EMPIRICAL ANALYSIS OF AGRO-BASED COMPANIES IN INDONESIA <i>MAYANG BOGAWA, NOER AZAM ACHSANI &amp; HENDRO SASONGKO</i>	19
6.	A STUDY OF FARMERS' PROFILE AND PROBLEMS IN NORTH GOA DISTRICT <i>DR. GAJANAN MADIWAL</i>	24
7.	A STUDY ON SOCIO-ECONOMIC CONDITIONS OF WIDOWS AND INVISIBLE WIDOWS TO ERODE DISTRICT <i>DR. N. MANI &amp; R. RAJALAKSHMI</i>	27
8.	IMPACT OF INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS ON ORGANISATIONAL PERFORMANCE: A STUDY AT SELECT ORGANISATIONS IN BENGALURU <i>V. MANJULA &amp; DR. D. GOVINDAPPA</i>	32
9.	CHALLENGES IN AGRO ENTREPRENEURSHIP IN TAMILNADU, INDIA <i>DR. G. YOGANANDAN &amp; T. VIGNESH</i>	37
10.	IMPACT ON CORPORATE GOVERNANCE WITH TACTIC TO IMPROVE THE ENTREPRENEURSHIP <i>MELBHA. D</i>	40
11.	FACTORS BEHIND INFANT MORTALITY: A COMPARATIVE DISCUSSION IN THE CONTEXT OF INDIA <i>BIKASH SAHA</i>	45
12.	EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT: AN OVERVIEW <i>DR. P. REVATHI</i>	49
13.	A STUDY OF PERCEPTION OF EMPLOYEES TOWARDS EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT IN RETAIL INDUSTRY <i>CARAL D'CUNHA</i>	52
14.	A CONTRIBUTION TO HEALTH TOURISM RESEARCH: THE CASE OF DEMAND FOR THERMAL RESORTS IN CROATIA <i>ANA ŠTAMBUK, EMA KELIN &amp; IVANA JURIĆ</i>	58
15.	IMPACT OF GST ON INDIAN ECONOMY <i>NAGALAKSHMI G S</i>	66
16.	INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY RIGHTS: A POWERFUL TOOL FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT <i>MONA KAPOOR &amp; SAMRIDHI SINGH</i>	69
17.	DETERMINANT OF BOND AND FIRM CHARACTERISTICS, MACROECONOMIC FACTORS TO CORPORATE BOND RETURN IN INFRASTRUCTURE, UTILITIES AND TRANSPORTATION SECTOR <i>ADYA RAHMI, DR. LUKYTAWATI ANGGRAENI &amp; DR. TRIAS ANDATI</i>	72
18.	A STUDY ON MERGERS AND ACQUISITIONS FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF SHAREHOLDERS <i>K. SRAVAN KUMAR</i>	77
19.	A STUDY ON STUDENTS SATISFACTION OF HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS IN ERODE DISTRICT <i>U. VISALATCHI</i>	79
20.	A STUDY ON ENTREPRENEURIAL ATTITUDE AMONG THE GRADUATES IN LAKHIMPUR DISTRICT OF ASSAM <i>RASHMI SARDA</i>	82
	REQUEST FOR FEEDBACK & DISCLAIMER	85

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## COMPARATIVE STUDY OF CROPPING PATTERN IN TRIBAL DISTRICTS OF HIMACHAL PRADESH: A CASE STUDY OF DISTRICT KINNAUR AND LAHAUL & SPITI

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### ABSTRACT

*Agriculture is a highly dynamic process and the growth and development of agriculture in Himachal Pradesh has crossed several mile stones in different historical periods. The cropping pattern of Himachal Pradesh was based on the traditional system of the subsistence farming without any surplus. With the passage of time, the relationship between commercialisation and cropping pattern emerged complimentary. The State has different variations in the agro-climatic conditions. The agro-climatic variation supports different types of cropping patterns in the State. However, it was the availability or unavailability of marketing facilities which played a key role in determining the cropping structure in the state. The aim of the present paper is to compare the cropping pattern in Kinnaur and Lahaul & Spiti districts of Himachal Pradesh. The percentage method has been used to analyse the data. The study reveals that the commercial crops of both the study regions are main sources of income of the tribal areas. While analyzing the diversification, the Kinnaur district is witnessing a fruits belt as compared to district Lahaul & Spiti. The farmers are gradually diversifying to commercial crops for the sake of higher earnings.*

### KEYWORDS

cropping pattern, land use, agriculture.

### I. INTRODUCTION

India is a country where great majority of population belongs to the rural areas having sufficiency of land holdings for agricultural and horticultural production. Further, the landscape consists of a great disparity having mountainous regions in the Himalayas and plains. The production intensity of the different regions varies widely and the mountainous regions like Kinnaur and Lahaul & Spiti of Himachal Pradesh are known for high level of fertility and good quality of production. In tribal areas, the return of crops is not contributing enough which raises a question to analyze the status of crop intensity and outturn of crops in such area. There is a huge disparity in terms of landscape, climate, irrigation, environmental hazards and preferences of people regarding option of occupation for economic development. All such factors varying production and fertility affect choices of people regarding selection of crops providing optimum outturn and convenient for the producer. The study has been necessitated to be conducted to know about the factors which are affecting choice of crop being produced in the areas under study. Moreover, the study is also an endeavour to examine the dependency of tribal's as per their cropping pattern.

### II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Sharma (1987) in his research, "**The Economy of Himachal Pradesh**" has analyzed the changes in the cropping pattern during the period 1950-51 to 1982-83. The author reveals that there is hardly any change in the cropping pattern of Himachal Pradesh during the entire period. According to the author, the share of land allocated to the cereals and non-cereals crops remains by the large unchanged and the share of area under wheat has increased from one third to nearly two fifth of total area sown during the period 1950-51 to 1982-83 as a result of the adoption of new form technology. Further, the author finds a noticeable change in the cropping pattern of Himachal Pradesh, with in the non-cereal category, i.e. the rise in share of area under fruits of all kinds. The study concluded that Himachal Pradesh has a large potential for the production of fruits of different categories, but the fruits crops still enjoy a low weight age in the total area sown.

Sharma et.al (1992), studied "**Impact of irrigation on socio-economic structure of farm families in Himachal Pradesh**." They focused on the impact of irrigation on the vegetables based and cereal based crops. The authors have found that in vegetable based farming, a net return on per hectare of cultivated land was high as compared to cereals based farming of the State. They have concluded that irrigated land gives more output in terms of vegetables as compared to cereals, and the positive impact of irrigation is found in socio-economic structure of the farm families in the State.

Swamy, (2011), observed in "**Tribal Land Question and Land Reforms in Kerala**", that the exclusion of 'adivasis' in India in terms of land rights remains a reality in contemporary India, and their rights to productive resources have generally been left unattained by the State Government. The author highlighted that Government has not taken any significant effort to grant land rights to landless tribal households and the shift from food to cash crops and from indigenous to hybrid seeds have also undermined the livelihood of these people which must be taken care of by the Government.

Uma et. al (2013) in their study "**Changing Cropping Pattern: A Boon or a Bane to Food Security**" revealed that most of the agricultural labourers are showing less interest in producing food crops and are changing their cropping pattern to commercial crops. The authors also find that all marginal farmers are slowly depending on other sector for higher wages without fully neglecting the agriculture. The authors' reveal that instead of changing the cropping pattern and continued their agriculture activity with other family members and relatives they are changing cropping from food crops to commercial crops. They conclude that changing in cropping pattern has posed a threat to the overall production of food crops and directly adverse effect on countries food production and food security. The authors also suggest that if every farmer thinks that changing the food crops to commercial crop will bring more income, there will be no one to produce needed amount of food crops in the country.

Akhter and Acharya (2015) in their study "**Changes in Cropping Pattern in Jammu and Kashmir**" revealed that the cropping pattern of Jammu and Kashmir was based on the traditional system of the subsistence farming without any surplus. The author's have focused on the changes in the cropping pattern in Jammu and Kashmir. The authors found that with the advent of New Agricultural Strategy, there emerged the complementary relationship between the commercialization and cropping pattern of the state. The authors have applied Regression analysis in order to see causal relationship between area and production. The study also reveals that the crop sector of Jammu and Kashmir agriculture at an aggregate level is gradually diversifying in favour of high-value crops. The authors found while analyzing the diversification, the Jammu division are witnessing a specialization in food-grain crops, while as Kashmir division depicting a trend towards diversification. The farmers are gradually diversifying to commercial crops for the sake of higher earnings.



### III. DATA BASE AND METHODOLOGY

The data for the study gathered from a purposeful and well structured field survey. The survey was conducted during June 2015. The sample was based on stratified random sampling and two stage sample design adopted for the purpose.

### IV. OBJECTIVES

1. To study the cropping pattern in Kinnaur and Lahaul & Spiti.
2. To analyse the cash crops grown and annual income of the farmers in the study areas.

### V. NEED OF THE STUDY

Production of crops is one of the major traditional occupations of the tribal people. The need of the research has been felt to examine the cropping pattern of the tribal communities and its contribution in the living standard of the farmers. Due to the lack of marketing facilities farmers are facing problems there is a need to provide adequate marketing facilities and organised markets for the crops.

### VI. ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

#### 1. CROPS GROWN

There are two seasons of crops in Kinnaur region, spread as Khariff crops which is being sown in the month of April-May and the Rabi crops which is sown in the month of November and December in the region and during the kharif season, vegetables are also grown. Table 1 shows the different crops being growing. In Lahaul and Spiti, the climate during spring and summer seasons (April-October) is rather mild during which both *Rabi* and *Kharif* crops are grown simultaneously. The rains are scanty and humidity remains low during this period. However, during winters (November-March), the climate is extremely cold and harsh and mercury drops even up to minus 35°C. During this period, heavy snowfall occurs and this area remains cut-off from rest of the world. Therefore, the area has a single cropping season.

TABLE 1: OPINION REGARDING CROPS AND VEGETABLES GROWN IN KINNAUR AND LAHAUL & SPITI

Crops		Kinnaur	L & S	Total
Kharif crops	Maize, Razmah	36 (17.1)	1 (4.54)	37 (15.94)
	Maize, Razmah, Fafra, Ogla	79 (37.6)	3 (13.66)	82 (35.34)
	Razmah	19 (9)	2 (9.09)	21 (9.05)
	Fafra, Ogla	76 (36.2)	16 (72.72)	92 (39.65)
	Total	210 (100)	22 (100)	232 (100)
Rabi Crops	Wheat	87 (47.54)	8 (11.42)	95 (37.55)
	Barley	48 (26.22)	3 (4.28)	51 (20.16)
	1,2,Both	48 (26.22)	59 (84.28)	107 (42.30)
	Total	183 (100)	70 (100)	253 (100)
Vegetables Grown	Tomato, Cabbage, Beans	51 (25.12)	-	51 (17.52)
	Potato, Peas	45 (22.16)	53 (60.22)	98 (33.67)
	Tomato, Cabbage, Potato	30 (14.77)	2 (2.27)	32 (10.99)
	Potato	27 (13.30)	2 (2.27)	29 (9.96)
	Peas	8 (3.94)	27 (30.68)	35 (12.02)
	All of the Above	42 (20.68)	4 (4.54)	46 (15.80)
	Total	203 (100)	88 (100)	291 (100)
Medicinal plants	Kuth	-	14 (26.92)	14 (26.92)
	Manu	-	8 (15.38)	8 (15.38)
	Hops	-	17 (32.69)	17 (32.69)
	Charma	-	13 (25)	13 (25)
	Total	-	52 (100)	52 (100)

Source: Data collected during field investigation through interview schedule.

In district Kinnaur, 36 (17.1%) respondents are producing Maize and Rajmah, followed by 79(37.6%) growing the combination of Maize, Razmah, Ogla, and Fafra, 19 (9%) informants growing only Rajmah, and 76 (36.2%) have reveals that they are producing the combination of Fafra and Ogla. The table also shows the Rabi Crops grown in the region only 183 respondents are growing Rabi crops. Majority of the respondents 87(47.54 %) are producing Wheat only, followed by Barley 48(26.22%) and overall 48 are producing the combination of both Wheat and Barley in the region. It is also evident from the table that, majority of the informants 51(25.12%) are growing Tomato, Cabbage, and Beans, followed by 45(22.16%) Potato and Peas, 42 are growing combination of all the above vegetables. Only 27(13.30%) are growing single Potato and 8(3.94%) are those who are producing only peas.

It concludes that in Kinnaur region almost all the major vegetables and crops are cultivated either for commercial purpose or self consumption which helps the tribal community either in their living as well as economic development.

In Lahaul & Spiti, out of 22 respondents, 1(4.54%) is producing combination of Maize and Rajmah, followed by 3(13.66%) Maize, Rajmah, Fafra, Ogla, 2(9.09%) are producing Rajmah, 16(72.72%) produce Fafra & Ogla. The table also reveals that 59(84.28%) respondents have produce both Wheat and Barley, followed by 8 producing Wheat, 3 producing barley only, overall 70 respondents are producing Rabi crops in the Lahaul & Spiti region. Majority of the respondents 59(84.28%) are producing both Wheat and Barley.

It is further noted that out of total number of respondents of Kinnaur district majority of the informants 51(25.12%) are growing Tomato, Cabbage, and Beans, followed by 45(22.16%) Potato and Peas, 42 are growing combination of all the above vegetables. Only 27(13.30%) are growing single Potato and 8(3.94%) are those who are producing only peas.

In Lahaul & Spiti out of 88 respondents, 53(60.22%) are producing Potato and Peas, followed by 27(30.68%) producing peas, only 4 are producing Tomato, Cabbage and Potato and 4 respondents are those who are producing all of the above vegetables.

It is further noted that in Lahaul & Spiti out of 90 respondents 52 are engaged in some medicinal plants, 14(26.92%) in Kuth, followed by 8(15.38%) in Manu, 17(36.29%) are producing Hops, and 13(25%) are produce Charma.

It is analysed from the data that peas and potato are the major agricultural crop in both the tribal districts, where as hops, kuth, and manu are produced in Lahaul & Spiti. Further, number of respondents of Kinnaur has admitted that they produce Rajmah in comparison to Lahaul & Spiti. Data further shows that although peoples of Lahaul & Spiti are more engaged in agriculture in comparison to Kinnaur and more agricultural crops are produced in Lahaul & Spiti, yet crops are almost same in both the districts.

## 2. FRUITS PRODUCED IN THE STUDY REGION

Agricultural diversification towards fruit and vegetable crops in Himachal Pradesh, especially in some areas in the districts of Shimla, Kullu, Solan, Kinnaur and Lahaul & Spiti, started in the late sixties and continued in the seventies and the eighties. The process of crop diversification gained momentum in the nineties and has now encompassed many new areas in the low and mid hill districts. The present study region is famous for cultivation of Apple, Almond, Chilgoza, Walnut, pears, Peach and Plum. In the Kinnaur region Apple is the only fruit which is produced all over the district but in Lahaul & Spiti very less production of fruits as shown in the table 2.

TABLE 2: FRUITS PRODUCED IN THE STUDY REGION

Fruits produced	Kinnaur	L & S	Total
Apple	74 (35.74)	8 (100)	82 (38.13)
Apple, Almond, Chilgoza	24 (11.59)	-	24 (11.16)
Apple, Apricot, Almond, Chilgoza, Walnut	57 (27.54)	-	57 (26.51)
Apple, Pears, Peach, Plum	27 (13.04)	-	27 (12.55)
Any other fruits	25 (12.07)	-	25 (11.62)
Total	207 (100)	8 (100)	215 (100)

Source: Data collected during field investigation through interview schedule.

In Kinnaur out of total respondents (210), 74 (35.2percent) are producing Apple only, followed by 24(11.4percent) are growing the combination of Apple, Almond, Chilgoza, followed by 57 (27.1%) growing Apple, Apricot, Almond, Chilgoza, and Walnut, 27 (12.9%) have produce the combination of Apple, Pears, Peach, and Plum and 25(11.9%) produce other types of local fruits i.e. *Luchi*, *Grapes*, *Bemi*, *chulli* etc. Along with this 3(1.4%) were found not growing any of the fruits. It indicates that Apple is the only fruit which is highly produced in the region.

In Lahaul & Spiti only 8 respondents were found to produce apple. It has been analysed that maximum respondents of Kinnaur region are horticulturists whereas, in Lahaul and Spiti, the number of horticulturists is meager.

## 3. CASH CROPS GROWN, MARKETING OF CROPS AND ANNUAL INCOME FROM CROPS

The economy of the study regions is based on various crops produced in the regions and commercialisation of crops. Cropping pattern has in majority of instances, changed due to influence of earnings and commercialisation. In Himalayan ranges, marketing of crops has become the major consideration of change in cropping pattern. As the Market facility is not good in the study areas the producers compel to sell their products outside state. In order to know whether cropping pattern of the selected tribal region has been influenced due to commercialisation and preferences of marketing of crops, Focus has been drawn here to examine the cash crops grown, marketing of crops and cropping income of the families of the households of these two districts as shown in the table 3.

TABLE 3: RESPONSE REGARDING CASH CROPS GROWN, MARKETING OF CROPS AND ANNUAL INCOME FROM CROPS

Cash Crops grown				Marketing				Annual income from crops					
Re-sponses	Yes	No	Total	Lo-cal/within the State	Outside State	Other	Total	Up to 1 lakh	1,00,001-2 lakhs	2,00,001-5 lakhs	5,00,001-10 lakhs	Above 10 lakhs	Total
Kinnaur	200 (95.2) (69.93)	10 (4.8) (71.42)	210 (100) (70)	63 (31.5) (43.75)	136 (68) (96.45)	1 (.5) (100)	200 (100) (69.93)	66 (31.4) (57.89)	51 (24.3) (68.91)	68 (32.4) (86.07)	20 (9.5) (74.07)	5 (2.4) (83.33)	210 (100) (70)
Lahaul & Spiti	86 (95.6) (30.06)	4 (4.4) (28.57)	90 (100) (30)	81 (94.18) (56.25)	5 (5.81) (3.54)	-	86 (100) (30.06)	48 (53.3) (42.10)	23 (25.6) (31.08)	11 (12.2) (13.92)	7 (7.8) (25.92)	1 (1.1) (16.67)	90 (100) (30)
Total	286 (95.33) (100)	14 (4.66) (100)	300 (100) (100)	144 (50.34) (100)	141 (49.30) (100)	1 (.34) (100)	286 (100) (100)	114 (38) (100)	74 (24.66) (100)	79 (26.33) (100)	27 (9) (100)	6 (2) (100)	300 (100) (100)

Source: Data collected during field investigation through interview schedule.

From the table 3, out of total 300 respondents, 286(95.33%) were found to grow cash crops only 14(4.66%) are not growing cash crops. In Kinnaur 95.2 percent are growing cash crops and in Lahaul & Spiti 95.6 percent informants are growing cash crops. It indicates that in both the tribal districts almost all of the respondents have cash crops.

Further, the table shows the nature of market access for food products specifically the cash crops. In Kinnaur, out of 200 respondents, 63(31.5%) are selling their crops in the Local market or in market within the state. And 136(68%) sell outside the State and only 1 (.5%) respondent was found not holding the market access. Usually small growers don't sale their products in the market.

In Lahaul & Spiti majority of the respondents sell their crops locally or within the State. Out of 86 informants 81(94.18%) have sold their crops within the State, and only 5(5.81%) have sold within the State. It concludes that majority of the respondents of Lahaul & Spiti region is selling their crops within the State, on the contrary in Kinnaur majority of the respondents are selling their crops outside the State.

Moreover, data shows that in Kinnaur 31.4 percent respondents have income from cropping up to Rs. 1 lakh, followed by 24.3 percent having Rs. 1 to 2 lakhs, 32.4 percent have Rs. 2 to 5 lakhs, and only 11.9 percent have above Rs. 5 lakhs income per annum. In both the districts the annual income of 114 respondents is up to Rs. 1 lakh, followed by 74 have Rs. 1 to 2 lakhs, 79 have Rs. 2 to 5 lakhs, and 33 have above Rs. 5 lakhs annual cropping income.

The data shows that out of 114 respondents of both the districts up to Rs. 1 lakh income group 57.89 percent are from Kinnaur and 42.10 percent are from Lahaul & Spiti indicating more number of respondents of Kinnaur having the income up to Rs. 1 lakh. Study also reveals that majority of the respondents of Lahaul & Spiti have annual cropping income up to Rs. 2 lakhs whereas, majority of the annual income of the respondents of district Kinnaur lies between Rs. 2 to 5 lakhs.

## VII. CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

Here farmers from both the districts provide a generalized picture of cropping pattern. Most important thing revealed that farmers are not changing their cropping pattern neutrally, but certain factors compelled them to shift their traditional cropping pattern to commercial crops. The study revealed that potato and peas are the major agricultural crops produced in both the districts. Whereas, majority of the farmers of Kinnaur region are apple producers and in Lahaul and Spiti, the number of apple producers are meagre. Besides this Lahaul & spiti district is diverse in production of hops, kuth, and manu. As it is evident that commercial crops helps the tribal people to generate income for their livelihood and most of the farmers are dependent on agricultural. The data revealed that in both the tribal districts, farmers have cash crops but due to the adverse geographical condition and lack of marketing facilities farmers are not getting adequate return for their crops. The need of the hour is that there should be organised markets for these crops and government should also organise training camps for farmers at panchayat level. So that farmers have enough knowledge about production and marketing.

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