

crop diversification is not an option but a dire need to 'double farmers income', sustain Agriculture sector and safeguard ecology of the country.

crop diversification means

'to adopt multiple crops through multiple cropping pattern in a same parcel of land either simultaneously or in different point of time'

NITI Aayog in its report'

Double farmer's income highlighted that 77% of gross cropping Area (GCA)

is occupied by staple crops - cereals pulses & oilseeds. specially

Punjab, Haryana, MH

and rice, wheat

are major crops.

while only 19%

of GCA belongs to NYC crops - fruits

vegetable etc.

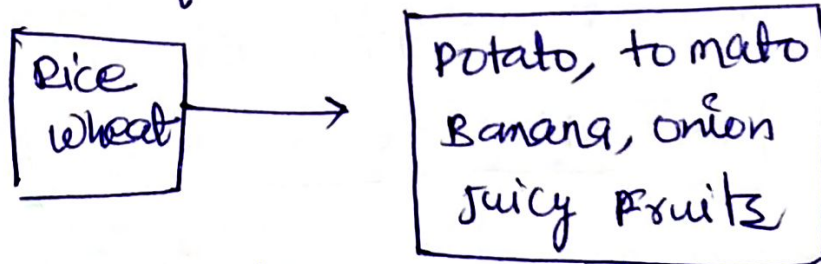


at the same time 86% of farmer belong to small & marginal category and staple food & not increasing their purchasing capacity.

### Benefits of crop diversification

(i) Income rise - NITI Aayog states that merely 1% diversification increases income by 5%, because of high demand.

(ii) catering need of food processing sector which is choice of large urban middle class today. Diversified towards



will generate employment & interest of youth.

(iii) Ecology - India is largest virtual exporter of water via water intensive crop, where panjab, haryana's ground water has severely depleted.



Further, mono cropping exhaust soil fertility and crop productivity.

→ It enhances cost for fertilisers & habitual pests.

→ Also risks of climate, pandemic etc can wipe out entire farms.

Thus, diversification towards low <sup>water</sup> intensive

crops will save water, provide risk

security and save input cost which

overall save ecology & increase income.

(iv) Fackling malnutrition - 37% wasted, 17%

stunted and more than 80% anaemic

childrens need nutrient crops. ~~Div~~

Diversified towards coarse

grains like Bajra, makka will serve

the purpose.

(v) import dependency - India imports

1/3rd timber, pulses, oil seeds etc

Thus diversification will make

country e Atmanirbhar.



## Challenges & Way Forward.

(i) Farmers protest against farm

laws is a major concern.

A conciliatory approach via taking them into confidence is need of the hour.

→ Government can ensure MSP to other crops also.

→ Subsidy reduction in electricity as Odisha govt has done via crop diversifying program

(ii) inputs - Quality seeds, soil health

card scheme, climate forecast etc

need to be strengthened.

(iii) market assurance via ENAM

PM Kisan Sampada Yojna etc need to

be augmented.