

Agriculture and Socio-economic Status: An Assessment of Village Kuh (Udhampur District, J&k)

Shashi Prabha¹ and Hardev Singh²

^{1,2}Department of Geography, University of Jammu, 180006
E-mail: ¹prabhaju@gmail.com, ²hardevthakur03@gmail.com

Abstract—It is well said that India has her identity from rural background. Most of India still resides in rural areas. It's Mahatma Gandhi who said that if we have to develop our nation, we have to develop our villages. For the development of villages, we have to develop our agriculture system because still more than 65% of population is residing in rural areas and directly or indirectly dependent upon agriculture. The industrial basis in India is also depending upon the raw material from the agricultural fields. Most of Indian agriculture is dependent upon monsoonal rainfall. The topography is highly diverse due to which irrigation facility is not possible in all agricultural fields. The district of Udhampur comes under the dry part of the state known as kandi. Many times it has to face dry spells which results failure of crops. The development of agriculture directly influences the socio-economic status of villagers. The standards of villager's life are basically determined by their economy generated from their fields. Most of the population in the District is residing in rural areas and most of them still unaware about the importance of proper land use planning. Therefore, it is essential to study the relationship between agriculture, environment and socio-economic status of population in the villages to know about the contemporary problems of the rural population. Such information can be helpful a lot in framing such alternative policies which can become very beneficial for the sustainable development of the society as a whole.

Keywords: Rural development, agriculture, socio-economic, environment, land use, sustainability.

1. INTRODUCTION

Rural development implies both the economic betterment of people as well as greater social transformation. Increased participation of people in the rural development process, decentralisation of planning, better enforcement of land reforms and greater access to credit and inputs go a long way in providing the rural people with better prospects for improved quality of life. Improvements in health, education, drinking water, energy supply, sanitation and housing coupled with attitudinal changes also facilitate their social development [1].

Agriculture is a backbone of Indian economy. In India more than fifty percent people is dependent upon agricultural for

their livelihood. Despite of technological advancement and conquest over nature, the agricultural activities in the world are closely controlled by physical factors. Developing countries are now facing two main problems concerned with agriculture. The first is meeting the increasing demand of food and other is supplying agro-products for ever increasing population and the second is uneven development of agriculture and changing pattern of agricultural land use. Development in a rapid phase has now a great negative impact upon agriculture. Because of urbanization, industrialization and infrastructural development, most of the area which is more suitable for agricultural purposes is now under different land uses causing decline in agricultural land whereas the area in rural regions are not so fertile in comparison to those in plain and river valley regions. The main problems of land use include under-utilization, over utilization; mis-utilization. The land available for agricultural purposes and others is finite and limited. Hence, the ever-increasing pressure of population and decreasing man-land ratio are posing challenging problems to the land use planners and agricultural geographers [2].

Land use can be defined as the use of land by human beings, usually with emphasis on the functional role of land in economic activities. Over exploitation and improper use of land resources during the last decades has caused widespread soil erosion, siltation, floods, droughts and rapid destruction of forests, flora and fauna. This deterioration has accounted for the quality of environment and life both. It is here that the study of land use becomes pivotal and unavoidable [3].

Land is one of the most important resources of a country and is a critical factor which determines its economic development. Sustainable development has been defined as "development that meets the needs of present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own need" (WCED 1987a). Land is having a great significance as it is the basis of all agricultural activities. The development of agriculture of any region is basically depends upon the quality of soil of that particular land as well as surrounding environment which involves the facilities as well

accessibility of agricultural inputs. Agriculture plays a very significant role in the socio-economic development of the rural areas. Most of the population of India who is residing in rural India are directly or indirectly depends upon the agriculture for their survival. It is also a bitter truth that most of the fertile agricultural land is confined to only certain region whether in respect to India or in respect to Jammu and Kashmir. The state of Jammu and Kashmir has its population in the mountainous regions where agriculture is not an easy task. The district of Udhampur is come under the Kandi region of the state. Sometimes the rainfall is so scanty which results failure of crops. The Udhampur district, the land holding is small and the area is highly undulating. The sandy loamy soil is dominant one. People in this region doing agriculture on subsidence basis. Very few people are able to sell and export their agricultural products. Even most of the farmers have to purchase from the market. Population is increasing at a fast rate which results decreasing of land holding as most of the residents construct their houses without planning which leads to coverage of agricultural land. The socio economic development of the region depends upon the economy of that particular region. A region can be socio-economically developed if the source of economy is good and the economy of the residents is also good. The socio-economic development involves life expectancy, level of employment, literacy rate, housing condition and surrounding environment etc. All these are determined by the nature of economy of that region. The Udhampur district has its maximum area in rural region. Agriculture can plays a very essential role in the socio-economic development of the region. As most of the residents are engaged in the agricultural purposes so the development of agriculture will significantly effect the soico-economic status of the area. Therefore the development of agriculture is utmost necessary for the development of the region.

2. STUDY AREA

The village kuh is situated 20 km away from the Udhampur main district headquarter. The village is highly undulating. It comes under the Chenani block. Most of the people of this village are engaged in primary activities. The total household of the village is 353 and the population is 1907. Out of total population, the males are 1028 and females are 879 respectively. The total literates among the 1907 are 1112 only. Out of which 795 are illiterates. The climate of the study region can be divided into three main seasons like winter season, summer and rainy Season respectively. The vegetation of the region is deciduous in nature. The dominant species are shisham, fla, thorny bushes, santha, tun, simbal, lasooni, mulberry tree and chir as well which are in at fewer places. The study region can be divided into two parts on the basis of their elevation, one region is adjoining to the khad (river) and other is at some higher altitudes as this region represents smaller hills like Siwaliks. The soil of the upper areas are sandy and shallow in depth whereas the low lying area of the study region has sandy as well as loamy and fertile soil

because it has greater depth in comparisons to upper areas because of which lower areas has high producing capacity. Kuh is situated in Udhampur tehsil and located in Udhampur district of Jammu & kashmir. It is one of 179 villages in Udhampur Block along with villages like Dchhapar and Riti. Nearby railway station of Kuh is Udhampur. There are various programmes in the villages regarding the development of the agriculture and other infrastructural development of the area.

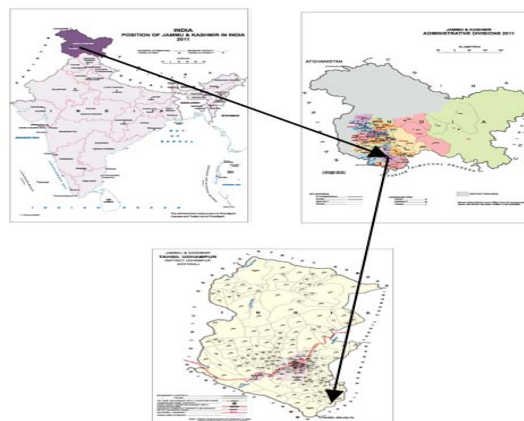
3. OBJECTIVES

- To know about the relationship between agriculture and socio-economic development.
- To access about various problems of the farmers.
- To know about the awareness level of farmers recording different polices of the government like MNERGA, IYA and IWMP.
- To find out the remedial measures and suggestion for improving the current standard of agriculture for sustainable development.

4. METHODOLOGY

Methods are not the ends but they are the means by which the end can be achieved. Our paper is based on both primary as well as secondary data. Primary data has been collected with the help of interviewing method whereas secondary data has been collected with the help of books, magazines, reports and census offices. In this paper we have conducted primary household survey by interviewing method. There are 353 household in the region. We take the sample of 60 houses and conduct house hold survey. We also observed and analysed various problems of the region. We basically selected those houses of the villages that have agricultural land. We noticed the views of the farmers and also pinned down their comments. After collecting, the dada has been analysed and interpreted.

5. LOCATION MAP



Source: Census of India, 2011

Table 1: Educational status of the respondents

S. No	Education	Numbers	Percentage (%)
1	P.G	NIL	0
2	BA/BSC	4	6.66
3	≤12	14	23.33
4	10	24	40
5	≤5	18	30
	Total	60	100

Source: Household survey

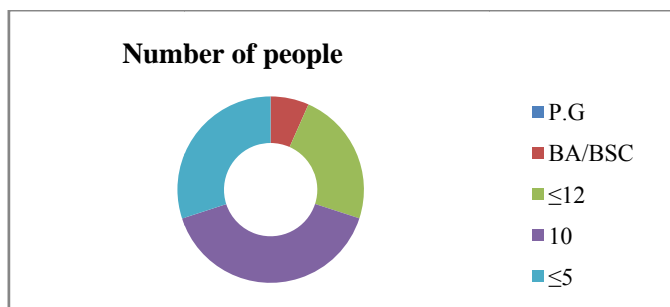


Fig. 1

The table 1 reveals that the education level of the study region is very low. Out of 60 households, only 4 persons are graduates. About 30% people have only upto fifth standard of education. This shows that the educational is not much high among the residents of this area because of which maximum people have to be involved in primary and agricultural activities.

Table 2: Income level of the respondents

	Mean Monthly Income	Numbers of respondents	percentage
1	≥10000	12	20
2	5000-10000	15	25
3	3000-5000	21	35
4	≤3000	12	20
	Total	60	100

Source: Household Survey

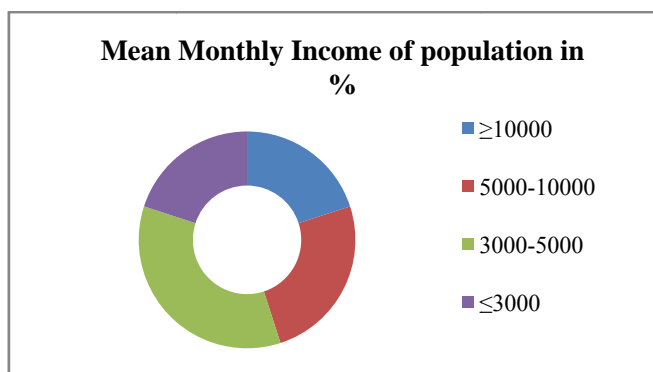


Fig. 2

Out of 60 respondents, 20% have an average monthly income of 10,000, 25% have an average income between 5000-10000, 35% have between 3000-5000 and 20 % have less than 3000 per month respectively. It shows that the income level of the residents of this area is very low in comparison to the farmers of the Punjab region. This may be because of low agricultural productivity and small land holdings.

Table 3: Type of Houses (%)

S. No	Monthly Income	Pucca	Kucha	Semi pucca
1	≥10000	85	Nil	5
2	5000-10000	75	5	20
3	3000-5000	45	40	15
4	≤3000	5	80	15

Source: Household Survey

Type of houses

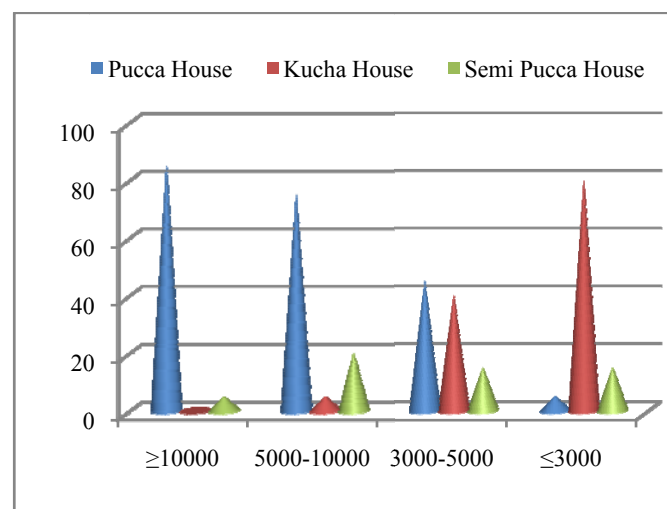


Fig. 3

The above table 2 shows that the respondents who have mean monthly income is 10000 and above have pucca houses where as those who have an average monthly earning is lesser have semi pucca and kucha houses. This table shows the relationship between agriculture and socio-economic development. From the above figures it is clear that agriculture development and socio-economic development are interrelated to each other and there is positive correlation between agriculture production and income, income and socio-economic development.

Table 4: Type of Sanitary conditions

S. No	Income Level	Good	Bad	Need Improvement
1	≥10000	80	Nil	20
2	5000-10000	80	Nil	20
3	3000-5000	50	5	45
4	≤3000	30	15	55

Source: Household Survey

Sanitary Conditions of the study region

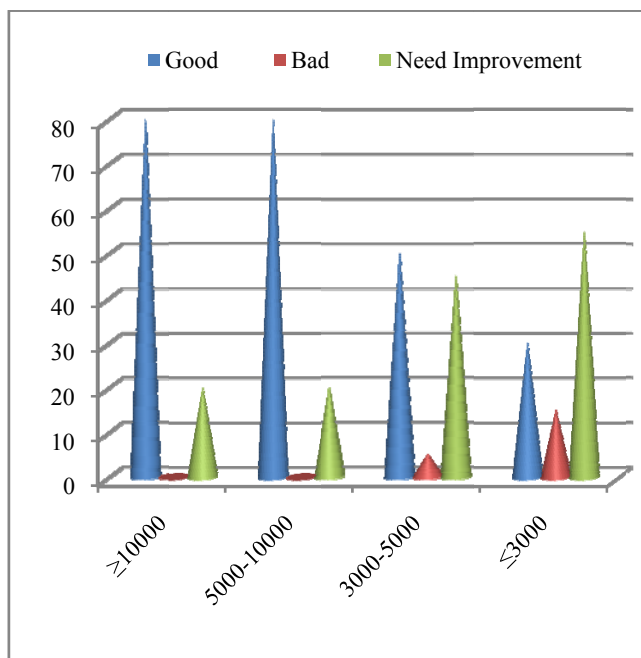


Fig. 4

The fourth table also reveals the picture of relationship between income level and development. It is clear from the above that those who poses good money from their agricultural fields those who have good income level from the agricultural land has good sanitary conditions whereas those who have low income level from the agricultural land has need to improve their sanitary conditions.

Table 5: Shows the Toilet Facilities

S. No	Toilet Facility	Number	Percentage
1	Within the house	20	33.33
2	Public toilets	Nil	Nil
3	Shared	Nil	Nil
4	Open area	40	66.66

Source: Household Survey

Toilet facilities

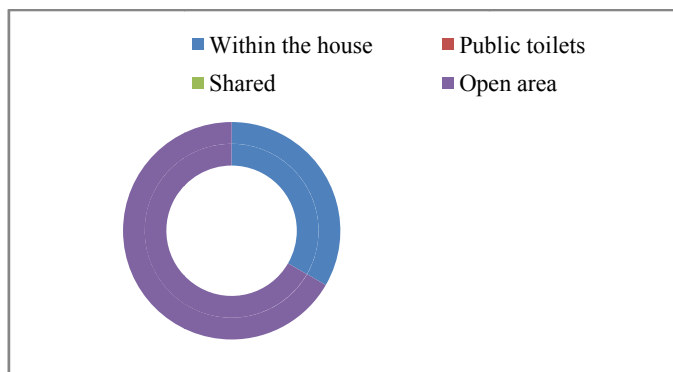


Fig. 5

The fifth table shows that those who have higher benefits from the field have good facilities of toilet in their houses where as maximum of them don't have toilet families in their houses. People have to go in an open area for toilet.

From the above discussion, it is clear that agriculture and socio-economic development has a link between them. Higher the benefits generated from the field's means a sign of socio-economic development. If the farmers can get handsome amount from their agricultural land, they can generate their good house as well as other facilities which are essential for development purposes. The agriculture is not so good in this region because the soil is not so fertile and other accessibilities in this area for good agriculture are not available. The outputs which they attain from their land are not enough to serve their whole part of year. They have to import many things from the market and they are doing agricultural on subsidence level which in turn don't give them surplus money for their other expenses. This leads to deficient of money with them. As a resident of that area, I have observed so many things which need to be developed. The people along with their agriculture also doing the job of daily wagers, servants in hotels, driver, conductor, carpenter and labourers etc. The money they acquired from different sources is only for their subsidence level. They don't have surplus to invest on other areas of their life. The study region resembles the picture of Udhampur district. So the findings of the study region can be applied to the district as well.

6. PROBLEMS FACED BY THE FARMERS OF THE STUDY REGION

- The study area comes under the kandi region of the state characterized by dry spells of the monsoon.
- The agriculture of the area totally depends upon the erratic nature of the monsoon.
- There is no any kind of irrigation facilities. Even the sources that have been made through different governmental schemes like integrated watershed management programme (IWMP) are not properly implemented.
- The wells and other rainwater tapping bodies built by watershed and MGNREGA programmes are not able to provide water for irrigational purposes because they are made in such region or on porous soil without consulting to engineers which results water scarcity during dry season of summer months. Even during winter season the water in these artificial water bodies is not available.
- The soil of the study region is sandy loamy which results low yield from the fields.
- Population is increasing which results coverage of agriculture area under non- agricultural purposes. The road has been passing through the low lying area of the study region, where the soil fertility is high. But on the

other hand population is also congested in these regions because of accessibility to road which causes diversion of agricultural land.

- The areas which are away from the road especially in the higher altitudes are less fertile but low population is there.
- The productivity of the area is also low which causes lower benefits to the farmers and compel them to use traditional methods without applying modern techniques like checking of soil sampling.
- People are unaware about the various schemes of the government to develop the agriculture.
- There are different programmes to reclaim land for agricultural purposes but on the other side the fertile agricultural land is shrinking day by day. Different programmes like MGNREGA, IWMP etc. which increases barren and other land under the occupation of agricultural purposes but on the other hand there is no check on the decline of fertile and most valuable land from diverting to non agricultural purposes.
- The people who are basically involved in IWMP and MGNREGA activities, more than 50% of them are not aware about the whole functions and procedure of these programmes. They just involving themselves just for need. So they are not enhancing the real objectives of these programmes.
- Most of the area is dry and have steep slope and because of steepness of slope in the area, the depth of soil is very less and there is continuing erosion of soil.
- The introduction of high yielding varieties of seeds and mechanisation in the District is very less because of unawareness poverty and small land holdings.
- Traditional way of agricultural without proper and timely dosage of fertilizers.
- About 94 % of agricultural area is un-irrigated.
- Integrated Watershed Management for water harvesting is not properly implemented which gives poor results. Dearth of awareness among farmers regarding type of soil and their proper usage for producing better results.



Photo showing the image of water bodies developed by MGNREGA Programme

7. ALTERNATIVES OF AGRICULTURAL LAND USE/ SUGGESTIONS

- The problems of the district are similar as in the village of Kuh.
- The study region is rain deficit so there must be acceptance of those crops and agricultural activities which can give good results to the farmers.
- In this region, the bee keeping activity can be promoted. The diesel tree and cultivation of alluvira tree in these environmental conditions are suited. .
- Dairy farming can be promoted.
- Agriculture department should take interest in the benefits of the farmers. For this, they must have to ensure the suitability of crop according to soil by soil sampling.
- The soil is also suitable for the production of horticulture. Citrus fruits can be well developed in this region.
- There is a need of agricultural diversification for the better development of the area.
- Maximum area of the District is dry so it provides a good opportunity of executing dry-land technology in the farming system.
- The study region has large population of livestock which can provide large quantity of FYM (Farm Yard Manure).
- It declines the threat of pests attack on crops.
- This District has a significant scope of apiculture and horticulture development except these, the rearing of multipurpose plants, bamboos, shisham and other deciduous plants should be grown.
- The cultivation of Mushroom should be developed and enhance its scope in the District as its cultivation is possible throughout the year because of different type of climate.
- The scope of sericulture is vital in the District as it has ideal climatic conditions of producing mulberry trees so that rearing of silk worm is possible.
- The major portion of this District is under Kandi region which is occupied by Bakerwal, Gujjars and Gaddis who rare different types of species, the scope of sheep and goat rearing can be enhanced by proving training to these tribal peoples so that they can rear high yielding species.
- Concerning authorities can also aware them who involves in these activities. Such initiatives should be insured. No doubt there are many programmes which claim that they have organised awareness camp but the harsh reality is that it doesn't reach to the needy who resides in far flung and in rural areas of the district. So they must ensure it by women participation in such innovative camps.

8. CONCLUSION

In the above findings and observation of the study region, it is clear that agricultural development and socio-economic status of the population is closely related. If the benefits of the agricultural activities are good it elevates the socio-economic

status of the farmers. Most of the population not only the J&K state but of the whole country involves in agricultural activities. The India resides in rural areas and their main occupation is agriculture. So agriculture development directly influences the lifestyle of the rural population. For the better development of the rural population, it is important to develop their native sources in the form of agriculture. The above discussion has also highlighted so many problems of the farmers of the village kuh like dry land, non availability of irrigational facilities, subsidence farming and failure of crops etc. Similar problems are being seen in the whole region of Udhampur district except few places. The problems can be well addressed by proper land use planning and policies. The area can be studied by expert to check the soil capability and can aware farmers to use suitable crops and techniques for fetching good results. The district of Udhampur has good potential of diversified agriculture. The need of the hour demands attention from the concerning authorities to check and enhancing the real objectives of the Programmes of rural development and land improvement. They must ensure that agricultural and fertile land should not be diverging for non agricultural purposes. The introduction of diversified agriculture can enhances the potential of the study region. Farmers can get good results by diversifying their agricultural land for other purposes. The population must be aware about the functions and provisions of the all such programmes which have been implemented in their areas so that they can full scope of applying such programmes for their betterment. Rural development helps in the development of the society as a whole. So its important to study the various problems associated with the rural residents of the country. It will generate new ideas to develop our country.

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