

## Analysis of Socio-Economic Profile and Land Use Pattern of Rural Households in Himachal Pradesh

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**Abstract:** This paper examines the Socio-economic profile and land use pattern of rural households in Himachal Pradesh. Socio-economic profile is one of the most important variables in social science studies. It plays a significant role in planning and execution of developmental programmes. The socio-economic status of a family refers to the family's place in the context of defined variables such as physical assets, economic status, education, occupation, social position, social engagement, caste, and so on. Some elements of the above variables have a tendency to go together. The concept of levels of living is a comprehensive one and a quantitative measurement of it is a difficult task. It includes the scale of preference and satisfaction of wants of individual members in family as also the collective wants of groups and communities. The levels of living also depend upon economic and social development brought about by the state action which helps the individual to lead a better life.

**Key Words:** Socio-economic, sample, pattern, rural, households.

### 1. INTRODUCTION:

All economic and social development operations are designed to benefit the people, as seen by their living standards, which are the end result of all economic activities. The term "content of living" refers to all aspects of a person's life, both material and immaterial advantages. Levels of living is synonymous with levels of consumption of people and it throws light on their economic well-being by bringing out the relative importance of various items and groups of items in the total scheme of their consumption. The more prosperous a society is, the more diverse its consumption expenditure over essentials, comforts, and pleasures is typically. A society at subsistence level will consume all of its available resources for the essential necessities of existence, such as food, clothing, fuel, and light, with just a small amount left over for secondary necessities, such as housing, medical aid, and so on. Levels of living are an important indicator of prosperity. There are differences in the levels of living between regions, villagers and even within villages and classes of people. The socioeconomic approach is mainly concerned with the social, economic, and political aspects of individuals or social groups in society. Generally the socioeconomic approach focuses on identifying the adaptive capacity of individuals or communities based on their internal characteristics such as, education, gender, wealth, health status, access to credit, access to information and technology, formal and informal (social) capital, political power, and so on. Variations of these factors are responsible for the variations in socioeconomic characteristics of farmers.

### 2. OBJECTIVES AND METHODOLOGY :

The specific objectives of the present study are to analyses socio-economic profile and land use pattern of rural households in Himachal Pradesh. For the present empirical investigation Mandi district has been selected purposively mainly due to the reason that the topography of the district is more or less similar to that of the state of Himachal Pradesh. Further, the district-wise percentage of poor varies between 20 percent to 54 percent, whereas this percentage in district Mandi is 20 percent. Therefore both from the topography as well as from the percentage poor point of view this selected district can represent the economic activities as well as the level of living of the rural household in the state of Himachal Pradesh. as a whole. Mandi district has ten development block viz. Mandi Sadar, Rewalsar, Drang, Chauntra, Chachiot, Siraj, Dharampur, Gopalpur, Sunder Nagar and Karsog. With the help of multi-stage random sampling a sample of 300 households was selected from Dharampur and Gopalpur development blocks. Out of the total 300 sample households, 165 households fall in the category of marginal farmers, 75 households fall in the category of small farmers, 54 households fall in the category of medium farmers and the remaining 6 households fall in the category of large farmers. In order to achieve the objective of the present study, the required information has been collected from the 300 sample households with the help of pre-tested scheduled by conducting personal interviews.

### 3. ANALYSIS AND RESULT:

Individuals or social groups in society are primarily concerned with the social, economic, and political components of the socioeconomic approach. Variations in these elements are too responsible for disparities in country socioeconomic features. The findings about the demographical profile, educational status, consumer units, land use pattern, value of farm input among the rural sample households of the study area in Himachal Pradesh are given below.

#### 3.1. Demographical Profile

Population plays an important role in affecting the income and consumption levels and thereby the living standard of any society. In the present empirical study there are 300 sample households consists of 1540 males, females and children. Out of the total 300 sample households, 165 households fall in the category of marginal farmers having land less than one hectares, 75 households fall in the category of small farmers having land 1-2 hectares, 54 households fall in the category of medium farmers having land 2-4 hectares and the remaining 06 households fall in the category of large farmers having land more than 04 hectares. The demographical profile of the sample households have been presented in Table 1. The age factor has a considerable social significance because it exerts a big influence upon social phenomenon in many ways. Age has an important bearing on the limit, above and below which a person can not be expected to work for economic benefit. The distribution of the sample population according to different age groups have been presented in Table 1 where the population has been divided in to six groups: 0 to 6 years, 6 to 9 years, 9 to 15 years, 15 to 59 years, 59 to 65 years and 65 years and above.

**Table 1 Age and sex-wise Family Composition among the Sample Households**

S.N.	Age Groups	Marginal Holdings	Small Holdings	Medium Holdings	Large Holdings	All Holdings
1	0-6 years					
	Male	42	13	12	3	70
	Female	29	14	16	2	61
	Total	71	27	28	5	131
2	6-9 years					
	Male	19	9	5	0	33
	Female	16	6	6	1	29
	Total	35	15	11	1	62
3	9-15 years					
	Male	39	27	20	1	87
	Female	31	14	10	1	56
	Total	70	41	30	2	143
4	15-59years					
	Male	232	164	115	12	523
	Female	215	148	114	10	487
	Total	447	312	229	22	1010
5	59-65 years					
	Male	26	9	15	1	51
	Female	25	12	12	0	49
	Total	51	21	27	1	100
6	65 years and above					
	Male	15	21	14	0	50
	Female	10	18	14	2	44
	Total	25	39	28	2	94
7	Total Population					
	Male	371	243	183	17	814
	Female	326	212	172	16	726
	Total	697	455	355	33	1540
8	Sex Ratio Per thousand Male	879	872	940	941	892
9	Standard Mandays	466.25	325.5	243	22.25	1057

10	Per Household Standard Mandays	2.83	4.34	4.50	3.71	3.52
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This has been done with a view to have better insight of the age composition in detail. The first and second group includes infants who are not supposed to do any manual work. The next age group includes the family members up to the age of 15 years who are supposed to study, but it has been observed that persons in this age group too help substantially in fields as well as in other light household activities such as rearing of children, bringing water and fuel, looking after cattle etc. The persons falling in the age group of 15 to 59 years are actively available for gainful economic activities and therefore, this group forms the main working force. The family members falling in the age group of 59 to 65 years also help in fields and light household activities, whereas, the family members above 65 years age have been termed as dependents. Table 4.1 reveals that out of the total population of 1540 persons, 814 are males and 726 are females. This table further shows that the age-wise composition of the total sample population consists of 131 infants fall in the age group of 0 to 6 years, 62 fall in the age group of 6 to 9 years, 143 fall in the age group of 9 to 15 years, 1010 persons fall in the age groups of 15 to 59 years, 100 persons fall in the age group of 59 to 65 years and 94 persons above 65 years of age. Out of the total sample population of 1540 persons, 697 persons fall in the marginal size of holdings, 455 on the small size of holdings, 355 on the medium size of holdings and the remaining 33 persons fall on the large size of holding group.

The birth rate, marriage age, the magnitude and direction of migrations etc. are all significantly affected by the proportion of males and females in the population. Women have always played an important role in the labour market in the rural areas. This is also true for the women of the areas where large majority of population depends upon agriculture and animal husbandry. On an average there are 892 females per one thousand males in the present sample areas of district Mandi. The female's ratio per thousand males has been worked out 879, 872, 940 and 941 on the marginal, small, medium and large size of holdings respectively. Due to the differences in the efficiency of male, female, children and old persons, standard mandays have been worked out in the present study by attaching the 'proper coefficient of efficiency' i.e., one woman day (WD) has been treated equal to 0.75 mandays (MD) one child day (CD) has been treated equal to one old person day (OD) and both are considered equal to 0.50 MD, i.e., 1 WD = 0.75 MD, 1 CD = 1 OD = 0.50 MD.<sup>1</sup> The standard mandays have been worked out 466.25, 325.5, 243 and 22.25 on the marginal, small, medium and large size of holdings respectively. Among all the holdings together the standard mandays came out 1057 as is evident from Table 1.

### 3.2. Average Family Size, Percentage of Labour Force and Percentage of Dependents

The average size of family, percentage of labour force, and percentage of dependents among the sample household has been presented in Table 2. The average size of family has been worked out 4.22, 6.07, 6.57 and 5.50 on the marginal, small, medium and large size of holdings respectively.

**Table 2 Average Family Sizes, Percentage of Family Work Force, Percentage of Dependents, Number of Standard Mandays and Number of Consumer Units Among the Sample Households**

S.N.	Particulars	Marginal Holdings	Small Holdings	Medium Holdings	Large Holdings	All Holdings
1	Total no. of households	165	75	54	6	300
2	Total no. of family members	697	455	355	33	1540
3	Average size of family	4.22	6.07	6.57	5.5	5.13
4	Percentage of Family Work force	447	312	229	22	1010
		(64.13)	(68.57)	(64.51)	(66.67)	(65.58)
5	Percentage of Dependents	250	143	126	11	530
		(35.87)	(31.43)	(35.49)	(33.33)	(34.42)
6	No. of Consumer Units	658.9	460	343.4	31.5	1493.8
7	Standard Mandays	466.25	325.5	243	22.25	1057
8	Literacy percentage					
	Male	300	205	149	13	667
		(93.75)	(94.04)	(95.51)	(100.00)	(94.34)
	Female	245	162	129	13	549



		(83.05)	(84.82)	(85.43)	(92.86)	(84.33)
	Total	545	367	278	26	1216
		(88.62)	(89.73)	(90.55)	(96.30)	(89.54)

Note:-Figures in parenthesis indicate percentages

The percentage of labour force has been worked out 64.13, 68.57, 64.51 and 66.67 per cent on the marginal, small, medium and large size of holdings respectively. Among all the holdings together this percentage came out 65.58. The percentage of dependents has been worked out 35.87, 31.43, 35.49 and 33.33 per cent on the marginal, small, medium and large size of holdings respectively. The percentage of dependents is the highest on the marginal size of holdings as compared to small, medium, and large size of holdings. Among all the holdings together the percentage of dependents came out 34.42. The percentage of dependents is the highest on the marginal size of holdings mainly due to higher illiteracy ratio as compared to the larger size of holdings.

### 3.3. Literacy

Literacy is an important indicator of the levels of living. In the sample as a whole 89.54 per cent of the population is literate, out of which 94.34 per cent are males and 84.33 per cent are females. The literacy percentage has been worked out 88.62, 89.73, 90.55 and 96.30 per cent on the marginal, small, medium and large size of holdings respectively. Among all the holdings together this percentage came out 89.54. The literacy percentage shows an increasing tendency with an increase in the size of holdings which is highest on the large size of holdings. The literacy percentage among males shows an increasing tendency with an increase in the size of holdings which has been worked out 93.75, 94.04, 95.51 and 100 per cent on the marginal, small, medium and large size of holdings respectively. Among all the holdings together this percentage came out 94.34. The literacy percentage among females shows an increasing tendency with an increase in the size of holdings which has been worked out 83.05, 84.82, 85.43 and 92.86 per cent on the marginal, small, medium and large size of holdings respectively. Among all the holdings together this percentage came out 84.33. Thus, the literacy percentage shows an increasing tendency with an increase in the size of holdings. It happened mainly due to the reason that the households falling on the larger size of holdings have sound and regular sources of income, can afford to make investment on the education of their wards. Contrary to it, the households falling on the smaller holdings, due to their uneconomic size of holdings and meager household income cannot afford to bear the expenses of the education of their children, i.e. mainly for the higher education. Further whatever education facilities Government have provided in the sample area are availed by the poor households mainly up to the primary or middle level by getting assistance from the Government in the form of fee concession, free books and dresses, etc.

### 3.4. Consumer Units

The consumer units of the sample households have been presented in Table 3. The total number of males, females and children of varying ages has been converted into 'standard consumption units' or 'adult man value' by applying the scale of coefficient suggested by the Indian Council of Medical Research<sup>2</sup> e.g., a family consisting of father, mother and three children aged 10.8, and 6 years has an adult man value as consumption units of 3.9(i.e. 1.0 + 0.8 + 0.8 + 0.7 + 0.6). This table clearly reveals that the total number of 'standard consumer units' of the total 300 sample households have been worked out 1493.8. Out of the total consumer units, i.e. 1493.8 among all the sample households 658.9, 460, 343.4 and 31.5 accounted to the marginal, small, medium and large size of holdings respectively.

**Table 3 Number of Standard Consumer Units Among the Sample Households**

S.N.	Age Groups	Marginal Holdings	Small Holdings	Medium Holdings	Large Holdings	All Holdings
1	0-3 years	14.4	6.4	6	2	28.8
2	3-5 years	11.5	4	3.5	0	19.0
3	5-7 years	11.4	5.4	4.8	0.6	22.2
4	7-9 years	18.2	4.2	9.1	0.7	32.2
5	9-12 years	33.6	16	11.2	0	60.8
6	12-21 years	79	61	31	3	174
7	21-59 years					
	Male	244.8	168	130.8	13.2	556.8
	Female	182.7	121.5	95.4	8.1	407.7
	Total	427.5	289.5	226.2	21.3	964.5

8	Above 59 years	63.3	73.5	51.6	3.9	192.3
9	Total Consumer Units	658.9	460	343.4	31.5	1493.8

### 3.5. Land Use Pattern

It has been revealed by many studies that in the rural areas, the variations in the levels of living are high due to uneven distribution of productive resources, mainly land. The distribution of land is such that only a small part of it is owned by the majority of the households. Consequently, these holdings swell the rank of non-viable units to produce sufficient output to support himself and his family in reasonable comforts and also does to provide gainful employment to the family human labour. In the rural district Mandi, land is the main productive asset. The land use pattern of the sample households has been presented in Table 4. The per household total area operated has worked out 0.26 hectares on the marginal size of holding, 1.22 hectares on the small size of holding, 2.33 hectares on the medium and 4.00 hectares on the large size of holding. Among all the sample households together per household total area operated has been worked out 0.95 hectares. The percentage of area under field crops has been worked out 57.0, 57.32, 53.94 and 50.00 per cent on the marginal, small, medium and large size of holdings respectively. Among all the holdings together this percentage came out 55.16. The percentage of area under horticultural crops has been worked out 00, 00, 1.84 and 3.33 per cent on the marginal, small, medium and large size of holdings respectively. Among all the holdings together this percentage came out 1.24. The percentage of area under field crops shows a decreasing tendency with an increase in the size of holdings, whereas, contrary to it, the percentage of area under orchards shows an increasing tendency with an increase in the size of holdings. It happened mainly because of the reason that smaller size of holding groups due to their less productive and uneconomic size of holdings cultivate their maximum land area in order to grow the field crops like, maize, wheat, barley etc., with a view to meet out the basic food requirements of their family members. Whereas, the larger size of holdings with quite large size of holdings, regular and sound sources of household income, can afford to utilize the maximum land area for the production of commercial crops in order to increase their household income manifold. The percentage of cultivated land to the total owned land shows a decreasing tendency with an increase in the size of holdings. The percentage of area under grass and trees has been worked out 42.10, 42.68, 44.21 and 46.67 per cent on the marginal, small, medium and large size of holdings respectively.

**Table 4 Land Use Pattern Among the Sample Households**  
 (Area in hectares)

S.N.	Items	Marginal Holdings	Small Holdings	Medium Holdings	Large Holdings	All Holdings
1	Cultivated Land					
	I. Under field crops	0.15 (57.00)	0.70 (57.32)	1.26 (53.94)	2.00 (50)	0.52 (55.16)
	II. Orchards	0.002 (0.90)	0.00 (0.00)	0.04 (1.84)	0.13 (3.33)	0.01 (1.24)
	III. Total ( I + II )	0.15 (57.90)	0.70 (57.32)	1.30 (55.79)	2.13 (53.33)	0.53 (56.40)
2	Uncultivated Land					
	I. Area Not Available for cultivation	0.00 (0.00)	0.00 (0.00)	0.00 (0.00)	0.00 (0.00)	0.00 (0.00)
	II. Grass Land and Land under Tree	0.11 (42.10)	0.52 (42.68)	1.03 (44.21)	1.87 (46.67)	0.41 (43.60)
	III. Total uncultivated Land(I+II)	0.11 (42.10)	0.52 (42.68)	1.03 (44.21)	1.87 (46.67)	0.41 (43.60)
3	Total Owned Land					
	I. Cultivated Land	0.15 (57.9)	0.70 (57.32)	1.30 (55.79)	2.13 (53.33)	0.53 (56.40)
	II. Uncultivated Land	0.11 (42.1)	0.52 (42.68)	1.03 (44.21)	1.87 (46.67)	0.41 (43.60)
	III. G. Total (I+II)	0.26 (100.00)	1.22 (100.00)	2.33 (100.00)	4.00 (100.00)	0.95 (100.00)

Note:-Figures in parenthesis denote percentage to column total.

Among all the holdings together the percentage of area under grass and trees, came out 43.60. The percentage of area under grass and trees shows an increasing tendency with an increase in the size of holdings. The percentage of uncultivated land to the total owned land has been worked out 42.07, 42.68, 44.21 and 46.67 per cent on the marginal, small, medium and large size of holdings respectively. Among all the holdings together this percentage of uncultivated area came out 43.60. Thus, contrary to the percentage of cultivated area which shows a decreasing tendency with increase in the size of holdings, the percentage of uncultivated land area indicates an increasing tendency with an increase in the size of holdings. The practice of leasing-out as well as leasing-in land is not practiced in the sample area. The overall position of land-holdings shows that the actual farm production in most cases is not sufficient even to meet out the demand of their domestic consumption. More than 95 per cent of the cultivated land areas are unirrigated.

### 3. 6. Value of Farm Inputs

The percentage values of different farm inputs used by the household falling in the different holdings group have been presented in the Table 5. This table clearly indicates that the percentage value of seeds to the total value of farm inputs has been worked out 29.34, 37.62, 45.19 and 44.92 per cent on the marginal, small, medium and large size of holdings respectively. Among all the holdings together this percentage came out 39.37. The percentage value of home produced seeds to the total value of farm inputs has been worked out 22.97, 25.25, 26.52 and 24.62 per cent on the marginal, small, medium and large size of holdings respectively. Among all the holdings together this percentage came out 25.20. The percentage value of purchased seeds to the total value of farm inputs has been worked out 6.37, 12.37, 18.67 and 20.31 per cent on the marginal, small, medium and large size of holdings respectively. Among all the holdings together this percentage came out 14.17. The percentage value of purchased seeds shows an increasing tendency with an increase in the size of holdings. The percentage value of plants to the total value of farm inputs is the highest on the large size of holdings as compared to marginal, small and medium size of holding groups. The percentage value of plants to the total value of farm inputs has been worked out 00, 0.64, 1.69 and 6.15 per cent on the marginal, small, medium and large size of holdings respectively. Among all the holdings together this percentage came out 1.35. The percentage value of plants shows an increasing tendency with an increase in the size of holdings. It clearly reveals that larger size of holdings group have utilized a large part of land for more remunerative cash crops and orchards. Whereas, the smaller holding groups have utilized their maximum land area for growing field crops mainly to meet out the needs of the domestic consumption.

**Table 5 Value of Farm Inputs Among the Sample Households**

S.N.	Farm Inputs	Marginal Holdings	Small Holdings	Medium Holdings	Large Holdings	All Holdings
1	Seeds					
	I) Owned	642.42 (22.97)	2098.67 (25.25)	4064.81 (26.52)	6666.67 (24.62)	1743 (25.20)
	II) Purchased	178.18 (6.37)	1028 (12.37)	2861.11 (18.67)	5500 (20.31)	980 (14.17)
	Sub-Total (I+II)	820.61 (29.34)	3126.67 (37.62)	6925.93 (45.19)	12166.667 (44.92)	2723 (39.37)
2	Value of Plants	0.00 (0.00)	53.33 (0.64)	259.26 (1.69)	1666.67 (6.15)	93.33 (1.35)
3	Manures	575.15 (20.56)	880 (10.59)	1368.52 (8.93)	2166.67 (8.00)	826 (11.94)
4	Fertilizers	545.45 (19.50)	1960 (23.59)	2962.96 (19.33)	5833.33 (21.54)	1440 (20.82)
5	Charges Paid for maintenance of agricultural Implements	101.88 (3.64)	250.27 (3.01)	652.78 (4.26)	1500 (5.54)	266.1 (3.85)
6	Wages paid to hired in human labour	42.42 (1.52)	362.67 (4.36)	666.67 (4.35)	1833.33 (6.77)	270.67 (3.91)
7	Wages paid to hired in bullock labour	711.52 (25.44)	1677.33 (20.18)	2490.74 (16.25)	1916.67 (7.08)	1297.33 (18.76)



8	Total value of inputs (1to7)	2797.03	8310.27	15326.85	27083.33	6916.43
		(100.00)	(100.00)	(100.00)	(100.00)	(100.00)

Note:-Figures in parenthesis denote percentage to column total.

The percentage value of manures to the total value of farm inputs has been worked out 20.56, 10.59, 8.93 and 8.00 per cent on the marginal, small, medium and large size of holdings respectively. Among all the holdings together this percentage came out 11.94. The percentage value of fertilizers came out 19.50, 23.59, 19.33, and 21.54 per cent on the marginal, small, medium and large size of holdings respectively. Among all the holdings together this percentage came out 20.82. The percentage value of charge paid for maintenance of agricultural implements has been worked out 3.64, 3.01, 4.26 and 5.54 per cent, on the marginal small, medium and large size of holdings respectively. Among all holdings together this percentage came out 3.85. The percentage value of wages paid to hired-in human labour to the total farm inputs has been worked out 1.52, 4.36, 4.35, and 6.77 per cent on the marginal, small, medium and large size of holdings respectively. Among all holdings together this percentage came out 3.91. The percentage value of wages paid to hired-in bullock labour came out 25.44, 20.18, 16.25 and 7.08 per cent on the marginal, small, medium and large size of holdings respectively. Among all holdings together this percentage came out 18.76. The percentage value of wages paid to hired-in human labour to the total farm input shows an increasing tendency with an increase in the size of holdings. Whereas, comparing to it the percentage value of wages paid to hired-in bullock labour shows a decreasing tendency with an increase in the size of holdings. It happened mainly due to the fact that smaller holdings groups due to their uneconomic size of holdings cannot afford to keep bullock. Whereas, contrary to it, on the larger size of holdings farmers find gainful work on their own fields throughout the agricultural year. Hence they can afford to keep bullocks and they generally hired-in human labour during the busy agricultural and horticultural seasons.

#### 4. CONCLUSIONS AND POLICY IMPLICATIONS :

The present study was conducted to throw some light on some socio-economic aspects of rural households of Himachal Pradesh. The study found some differences in socio-economic parameters of rural households. The empirical finding of the present study indicates that the average size of family among all the holdings together came out 5.13. The percentage of labour force among all the holdings together came out 65.58. The percentage of dependents is the highest on the marginal size of holdings. Among all the holdings together this percentage came out 34.42. The total number of males, females and children of varying ages, when converted into 'standard consumption units', (by applying in scale given by the Nutritional Experts) came out 658.9, 460, 343.4, 31.5 and 1493.8 on the marginal ,small ,medium, large and among all the holding groups together respectively. The number of 'standard mandays' (by attaching proper co-efficient of efficiency to male, female, children and old persons) have been worked out 466.25, 325.5, 243, 22.25 and 1057 on the marginal, small, medium, large and among all the holdings together respectively. The per household total area operated has been worked out 0.26, 1.22, 2.33, 4.00 and 0.95 hectares on the marginal ,small, medium, large and among all the holdings together respectively. The percentage of area under filed crops has been worked out 57.0, 57.32, 53.94 and 50.00 per cent on the marginal, small, medium and large size of holdings respectively. Among all the holdings together this percentage came out 55.16. The percentage of area under horticultural crops has been worked out 00, 00, 1.84 and 3.33 per cent on the marginal, small medium and large size of holdings respectively. Among all the holdings together this percentage came out 1.24. The percentage of area under field crops shows a decreasing tendency with an increase in the size of holdings, whereas, contrary to it, the percentage of area under orchards shows an increasing tendency with an increase in the size of holdings.

The different socio-economic indicators which have a direct bearing on the socio-economic conditions of the rural people have been empirically analyzed in order to find out the variation in the pattern of the assets distribution, gainful employment opportunities, income and consumption and thereby the variation in the socio-economic conditions of the sample households. The socioeconomic characteristics of rural household are important for better policy options. Though the research location is under rural area, the characteristics of rural household are different than other social groups. Most of the farmers have large family size and no alternative sources of income except agriculture. Moreover, most of the cases there is only one earning family members as a result the dependency ratios are very high. Majority of the farmers are educated, but highly educated people are also not interested in agriculture because low profitability in respect to off-farm wage. Therefore, government needs to take policy to improve the productivity of rural household through specific training or education programmes, awareness creation program, extra incentive programme etc. These factors are very important for sustainability of rural household,

poverty reduction and reduce income inequality. Here agricultural policies and investments need to be more strategic. Production practices are important relative to current government policy.

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