

Ecology of Changing Cropping Pattern in Bharmaur Tribal Area of Himachal Pradesh

M.S. Jaglan and B.R. Thakur

Department of Geography, Kurukshetra University, Kurukshetra 136 119, Haryana, India

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ABSTRACT With the fast increasing population, the land – man ratio is decreasing fast in Himachal Pradesh. Undoubtedly, land is the most prominent resource endowment in the agricultural economy of the tribal areas in the state. Bharmaur being a hilly region has lesser proportion of area available for cultivation. The present study is based on secondary data of sample villages spread across four Valleys of Bharmaur region. An attempt has been made to analyse the changes in cropping pattern of Bharmaur tribal area over the period 1974-77 to 1998-01. The study reveals that Gaddis have changed their traditional cropping pattern from cultivating local cultivars to the more remunerative crops. This change is more discernible in case of cereals and plantation crops. The apple (*Pyrus mallus*) cultivation has diffused along valley slopes during the recent study period. The area under this fruit in sample villages was merely 0.32 per cent of total cropped area in 1974-77 which increased to 4.29 per cent during 1998-01. Some of the traditional kharif crops namely kodra (*Paspalum scrobiculatum*), chinae (*Panicum miliaceum*) and bhrace (*Fagopyrum esculentum*) grown during mid 1970s have now been replaced by cash crops namely – rajmah (*Phaseolus vulgaris*) and urd (*Phaseolus radiatus*). In case of rabi crops, wheat (*Triticum aestivum*) is the staple food crop. But the cultivation of barley (*Hordeum vulgare*) has recorded a decline. The study shows that there are significant spatial variations in cropping pattern during both the periods under discussion.