



Perception of Farmers towards Conversion of Agriculture Land to Other Sectors: A Case Study of Pulwama District Jammu & Kashmir – India

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ABSTRACT: The Land is a basic input for agriculture and it occupies an important position among all the resources required for a modern economy. Food is a source of nutrition and basic need for life. The different crops are grown as per their requirements as staple food. The present investigation is to study the causes and concerns of agriculture land conversion in district Pulwama. A pre-tested questionnaire has been used to study the perception of farmers towards conversion of agriculture land to other sectors. Our study reported that 25.5% of the agricultural farmers have converted their land to horticulture and 60% of them have converted their towards residential sectors which is quite alarming and opposite to the land policy of Jammu and Kashmir. There is an urgent need to restrict land conversion in Kashmir valley to reduce negative consequences that may otherwise expose society to the different vulnerabilities.

Keywords: Food, Agriculture, Conversion, impact, Kashmir

I. INTRODUCTION

Change of farmland to different uses has various immediate and indirect outcomes, including loss of dietary foods, increments in the expenses, lower quality of fertile land more prominent transportation expenses of items to increasingly far off business sectors and loss of environment quality. Researchers believe that steady increments in efficiency of food are not possible in an area where land conversions are a normal practice. Land use is any kind of permanent or cyclic human intervention to satisfy human needs, either material or spiritual or both from the complex of natural and artificial resource, which together are called “land” [1].

Goswami and Challa (2006) reported the socio-economic factors affecting land use in India. The study envisaged population pressure and prices of essential commodities were the most important factors contributing to change in land use pattern. The study made obvious that high population pressure on cultivable land induced the rural people to bring more land under cultivation. Similarly, with a constant increase in the prices of essential commodities, there was a pressure to substitute land from low value output to high value output [3]. Harish (2006) conducted the study on economic appraisal of land use dynamics in Mandya district from 1980-81 to 2003-04. Delphi method was employed to know the reasons for observed changes in land use pattern. The results identified that the major factors responsible for the changes in land use pattern were rainfall, profitability of crops, salinity and alkalinity of the soil and drought, labour scarcity and uneconomic holdings [4]. Bardhan and Tewari (2010) investigated into land use dynamics in India and land under utilization for the period of 1992-93 to 2005-06. The linear regression was employed to explore the factors affecting other fallows and cultivable wastes. The results revealed that cultivable wastes increased with an increase in the area under large holdings and decreased with increase in the proportion of leased-in land. Similarly, in the valley of Kashmir, a large portion of land has been converted into horticulture and other allied sectors. This will ultimately cause great impact on the food resources and the food dependency will increase more and more with increase in large conversion practices. This paper is an attempt to study the opinion of farmers who have converted their land into different sectors [2].

II. SOURCES OF DATA

For the collection of primary data interview schedule and observation technique have been used. These schedules were prepared and used for holding formal interviews, they are for land owners, Government officials of concerned department, performing inspectorial duties were interview informally, before organization and operation of interviews rapport was established with interviewees by using intermediaries such as government officials, friends

and other influential persons etc. Non participant observation technique was used to collect valuable information regarding the land conversion behavior in that area.

III. SELECTION OF SUBJECTS

For collection of primary data 200 respondents were selected from the different villages of the Pulwama district. The selection was a random sampling technique and mostly the farmers who have converted full or part of land into other activities. The researcher himself visited to these famers and the purpose of study was informed to them. The questionnaire was translated to them in local language (Kashmiri) as most of the farmers were illiterate. The questionnaires were filled and numbered and edited wherever, required.

IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Jammu and Kashmir has lost an estimated 10 lakh kanal agricultural land to non-agricultural purposes in the past 10 years primarily because of the failure of the state government to curb the practice. As per official data, Jammu and Kashmir had 8.47 lakh hectare agriculture land in 2005-06 which has shrunken to 7.94 lakh hectare till 2015-16. This means, the loss in a decade is estimated 53,000 hectare farmland (equivalent to 10, 60,000 kanal) which has been converted for non-agricultural activities across the state. Jammu & Kashmir is mainly an agrarian economy with about 80% of its population occupied in agriculture and allied sectors. The agro-climatic diversity of the UT differs from sub-tropical in Jammu, temperate in Kashmir and makes it best for varied cultivation. The official figures indicated that “Kashmir had 4,67,700 hectares of agricultural land in 2015 which has shrunk to 3,89,000 hectares till 2018. According to figures Kashmir has lost around 80,000 hectares of agricultural land to non-agricultural purpose since 2015.

“Data shows that land under paddy cultivation in Kashmir region decreased from 1,48,000 hectares in 2015 to 1,40,000 in 2018. The data further reveals that cultivation of pulses had declined from 14,600 hectares to 12,767 hectares”. Data shows that the land under paddy cultivation in Kashmir region shrank from 1, 48,000 hectares in 2015 to 1, 40,000 in 2018. Similarly, maize cultivation declined from 100,000 hectares to 76,000 hectares over these years. Accordingly, cultivation of pulses has declined from 14,600 hectares to 12,767 hectares. Oilseed cultivation also decreased from 86,000 hectares to 81,000”.

This has happened due to transformation of agricultural land into horticulture, unplanned construction including residential colonies, factories, brick kilns, shopping complexes and other commercial infrastructure.

Without caring for the laws, farmers are transforming their agricultural land into horticulture and other activities, as it gives them better financial gains. There are lacuna on the part of government too, as they only promote horticulture without creating any strong marketing base for the agricultural activities. Although, experts believe that the agriculture sector in valley has tremendous export potential ax it has seasonal advantage over Jammu region and parts of the country. It will have also reduced food dependency in the valley, which is quite alarming in the present scenario.

Table 1: Total land converted to different sectors.

Sectors	No. of Items	(% Yes)	(% No)
Horticulture	51	25.5	74.5
Residential	120	60	40
Industrial	9	4.5	95.5
others	0	0	0
Total	200	100	

Over the period of time people have converted most of their land towards other sectors like horticulture, residential, industrial and allied sectors. This has happened due to population explosion, industrialization and consumerism in Pulwama. Our study reported that 25.5% of the agricultural farmers have converted their land to horticulture and 60% of them have converted their towards residential sectors which is quite alarming and opposite to the land policy of Jammu and Kashmir. Only 4.5% of the farmers have converted their prime land to the industries in our to meet the demands of the people (Table 1 & Fig 1). Although this percentage is quite low but is again indicative that Pulwama district is industrially backward district in the Union territory of Jammu and Kashmir.

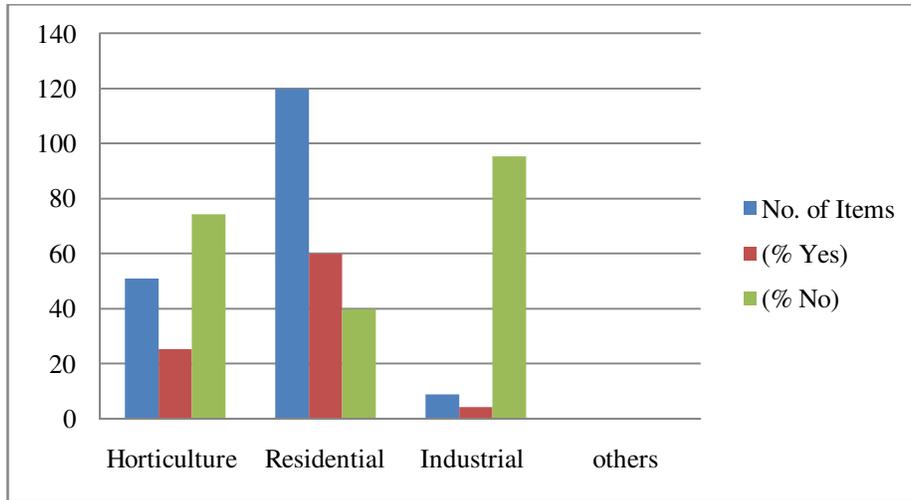


Fig. 1. Total land converted to different sectors.

23.5% of the respondents have converted agriculture land to other sectors and 7% of them have converted agriculture land into other sectors. However, most of the people argued that they have not yet converted their land into other sectors (Table 2 & Fig 2).

Table 2: Type of land converted to other sectors.

Level	No. of Items	(% Yes)	(% No)
Agriculture	47	23.5	76.5
horticulture	14	7	93.0
both	2	1	99.0
None	137	63.5	36.5
Total	200	100	200

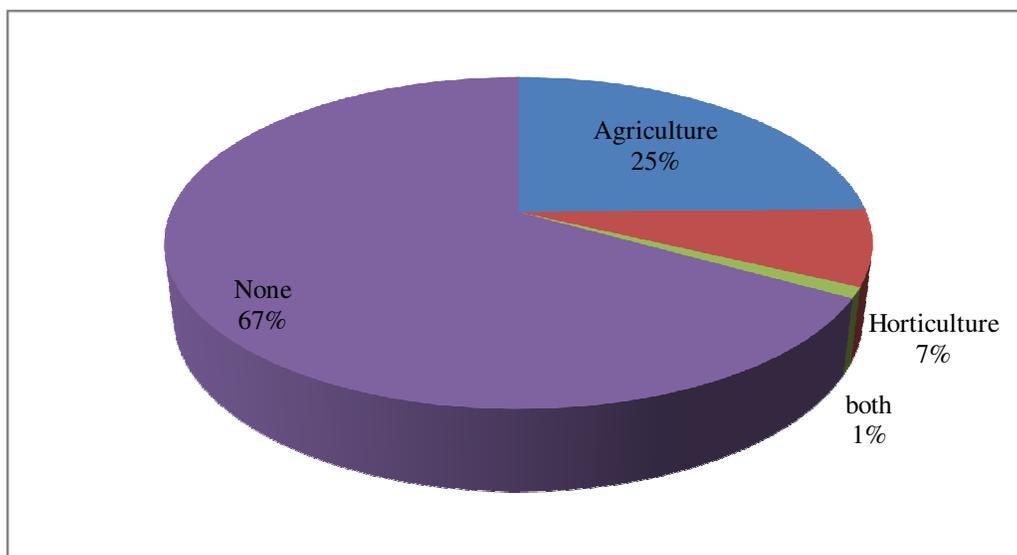


Fig. 2. Type of land converted to other sectors.

Table 3: Various reasons for land conversion.

Level	No. of Items	(% Yes)	(% No)
Food security	9	4.5	95.5
High price	169	84.5	15.5
Both	22	11	89
Total	200	100	200

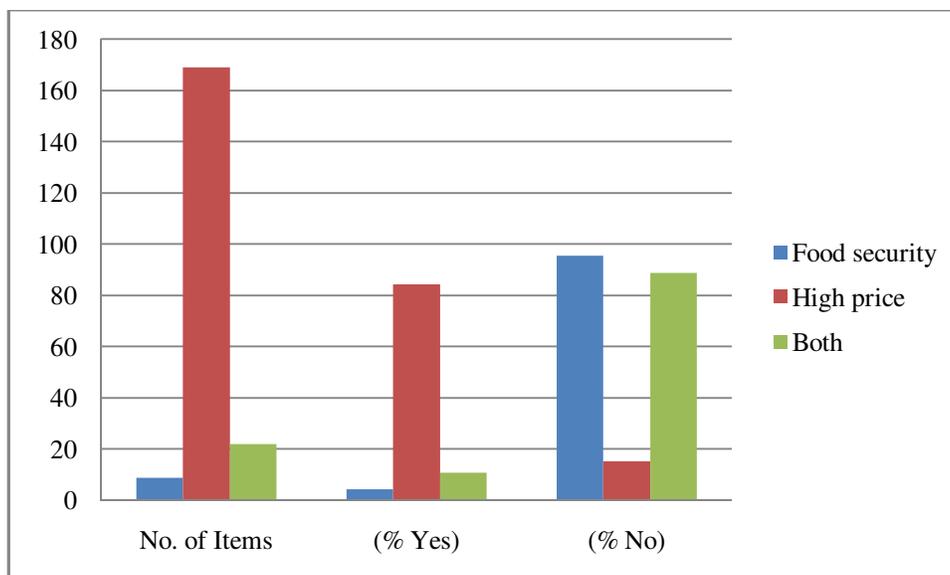


Fig. 3. Various reasons for land conversion.

When respondents were asked about the reasons for land conversion a large number of respondents (84.5%) reported that due to high price to the horticulture products like apples they were compelled to convert the land into apple orchards. The concept of food security is totally new and few believe that they have done this to feed their family members and it will be good prospect for the future generation (Table 3 & Fig 3).

V. CONCLUSION

The land conversion in Jammu and Kashmir over the years is causing a threat to the food security of the region. It will make the valley dependent on food from other states that have its own repercussions. It has been observed that due to less market value of rice in the region, people have shifted to horticulture sector as it fetches more market value as compared to rice. There is an urgent need to restrict land conversion in Kashmir valley to reduce negative consequences that may otherwise expose society to the different vulnerabilities.

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