

Agricultural Scenario of Saran Plain – A Geographical Analysis

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Introduction

This study area is predominantly an agricultural tract. Most of the people of the region are engaged in agricultural pursuits. The homogeneous fertile land and congenial climatic conditions provide an ideal situation for agricultural activities. The development of irrigation facilities like canals, tube-well and other sources may be noticed in the region. The intensity of agriculture has been accelerated to a greater extent. The recurrence droughts and floods have certainly caused damage to the agriculture. It is relevant to note here that the region has dense population. The vast majority of the people are dependent to their subsistence on agriculture in Saran plain. As such agro based economy of the inhabitants dominate in the region.

The task of the agricultural geographers is to do the delimitation and assessment of the rational characteristics of agricultures. The quality of agricultural lands varies in response to the terrain, soil, productivity and the physical environment of the area.

The production depends upon the methods, introduced techniques adopted, irrigation provided, quality of the seeds and fertilizers used, quality of the soil and the cropping pattern practiced. Farming is a product not merely a physical setting but also a manmade frames.

It is relevant to mention here that in the study area most of the farmers are unable to purchase the modern implements for agricultural activities. Generally they use, traditional agricultural tools for cultivation and harvesting etc. Small agricultural holdings and scattered land holdings are great obstacles against agricultural holdings and scattered land holdings are great obstacles against agricultural development. Even today considerable number of farmers express their inability to use required amount of fertilizers, the better quality of seeds due to lack of resources.

Seasonal cropping is the main characteristics of agricultural practice in Saran Plain. The agricultural operation may be divisible into four harvesting periods –

- (i) Early Monsoon period (Bhadai)
- (ii) Later Monsoon period (Agahani)
- (iii) Spring period (Rabi)
- (iv) Summer period (Garma)

Bhadai crops are sown in the month of May and June and harvested in the month of July and August. This harvest comprises quick maturing crops like Bhadai – Paddy, maize, millets, marua, vegetables etc. It is greatly benefited in the region by the premonsoon shower. Aghani – crops are sown in the month of June and July and harvested in the month of November and December. The rabi harvest includes wheat, barley, pulses and oil seed, etc. These crops are sown in the month of October and November and harvested in the month of February and March. Garma crops are sown in March-April and harvested in the months of June and July. Garma crops include rice, maize, moong and vegetables.

Table 1.1 demonstrates the above four harvesting periods in Saran plain; Rabi is the most important whereas Garma is least important harvest in the region. On the district level the rabi predominates in Saran where Bhadai in Gopalganj and Bhadai-Agahani in Siwan district. The important crops of the region are wheat, barley, gram, paddy, sugarcane, maize, potato, fruits, peas, millits, vegetables etc.

Table No. 1.1

Area under Different Harvest, Seasons 2019-20

Sl. No.	Harvests	Area in Hecteress	% of the total cropped area	% of the total cropped area of the State
1.	Bhadai	170,677,86	23.13	1.51
2.	Agahani	197,948,89	26.92	1.74
3.	Rabi	324,275,59	43.94	2.87
4.	Garma	45,126,27	6.41	0.39
	Total	838,02,861	100.00	

Sources : District Statistical Offices

Table 1.2 reveals percentage of lands under principal crops wheat occupies the highest percentage of land (30.33%) whereas paddy shares (20.52%) and maize (12.29%). The remaining crops have percentage lower than 10%. The least percentage of land comes under Barley, Arhar, Khesari, and peas etc.

Principal Crops of the Area :

It has already been stated that the region produces a large number of crops. The production of crops is considerable influenced by variation in topography, soils and rainfall. The principal crops of Saran plain are given below:

Paddy : Paddy is a dominant crop in the region covering about 30.32% of the total cropped areas of the region. This crop is of equal importance in



SARAN PLAIN AGRICULTURAL HARVESTS

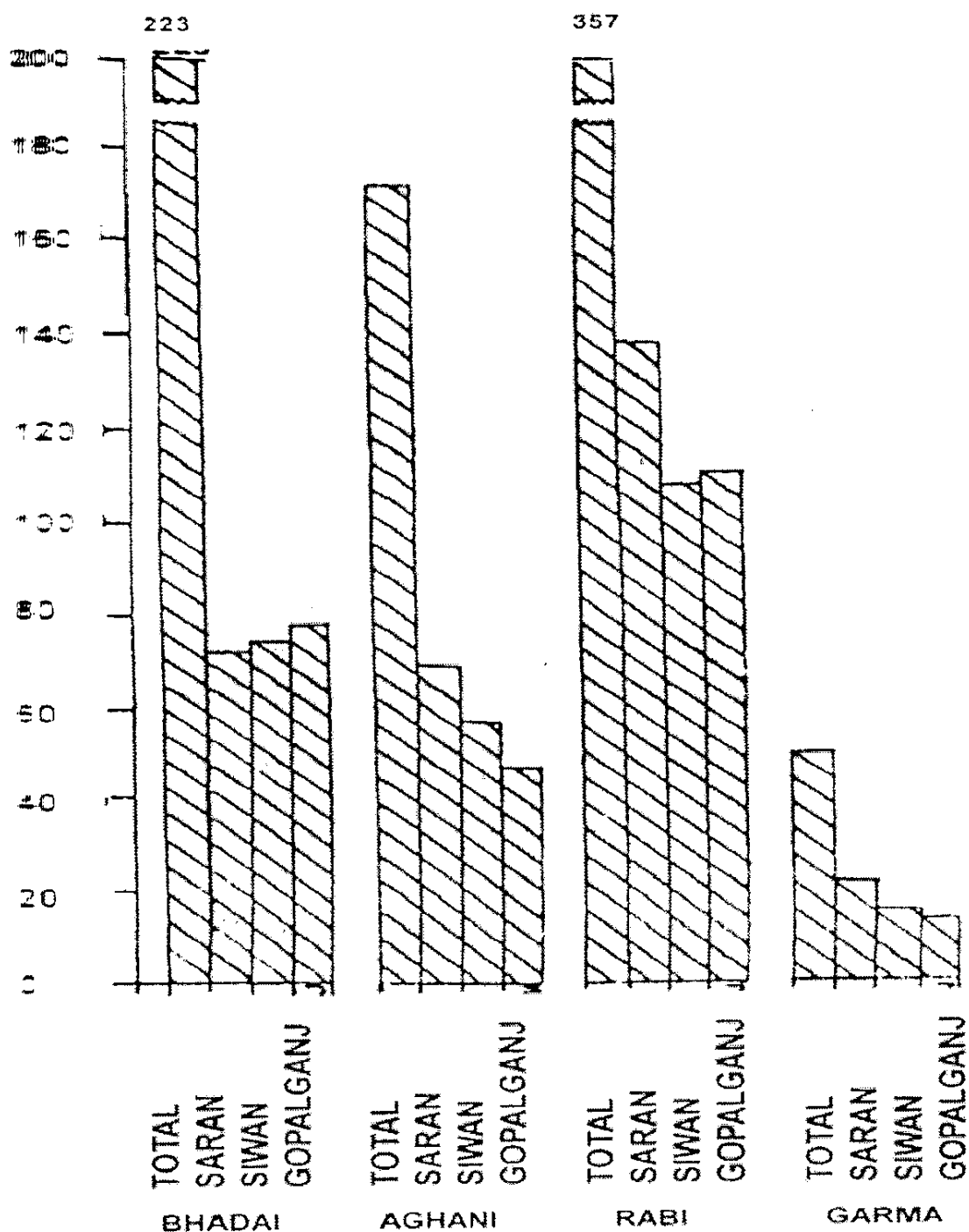


Table 1.2

Percentage of Land under Principal Crops, 2019-20

Sl. No.	Crops	% of the total cropped area of the region
1.	Paddy (Autumn)	8.44
2.	Paddy (Winter)	20.52
3.	Paddy (Summer)	0.11
4.	Wheat	30.33
5.	Gram	1.39
6.	Maize (Autumn)	12.29
7.	Maize (Summer)	0.58
8.	Sugarcane	3.37
9.	Potato	2.00
10.	Fruits	1.93
11.	Vegetables	2.83
12.	Barley	0.01
13.	Masoor	0.01
14.	Arhar	0.00
15.	Kesari	0.20
16.	Peas	0.01
17.	Others	15.09
	Total	100.00

Source : District statistical Hand book, Chapra

three districts. viz; Saran, Siwan and Gopalganj. Among the three crops of summer, autumn and winter, rice covers about 90% of rice area and the remainder is mostly under autumn rice, Baniapur, Amnour, Dariyapur, Parsa, Jalalpur, Mashrakh, Manjhi may be worth-mentioning.

Wheat, Baley and Gram : These three crops are studies under rabi. Infact Rabi is the most valuable crops comprising area 31.72% of total crop bed area of the region. Out for the 40 Anchals of the region, Rabi stands the first ranking crop Dighwara, Amnour, Kateyan,

Dariyapur, Barharia are main anchals where Rabi is cultivated. Barley is cultivated in less fertile areas and even those areas having irrigational facilities are quite suitable for this crop, Gram is mainly cultivated on good quality of soil. It has a share of 4.39% of the total cropped areas. Irrigation is needed for this crop. Important anchals under gram cultivation are Chapra, Revelganj, Dighwara, Sonapur, Hussainganj and Manjhi etc.

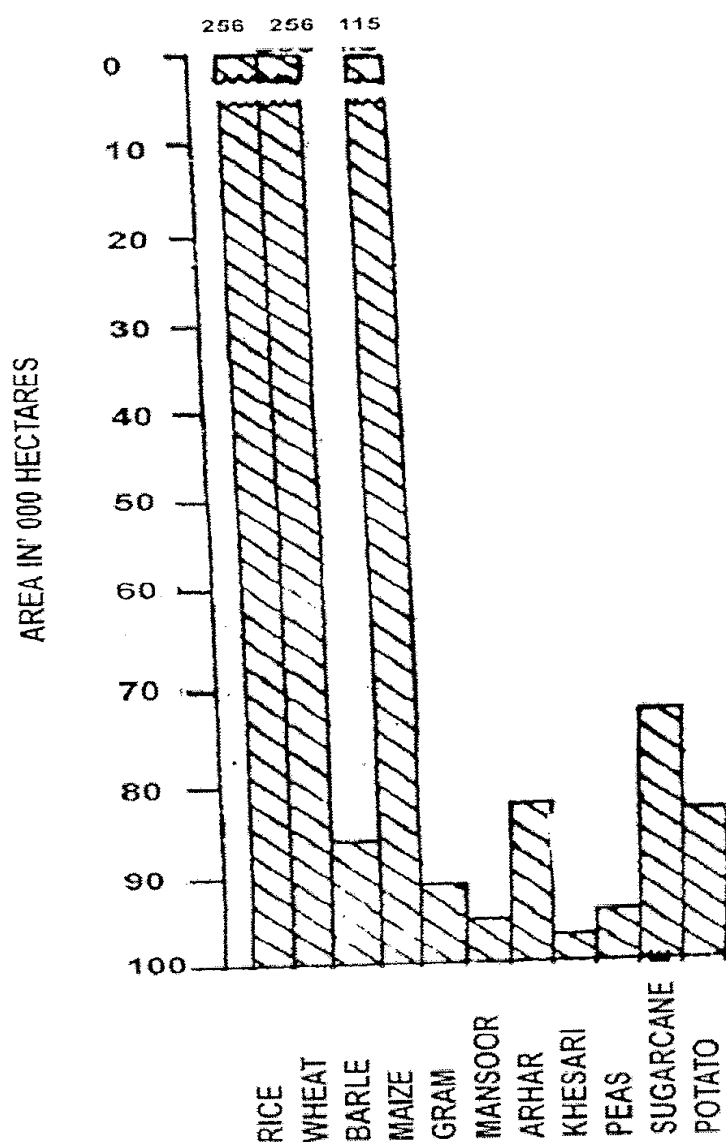
Maize : Maize is the food of the poor. It covers an area of 0.58% of the total cropped areas. It comes under Bhadaï crop. Among anchals Gopalganj, Marhaura, Baikunthpur, Sonapur, Sisswan, Daralui are noted for this crop.

Pulses : Here pulses comprise all types of pulses produced in the Rabi and Kharif seasons : These pulses are Arhar, Urad, Moong, Masoor, Khesari and peas etc.

In recent times farmers do not pay more attention to the production of pulses in the region; yield may be witnessed in Sonapur, Baniapur, Ekma, Maharajganj, Basantpur, Bhagwanpur etc.

Sugarcane : Sugarcane is the most important cash-crop of the study area. Earlier this crop played vital role in the economic development of the farmers. At present the closure of sugar mills has slashed the economy of the farmers especially in the anchals of Siwan, Pacharukhi, Siswan, Maharajganj, Daraunda, Hussainganj etc. This crop engages 3.37% of the total cropped area of the region. It is produced in certain limited areas. It is grown in a fairly defined belt in the north and the north west. It is grown in good quality lands. Sugarcane is quite suitable for varying soil condition but loamy soil with good drainage and slightly acidic to alkaline is the best suitable belt for this crop.

SARAN PLAIN PRINCIPAL CROPS



Potato is the main vegetable grown in the region particularly in Dariyapur, Marhaura, Hathua, Amnour, Banipaur.

Orchards consisting of Mango, Jack fruits, Banana, Guava are also grown here.

Conclusion:

It is important to note here that the study area has adopted multiple cropping system. It has already been discussed that most of the people are mainly dependent upon agriculture. The

high pressure of population on agriculture has forced people to migrate to elsewhere. On the other hand high yield has attracted attention of the farmers residing in the neighbouring areas. In terms of out migration push factor operates in the area and pull factor comes into being where high yield in the area is noticed. To check the out migration, the Govt. of Bihar & India have adopted several development programmes for additional production of good grains. The Govt. has emphasized the irrigation facilities in the region with a view to yielding more crops.

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