JETIR.ORG ISSN: 2349-5162 | ESTD Year : 2014 | Monthly Issue
JOURNAL OF EMERGING TECHNOLOGIES AND INNOVATIVE RESEARCH (JETIR)
An International Scholarly Open Access, Peer-reviewed, Refereed Journal

SHRINKING FARMS IN INDIA: CAUSES AND CONSEQUENCES

Dr. Shakuntala I Madiwalappagol

Associate Professor of Economics,

SDVS Sangh's Shri L K Khot College of Commerce, Sankeshwar

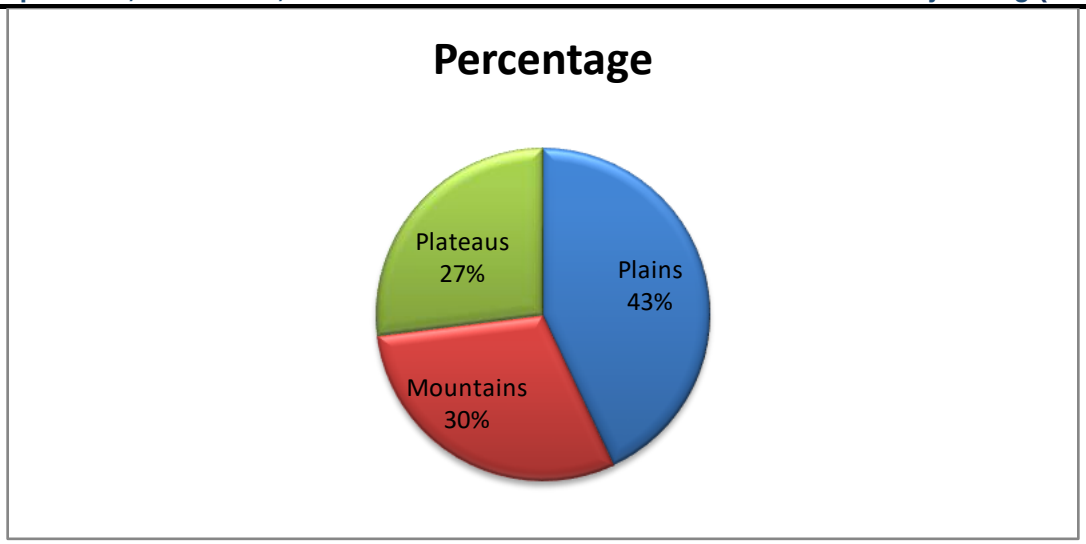
Abstract: Land is the most important natural resource of a country. Rapidly growing population. Inheritance laws, urbanization and economic pressures contribution to division sub- division and land fragmentation. Landless, marginal, and small farmers together constitute 93.7% of the total agricultural workforce in India. Over the decades , the average size of operational land holdings in India has been steadily decreasing leading to low agricultural productivity and low income for the farmers The number of operational farm holdings in India has been increasing continuously since1970-71 . As per the latest Agricultural Census 2015-2016, India had 146.5 million fragmented landholdings compared to 71 million landholdings in 1971. The issue of shrinking farms in India is a critical factor that is adversely affecting the nation's agricultural growth and the livelihoods of millions of people. Hence, the present paper is focused on the causes and consequences of shrinking land holdings in India.

Key Words: Land Holdings, Fragmentation, Shrinking Farms, Inheritance Law.

Introduction: India is the seventh largest country in the world. India covers an area of 32,87,263 sq.km, extending from the snow-covered Himalayan heights to the tropical rain forests of the south. India holds about 18 percent of world population and the largest livestock population on 2.5 percent of land area of world. Approximately 43 percent of India's land is flat plains which are ideal for agriculture and industrial development. Mountains cover around 30 percent of the country's surface area which ensures perennial river flow, supports tourism and contributes to biodiversity and ecological balance. Plateaus constitute about 27 percent of India's land area. It holds reserves of minerals, fossil fuels and forests.

Natural Division of Indian Land

Serial Number	Particulars	Percentage
1	Plains	43%
2	Mountains	30%
3	Plateaus	27%



Classification of Land in India

- **Forest Land**: Land covered with forest or reserved for the growth of forests. It includes areas with significant tree cover, whether natural or planted.
- **Agricultural Land:** This category encompasses land used for agricultural activities. It includes net sown area, current fallow land and other fallow land.
- **Pastures and Grazing Land:** These areas are used for livestock grazing .It includes pastures and meadows Land under Miscellaneous Tree Crops: It includes orchards and plantations
- **Cultivable Waste Land** :This land includes the land which is suitable for cultivation but is currently not being used
- **Fallow Land:** The agricultural land which is temporarily not under cultivation
- **Current Fallow:** Uncultivated crop land during the current agricultural year
- **Other Fallow Land**: The land which is left fallow for more than one agricultural year but less than five years.
- **Barren and Uncultivable Land**: It includes the land that cannot be brought under cultivation due to topography, climate or soil conditions
- **Land put to non agricultural uses**: This category includes land which is used for settlements, industries, roads, railways and other infrastructure.

Classification of Landholdings: Land holding refers to the area of land which a person or a family owns. The average landholding for farming among farmers in the country was 1.08 hectares in 2016-17, but it was declined to just 0.74 hectares in 2021-22. Majority of land holdings in India are small and marginal. These small and marginal land holdings hinder efficient farming practices , mechanization and overall productivity. The size of land holdings vary significantly across different regions of India

Classification of Operational Landholdings

Serial Number	Category	Size of Land Holdings
1	Marginal	Less than 1 hectare
2	Small	1 to 2 Hectares
3	Semi-medium	2 to 4 Hectares
4	Medium	4 TO 10 Hectares
5	Large	10 Hectares and Above

Literature Review:

K.Anantha Ram et al,(1999) the study found that the laws of inheritance and succession and increase in rural population contributes to the division and subdivision of land holdings. The adverse impact of Shriking land holdings on fertility of the soil , productivity of land , land management , food production and monoculture and continuous cultivation

A.V. Manjunatha et al , (2013) Studied land fragmentation, farm size , land ownership and crop diversity and adverse impact on profit of farm and efficiency of irrigated farms and found that land fragmentation contributes to inefficiency and adverse impact on farm profit.

Sneha Roy et al,(2020) Studied the conditions of land structure and level of fragmentation of small marginal farming households in villages of West Bengal and existence of traditional patriarchal land ownership patterns , lack of women's property ownership rights and found extreme fragmentation of land holdings and higher cost of production.

Objectives:

1 To study the classification of Landholdings in India
2 To know the factors influencing shrinking farms
3 To examine the consequences of shrinking farms

Methodology: The present study is based on secondary sources of data such as research articles, government reports, census reports, magazines and books.

State - wise Average size of Holdings as per Results of Agriculture Census 2015-2016

Serial No	States/UTs	Average size of holdings(in Hectare)
1	A & N Islands	1.78
2	Andhra Pradesh	0.94
3	Arunachal Pradesh	3.35
4	Assam	1.09
5	Bihar	0.39
6	Chandigarh	1.22
7	Chhattisgarh	1.24
8	D & N Haveli	1.38
9	Daman & Diu	0.36
10	Delhi	1.39
11	Goa	1.10
12	Gujarat	1.88
13	Haryana	2.22
14	Himachal Pradesh	0.95
15	Jammu and Kashmir	0.59
16	Jharkhand	1.10
17	Karnataka	1.36
18	*Kerala*	0.18
19	Lakshadweep	0.27
20	Madhya Pradesh	1.57
21	Maharashtra	1.34
22	Manipur	1.14
23	Meghalaya	1.29
24	Mizoram	1.25
25	Nagaland	4.87
26	Odisha	0.95
27	Puducherry	0.62
28	Punjab	3.62
29	Rajasthan	2.73
30	Sikkim	1.27
31	Tamil Nadu	0.75
32	Telangana	1.00
33	Tripura	0.49
34	Uttar Pradesh	0.73
35	Uttarakhand	0.85

36	West Bengal	0.76
All India		1.08

Source: Agriculture Census 2015-2016

Causes of Shrinking Farms

The size of land holdings is too small in India due to rapid growth of population and the laws of inheritance. The agricultural land is distributed equally among the male children of the deceased farmer.

1 **Population Growth:** The average size of the operational land holdings in India has been declining due to over pressure on limited land which is available for cultivation. Hence most of the farmers are marginal farmers in India.

2 **Inheritance Laws:** Inheritance laws play a significant role in the fragmentation and shrinking land holdings in India. As per this law land will be divided among children, after the death of the land owner. This repeated division of land holdings lead to small and uneconomic holdings which are unfit for modern scientific cultivation.

3 **Urbanization**: Urbanization shrinks land holdings. Urbanization leads to the conversion of agricultural land for commercial, residential and industrial purposes. Expansion of cities due to urbanization leads to fragmentation of land holdings. Further high cost of land attracts land owners to sell their lands.

4 **Economic Pressures:** Due to bad weather conditions, high input costs, fluctuating crop prices farmers face financial problems and forced to sell portions of their land

5 **Lack of land consolidation policies:** Land consolidation policies can promote sustainable agriculture. Consolidation of land creates larger, more contiguous plots of land that can lead to higher yields and reduced production costs.

Consequences of Shrinking Land Holdings

The trend of shrinking farms has adverse impact on economy, society and the environment.

I Impact on Economy

Decrease in Income: Small and fragmented land holdings lead to decrease in income for farmers, making their life miserable and challenging to sustain.

Increase in Costs: Smaller land holdings lead to higher cost of production such as higher input costs, high transportation and marketing expenses.

Decrease in Productivity: Farmers may not be able take advantages of large-scale production and economies of scale; smaller farms lead to low productivity.

II Impact on Society

Rural Migration: Due to uneconomic and unprofitable small and fragmented land holdings young people move to city places to seek better economic opportunities.

Aging Farmer Population: The average age of farmers is increasing due to lack of interest of younger generation in farming activities. Young people are not interested in small land holdings as they are uneconomic and challenging.

Loss of Rural Culture: Small land holdings lead to loss of rural culture and traditional farming practices.

III Impact on Environment

Soil Erosion: Intensive farming practices on small holdings lead to soil erosion, nutrient deficiency and decreased fertility

Loss of Biodiversity: Smaller farms can lead to habitat fragmentation, making it difficult for wildlife to survive.

Water Pollution: Increased use of fertilizers and pesticides on smaller farms can contaminate water sources.

Conclusion: In India agriculture plays an important role. The shrinking of land holdings is a significant trend with far – reaching consequences. Rapid growth of population and inheritance law in India contribute to division and sub division of land holdings and land fragmentation. Further, urbanization leading to conversion of agricultural land for other uses. Farmers are forced to sell their lands due to financial problems. Migration of rural people to urban areas in search of jobs, decrease in agricultural productivity, indebtedness of farmers are the other issues require careful attention and solutions to ensure sustainable agricultural practices and the well-being of rural people

References:

K. Anantha Ram, A. Tsunekawa, D.K. Saha, T. Miyazaki Subdivision and fragmentation of land holdings and their implication in desertification in the Thar Desert, India, Journal of Arid Environments, Volume 41, Issue 4,1999,Pages 463-477,ISSN 0140-1963,https://doi.org/10.1006/jare.1999.0495

A.V. Manjunatha, Asif Reza Anik, S. Speelman, E.A. Nuppenau,

Impact of land fragmentation, farm size, land ownership and crop diversity on profit and efficiency of irrigated farms in India,Land Use Policy,Volume 31,2013,Pages 397-405,ISSN 0264-8377,https://doi.org/10.1016/j.landusepol.2012.08.005.(https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article

Sneha Roy (2020) "Land structure and level of fragmentation in typical small-marginal agricultural holdings in India"Indian Journal of Agricultural Sciences,90 (4): 699–703, April 2020/Article https://doi.org/10.56093/ijas.v90i4.102205 29 August 2019

(https://www.sciencedirect.com

https://www.downtoearth.org.in/

https://pib.gov.in/

https://www.chinimandi.com/

https://mospi.gov.in/

https://farmonaut.com/

https://pwonlyias.com/

https://www.downtoearth.org

https://www.businesstoday.in/