

## **DIVERSIFICATION OF AGRICULTURE IN UTTAR PRADESH : NEED FOR POLICY REORIENTATION**

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### **ABSTRACT**

*Crop diversification in favour of more remunerative and high valued crops has been reckoned as an important strategy to increase the income and employment opportunities of the farmers in the State of Uttar Pradesh. It has been adopted in the 'Agricultural Policy of Uttar Pradesh' which has emphasised the need for diversification of existing agriculture towards high value crops and develop appropriate infrastructure to accomplish regional specialisation in production of commodities best suited to their respective bio-physical endowment and improving the sustainability of soil and water resources. In the era of economic liberalisation and WTO regime, crop diversification in agriculture best suits to the market oriented development strategy. In view of this, an attempt has been made in the paper to evaluate the pattern of crop diversification achieved during the post-liberalisation period in the State of Uttar Pradesh and suggest policy modifications. The study noted that agricultural economy of Uttar Pradesh has been largely food crop based during the economic reform period as it was before. Wheat and rice are still the principal crops in the State. The pace of commercialisation in agriculture has been found to be slow in the State. Even the most commercialised western region has shown declining trend in its area under commercial crops in 2006-07 as against 1990-1991. Majority of the districts in Western, Eastern and Bundelkhand regions have lost their area of commercial crops during 2006-07 against the level of 1990-91. In this way majority of districts in Uttar Pradesh have slipped down from their ranks in 2006-07 as compared to their position in the year 1990-91 as far as the level of commercialisation in agriculture was concerned.*

*The role of cropping intensity in boosting the area of cash crops has been found to be negligible. The observed trends are deterrent in achieving the objectives of Agricultural Policy of Uttar Pradesh which has emphasised the speedy commercialisation of agriculture through cultivation of high value crops by crop intensification. The trend necessitates the infrastructural support and improving the delivery mechanism of promotional policies of farm sector in the State.*