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Change management behaviour of farmers towards crop diversification: An assessment of constraints and strategies for facilitation

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ABSTRACT

Crop diversification is an important strategy for improving farm income, reducing production and market risks, enhancing resource-use efficiency and promoting sustainable agricultural development. However, farmers' shift from existing cropping patterns to diversified production systems is influenced by several economic, socio-personal and extension-related factors. The present study was undertaken to identify the major constraints perceived by farmers towards crop diversification and to document their suggestions for facilitating behavioural change. A total of 80 farmers were selected as respondents and data was collected using a structured interview schedule. Constraints and suggestions were measured based on the frequency and percentage and which was ranked. The findings revealed that among market and economic constraints, market price fluctuation was the major constraint, reported by 93.75 per cent of farmers, followed by improper marketing channels at the village level (90.00%) and low economic affordability (81.25%). Among socio-personal constraints, unawareness of the benefits of crop diversification was ranked first (87.50%), followed by low self-confidence (80.00%) and concerns regarding soil status (75.00%). Among extension-related constraints, absence of group membership, particularly FPOs, emerged as the major constraint (96.25%), followed by limited awareness of government schemes and policies (93.75%) and ineffective skill-oriented extension activities (87.50%). The major suggestions included strengthening FPOs, establishing effective village-level marketing channels, improving awareness of government schemes, organizing practical skill-oriented training programmes, promoting successful farmer-to-farmer learning and providing appropriate financial and institutional support. The study highlights the need for an integrated, farmer-centred extension strategy combining market, institutional, technical and behavioural interventions to facilitate the adoption of crop diversification.

Keywords: Crop diversification, Change management behaviour, Constraints, Suggestions, Farmers, FPOs, Agricultural extension

Introduction

Indian agriculture is undergoing significant changes due to increasing climate variability, rising production costs, fluctuating market prices, declining natural resource quality and changing consumer preferences. Under these circumstances, dependence on a limited number of crops can expose farming households to considerable production and economic risks. Crop diversification is increasingly recognized as an important strategy for improving farm resilience, enhancing income opportunities, promoting efficient utilization of available resources and supporting sustainable agricultural development. Crop diversification refers to the introduction of a wider range of crops within a farming system through changes in crop combinations, rotations or enterprises. It may involve shifting from monocropping or dominant cereal-based systems towards combinations of cereals, pulses, oilseeds, horticultural crops, fodder crops and other remunerative enterprises. Appropriate diversification can improve the utilization of land, water and labour resources while creating opportunities for additional income and employment.

Despite its potential benefits, the adoption of crop diversification is not merely a technical decision. It involves a change in farmers' existing production behaviour, decision-making processes, resource allocation and risk-management strategies. Farmers who have followed a particular cropping system for several years may be reluctant to shift towards unfamiliar crops because of uncertainty regarding production practices, market demand, input availability and expected returns. Therefore, successful crop diversification requires effective management of the behavioural and institutional changes associated with the transition. Farmers' decisions regarding diversification are influenced by several factors. Economic factors such as availability of finance, market prices, access to inputs, marketing facilities and profitability are particularly important. Market price fluctuations and inadequate marketing channels can increase uncertainty and discourage farmers from investing in alternative crops. Similarly, limited access to institutional credit and high initial investment requirements may constrain farmers with limited financial resources. Socio-personal factors also influ

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ence farmers' willingness to change. Awareness of the benefits of diversification, self-confidence, motivation, cultural preferences, soil-related concerns and previous farming experiences can shape farmers' attitudes towards new cropping systems. Farmers are more likely to consider unfamiliar practices when they have access to reliable information, practical experience and opportunities to observe successful examples within their communities. The role of agricultural extension services is particularly important in facilitating such behavioural change. Extension agencies can provide technical knowledge, organize demonstrations and training programmes, facilitate access to government schemes and establish linkages among farmers, research institutions, markets and other stakeholders. Farmer Producer Organizations (FPOs) can further strengthen collective action by improving farmers' bargaining power, facilitating input procurement, supporting marketing and creating opportunities for knowledge sharing.

However, inadequate institutional linkages, limited awareness of government programmes, insufficient exposure to successful diversification models, dependence on conventional extension methods and ineffective skill-oriented programmes can limit the effectiveness of extension interventions. Therefore, identifying the specific constraints experienced by farmers and understanding their preferred strategies for overcoming these constraints are essential for designing effective interventions. In this context, the present study was undertaken to identify the major constraints faced by farmers in managing change towards crop diversification and to document their suggestions for facilitating the transition. The findings are expected to provide useful insights for agricultural extension personnel, KVKs, government agencies, FPOs and other stakeholders involved in promoting diversified and sustainable farming systems.

Materials and methods

The study was conducted in Jogulamba Gadwal district of Telangana State using an ex-post facto research design, as the phenomenon under investigation farmers' existing experiences, constraints and perceptions regarding crop diversification had already occurred and could not be manipulated by the researcher. Jogulamba Gadwal district comprises 12 mandals, out of which Gadwal and Dharoor mandals were purposively selected based on their maximum area under paddy cultivation during the Rabi season. From each selected mandal, one village was selected randomly, namely Gurramgadda from Gadwal mandal and Chintharevula from Dharoor mandal, which had a relatively higher area under paddy cultivation during Rabi. From each selected village, 80 farmers were selected randomly, comprising 40 small and marginal farmers and 40 large farmers. Thus, a total of 160 farmers, consisting of 80 small and marginal farmers and 80 large farmers, were selected from the two villages and interviewed using a structured interview schedule for assessing their constraints and suggestions.

Farmers' data was assessed using a structured pretested schedule developed/adapted for the purpose of the study. The schedule was developed in accordance with the objectives of the study and included items related to market and economic constraints, socio-personal constraints and extension-related constraints. The respondents were personally interviewed to obtain information regarding the difficulties they experienced in adopting or considering diversified cropping systems. The respondents were asked to indicate their preferences for the possible constraints and elicit suggestion which they prefer. The scores obtained for each constraint and suggestions were used to determine the relative preference of the farmers were subsequently rank ordered based on the preferences. The frequency and percentage of respondents under each rank were calculated and the results were used to identify the predominant learning styles among the farmers.

Statistical analysis

The collected data were tabulated and analysed using frequency, percentage and rank-ordering techniques. Frequencies and percentages were used to describe the distribution of farmers across the different ranks, while rank ordering was used to identify the relative prominence of the constraint and suggestions. The findings were interpreted to determine differences in suggestions of farmers and suggest suitable suggestions.

Results and discussion

The constraints and suggestions perceived by farmers towards facilitating change management behaviour for crop diversification were analysed under three major categories, namely market and economic constraints, socio-personal constraints, and extension-related constraints. The frequency and percentage of respondents reporting each constraint and corresponding suggestion were ranked to identify the major factors influencing farmers' willingness and ability to adopt crop diversification.

Market and economic related constraints

The findings presented in Table 1 revealed that market price fluctuation was the most important market and economic constraint, reported by 75 farmers (93.75%) and ranked first. Fluctuations in prices create uncertainty regarding returns from alternative crops and may discourage farmers from shifting from familiar cropping systems. Farmers suggested entering into contract farming agreements to ensure relatively stable prices and strategically diversifying crops as possible measures, which was also ranked first with the same frequency and percentage i.e 75 farmers (93.75%). The second major constraint was improper marketing channels at the village level, reported by 72 farmers (90.00%) and ranked second. Lack of nearby and efficient marketing facilities may increase transportation costs and reduce farmers' bargaining power. Correspondingly, farmers suggested establishing farmers' markets or cooperatives at the village level and utilizing digital platforms for direct marketing and connecting with buyers, which received the same rank and response level (72; 90.00%). Low economic affordability was reported by 65 farmers (81.25%), ranking third. Limited financial capacity may restrict farmers from investing in new crops, inputs, technologies and enterprises associated with diversification. Farmers suggested adopting cost-effective farming techniques and technologies and providing financial support programmes and subsidies to small-scale farmers, which received third rank (65; 81.25%).

Exploitation by middlemen was reported by 60 farmers (75.00%) and ranked fourth. Dependence on intermediaries may reduce farmers' share in consumer prices and weaken the economic attractiveness of diversified crops. Establishing direct linkages with buyers and markets through cooperatives was suggested by the same number of farmers and ranked fourth.

Insufficient finance to start new enterprises was reported by 56 farmers (70.00%), ranking fifth. Farmers suggested improving access to microfinance institutions and government-sponsored schemes for small-scale enterprises, which also ranked fifth. Untimely availability of good-quality inputs was reported by 43 farmers (53.75%) and ranked sixth. Collaboration with agricultural extension agencies to improve the input supply chain was suggested as a corresponding strategy. Overall, the findings indicate that economic uncertainty, inadequate market infrastructure, limited financial resources and input-related difficulties were important barriers to crop diversification. Strengthening collective marketing, improving access to institutional finance and ensuring timely availability of quality inputs could therefore support farmers in managing the transition towards diversified cropping systems.

Table 1. constraints and suggestions stated by small and marginal farmers

S. No	Constraints	Frequency and Percentage	Rank	Suggestions	Frequency and percentage	Rank
Market and economic related constraints						
1.	Improper marketing channels at village level	72 (90.00)	II	Establish farmers markets or cooperatives at the village level. Utilise digital platforms for online marketing and connecting with buyers directly.	72 (90.00)	II
2.	Insufficient finance to start new enterprises	56 (70.00)	V	Access microfinance institutions or government- sponsored schemes for small-scale entrepreneurs.	56 (70.00)	V
3.	Market price fluctuation	75 (93.75)	I	Enter into contract farming agreements to secure stable prices. Diversify crops strategically to mitigate the impact of market fluctuations.	75 (93.75)	I
4.	Exploitation by the middle man	60 (75.00)	VI	Establish direct links with buyers or markets through cooperatives.	60 (75.00)	VI
5.	Low economic affordability	65 (81.25)	III	Explore cost- effective farming techniques and technologies. Advocate for financial support programs and subsidies for small- scale farmers	65 (81.25)	III
6.	Untimely availability of good quality inputs	43 (53.75)	IV	Collaborate with agricultural extension services to improve the supply chain for inputs	43 (53.75)	IV
Socio – personal constraints						
1.	Improper motivation for increasing participation	58 (72.50)	IV	Conduct awareness campaigns highlighting the benefits and success stories of crop diversification	58 (72.50)	IV
2.	Culture aspects (eating, rituals and life style)	52 (65.00)	VI	Promote crops that align with local cultural practices and preferences. Integrate traditional farming practices with modern techniques for sustainability	52 (65.00)	VI
3.	Status of soil	60 (75.00)	III	Implement soil testing and provide farmers with information on soil health. Encourage the use of organic and sustainable farming practices	60 (75.00)	III
4.	Unaware of benefits of crop diversification	72 (87.50)	I	Implement educational campaigns through community events, workshops, and farmer field schools. Engage with local influencers and leaders to promote the advantages of crop diversification	72 (87.50)	I
5.	Human and animal conflict	49 (61.25)	V	Implement protective measures such as fencing and deterrents. Collaborate with local authorities to address conflict resolution and compensation mechanisms	49 (61.25)	V
6.	Low self- confidence	64 (80.00)	II	Provide mentorship programs and counseling to boost farmers' self-esteem. Encouraging success stories and peer-to-peer learning within the community	64 (80.00)	II

(continued on next page)

S. No	Constraints	Frequency and Percentage	Rank	Suggestions	Frequency and percentage	Rank
Extension constraints						
1	Absence group membership (FPOs)	77 (96.25)	I	Advocate for the formation of Farmer Producer Organizations (FPOs) to amplify collective bargaining power. Collaborate with NGOs and government agencies to support the establishment of FPOs.	77 (96.25)	I
2.	Absence of contact with authorized institutions	43 (53.75)	VII	Facilitate outreach programs from government agencies to connect with farmers. Encourage local representatives to act as intermediaries between farmers and authorities	43 (53.75)	VII
3.	Use of single extension teaching method	47 (58.75)	VI	Implement a mix of methods, including on-farm demonstrations, workshops, and digital tools. Customize extension services based on the specific needs and preferences of farmers	47 (58.75)	VI
4.	Low media exposure towards crop diversification	58 (72.50)	V	Collaborate with local media outlets to showcase success stories and benefits. Utilize social media platforms for promoting crop diversification practices	58 (72.50)	V
5.	Low expose of success stories to fellow farmers	65 (81.25)	IV	Organising a meeting every quarterly of month in raithu vedika with farmer who had succeeded in crop diversification by sharing his experience Organize field visits and demonstrations to showcase successful diversification models.	65 (81.25)	IV
6.	Ineffective skill oriented extension activities	72 (87.50)	III	Develop skill- oriented training programs focused on diversified cropping systems. Encourage partnerships with agricultural institutions for specialized skill development	72 (87.50)	III
7.	Limited awareness on Government schemes and policies	75 (93.75)	II	Conduct awareness campaigns about available government schemes and policies. Collaborate with local government representatives to disseminate information to farmers	75 (93.75)	II

Socio-personal constraints

Among the socio-personal constraints, unawareness of the benefits of crop diversification emerged as the major constraint, reported by 72 farmers (87.50%) and ranked first. This suggests that inadequate understanding of the economic, ecological and risk-management benefits of diversification may limit farmers' willingness to change their existing cropping practices. Farmers suggested conducting educational campaigns through community events, workshops and farmer field schools, along with involving local leaders and influential farmers to communicate the benefits of diversification. This suggestion also ranked first with 72 respondents (87.50%). The second-ranked constraint was low self-confidence, reported by 64 farmers (80.00%). Farmers may hesitate to adopt unfamiliar crops or enterprises when they lack confidence in their ability to manage new production practices and market risks. Farmers suggested mentoring, counselling, sharing successful experiences and promoting peer-to-peer learning to improve confidence, which received second rank (64; 80.00%). Status of soil was identified as the third major constraint by 60 farmers (75.00%). Concerns regarding soil suitability and fertility may influence farmers' decisions to introduce alternative crops. Farmers suggested soil testing, dissemination of soil-health information and promotion of organic and sustainable farming practices, which ranked third with 60 farmers (75.00%).

Improper motivation for increasing participation was reported by 58 farmers (72.50%), ranking fourth. Farmers suggested conducting awareness campaigns highlighting successful crop diversification experiences and benefits, which received the same rank and percentage. Human and animal conflict was reported by 49 farmers (61.25%) and ranked fifth. Farmers suggested protective measures such as fencing and deterrents, together with collaboration with local authorities for conflict resolution and compensation mechanisms. Cultural aspects related to food habits, rituals and lifestyle were reported by 52 farmers (65.00%) and ranked sixth. Farmers suggested promoting crops compatible with local cultural preferences and integrating traditional farming practices with modern techniques. The findings suggest that awareness, confidence, motivation, soil-related concerns and socio-cultural factors play an important role in farmers' change management behaviour. Thus, behavioural change interventions should not be restricted to technical information alone but should also address farmers' confidence, local preferences and experiential learning needs.

Extension-related constraints

Among the extension-related constraints, absence of group membership, particularly Farmer Producer Organizations (FPOs), emerged as the most prominent constraint. It was reported by 77 farmers (96.25%) and ranked first. Lack of collective organization may restrict farmers' access to inputs, technical information, markets, institutional support and collective bargaining opportunities. Farmers strongly suggested formation and strengthening of FPOs, with support from NGOs and government agencies. This suggestion also received first rank with 77 farmers (96.25%). The second-ranked constraint was limited awareness of government schemes and policies, reported by 75 farmers (93.75%). Farmers may be unable to access available financial, technical and institutional support when information about government programmes does not reach them effectively. Accordingly, farmers suggested conducting awareness campaigns on government schemes and policies and involving local government representatives in information dissemination, which also ranked second (75; 93.75%). Ineffective skill-oriented extension activities ranked third, with 72 farmers (87.50%) reporting the constraint. This indicates a need for practical capacity building rather than information dissemination alone. Farmers suggested developing skill-oriented training programmes focusing on diversified cropping systems and strengthening partnerships with agricultural institutions for specialized skill development, which ranked third.

Limited exposure to successful crop diversification stories among fellow farmers was reported by 65 farmers (81.25%) and ranked fourth.

Farmers suggested organizing quarterly meetings at Raithu Vedikas with successful farmers, along with field visits and demonstrations of successful diversification models. Such farmer-to-farmer learning can provide practical evidence and increase confidence in adopting new practices. Low media exposure towards crop diversification was reported by 58 farmers (72.50%), ranking fifth. Farmers suggested collaboration with local media and greater use of social media platforms to disseminate successful experiences and information on crop diversification. The constraint use of a single extension teaching method was reported by 47 farmers (58.75%), ranking sixth. Farmers suggested using a combination of extension methods, including on-farm demonstrations, workshops and digital tools, and tailoring extension activities according to farmers' specific needs and preferences. Finally, absence of contact with authorized institutions was reported by 43 farmers (53.75%), ranking seventh. Farmers suggested strengthening outreach programmes of government agencies and encouraging local representatives to facilitate communication between farmers and relevant institutions.

The findings presented in Table 2 reveal that large farmers perceived a range of market and economic, extension and socio-personal constraints affecting crop diversification. The corresponding suggestions indicate that farmers preferred interventions related to market development, infrastructure, skill-oriented extension, institutional support and exposure to successful diversification models.

Market and economic-related constraints

Among the market and economic constraints, lesser government marketing channels for alternate crops emerged as the most important constraint, reported by 72 farmers (87.50%) and ranked first. The limited availability of government-supported marketing avenues may reduce farmers' confidence in producing alternative crops because of uncertainty regarding where and how to sell the produce. Correspondingly, 72 farmers (87.50%) suggested establishing government-led marketing channels and creating additional marketing avenues for diverse crops. This suggestion also ranked first. The second major constraint was inadequate infrastructural facilities, including roads, markets, transportation and processing facilities, reported by 68 farmers (85.00%) and ranked second. Inadequate infrastructure can increase transportation and handling costs and may restrict farmers' access to markets and processing facilities. Farmers suggested collaboration with concerned authorities to improve agricultural infrastructure, which was also ranked second (68; 85.00%). High cost of processing and value addition was reported by 64 farmers (80.00%), ranking third. High processing costs can reduce the profitability of alternate crops, particularly when farmers lack access to local processing facilities. To overcome this constraint, farmers suggested cost-sharing models, subsidies and grants for establishing processing units, which received the same rank and response level. Improper market facilities for alternate crops was reported by 60 farmers (75.00%) and ranked fourth. Farmers suggested developing suitable markets and trading platforms for diverse crops. The lack of appropriate marketing infrastructure can discourage farmers from shifting from well-established crops to alternative crops for which organized markets may be limited. Fluctuations in Minimum Support Prices (MSP) were reported by 60 farmers (75.00%), ranking fifth. Price uncertainty can influence farmers' decisions regarding crop selection and investment. Farmers suggested advocating for stable and favourable MSP arrangements for diverse crops and selecting crops according to market demand and trends.

Farmers suggested strengthening extension services and providing additional resources for educating farmers about new crops. This suggestion also ranked second. Inadequate knowledge in handling alternate crops was reported by 68 farmers (85.00%), ranking third. Lack of technical knowledge can increase the perceived risk associated with introducing unfamiliar crops. Farmers suggested conducting educational programmes and workshops to improve their understanding of diverse crops, which received the same rank and percentage. These findings demonstrate the importance of shifting from predominantly

information-oriented extension towards skill-oriented and practical extension interventions. Demonstrations.

Table 2. Constraints and suggestions stated by large farmer

S. No.	Constraints	Frequency and Percentage	Rank	Suggestions	Frequency and percentage	Rank
Market and economic related constraints						
1.	Improper market facilities for alternate crops	60 (75.00)	IV	Advocate for the development of markets and trading platforms for diverse crops.	60 (75.00)	IV
2.	less mills processing mills for alternate crops like paddy	58 (72.50)	VI	Encourage private investors and entrepreneurs to invest in processing mills.	58 (72.50)	VI
3.	High cost for processing and value addition	64 (80.00)	III	Promote cost-sharing models, subsidies, or grants for processing units.	64 (80.00)	III
4.	No subsidiary	52 (65.00)	VII	Advocate for government subsidies or financial incentives for farmers engaging in crop diversification.	52 (65.00)	VII
5.	Lesser government marketing channels for alternate crops	72 (87.50)	I	Lobby for the establishment of government-led marketing channels for diverse crops. Collaborate with the government to create marketing avenues	72 (87.50)	I
6.	Infrastructural facilities (road, market, transport and processing facilities)	68 (85.00)	II	Collaborate with authorities to improve infrastructure in agricultural regions.	68 (85.00)	II
7.	Fluctuations in MSP	60 (75.00)	V	Lobby for stable and favorable Minimum Support Prices (MSP) for diverse crops. Diversify crops based on market demand and trends.	60 (75.00)	V
Extension constraints						
1.	Inadequate knowledge in handling alternate crops	68 (85.00)	III	Implement educational programs and workshops to enhance farmers' understanding of diverse crops.	68 (85.00)	III
2.	Less skill oriented programs by government towards crop diversification	75 (93.75)	I	Advocate for government initiatives focused on skill development for handling different crops.	75 (93.75)	I
3.	Insufficient extension services for new crops	72 (87.50)	II	Strengthen extension services and provide additional resources for educating farmers on new crops.	72 (87.50)	II
Socio – personal constraints						
1.	High labour wages	58 (72.50)	IV	Introduce mechanization and modern farming techniques to reduce dependency on labor.	58 (72.50)	IV
2.	Low farmers success rate in crop diversification	70 (87.50)	I	Establish mentorship programs to share successful progress Conduct awareness campaigns on successful diversification	70 (87.50)	I
3.	Less support from different authorized institutions	68 (85.00)	II	Engage with agricultural institutions and NGOs to provide support and guidance for crop diversification	68 (85.00)	II
4.	Insufficient schemes in promoting crop diversification	64 (80.00)	III	Advocate for the development and implementation of government schemes promoting crop diversification.	64 (80.00)	III

hands-on training, exposure visits, farmer field schools and crop-specific advisory services could help farmers acquire the competencies required to manage diversified cropping systems.

Socio-personal constraints

Among the socio-personal constraints, low success rate of farmers in crop diversification was the most important, reported by 70 farmers (87.50%) and ranked first. Farmers may hesitate to adopt alternative

crops when they have limited exposure to successful diversification experiences in their locality. Farmers suggested establishing mentorship programmes for sharing successful experiences and conducting awareness campaigns highlighting successful crop diversification, which also ranked first (70; 87.50%). The second-ranked constraint was less support from different authorized institutions, reported by 68 farmers (85.00%). Limited institutional support may restrict farmers'

access to technical advice, inputs, finance, marketing information and other services necessary for diversification. Farmers suggested strengthening linkages with agricultural institutions and NGOs to provide support and guidance for crop diversification. This suggestion was ranked second with 68 farmers (85.00%). Insufficient government schemes promoting crop diversification was reported by 64 farmers (80.00%) and ranked third. Farmers suggested advocating for the development and effective implementation of government schemes specifically promoting crop diversification, which was also ranked third.

High labour wages was reported by 58 farmers (72.50%), ranking fourth. The high cost and limited availability of farm labour may make some alternative crops less attractive, particularly where they require additional or specialized labour. Farmers suggested introducing mechanization and modern farming techniques to reduce dependence on manual labour. This suggestion received the same rank and percentage.

Overall discussion

The findings demonstrate that farmers' change management behaviour towards crop diversification is influenced by an interconnected set of economic, market, technical, institutional, extension and socio-personal factors. Among the major constraints identified, absence of FPO membership (96.25%), market price fluctuation (93.75%), limited awareness of government schemes and policies (93.75%), fewer skill-oriented government programmes towards crop diversification (93.75%), improper marketing channels at the village level (90.00%), fewer government marketing channels for alternate crops (87.50%), low success rate of farmers in crop diversification (87.50%), insufficient extension services for new crops (87.50%), lack of awareness about the benefits of crop diversification (87.50%), and inadequate infrastructural facilities (85.00%) were particularly prominent. The corresponding suggestions closely reflected these constraints, indicating that farmers require collective, market-oriented, knowledge-based, skill-oriented and practical interventions rather than isolated technical advice. The findings particularly emphasize the need for strengthening FPOs, establishing government-supported marketing channels, improving market and processing infrastructure, providing practical skill-oriented training, strengthening extension services, increasing awareness of government schemes, facilitating institutional convergence, promoting mentorship and farmer-to-farmer learning, and improving access to finance and quality inputs. The results further suggest that facilitating crop diversification requires an integrated approach in which production support is linked with market development, processing and value addition, extension education, institutional support, behavioural motivation and successful farmer demonstrations. Such a coordinated approach can reduce the uncertainty and perceived risks associated with adopting alternate crops and create a more enabling environment for farmers to evaluate and adopt diversi-

fied cropping systems. Extension agencies, FPOs, KVKs, government departments, research institutions and NGOs can therefore play an important role in facilitating the transition by providing timely technical guidance, institutional support, market linkages, capacity building and experiential learning opportunities.

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