



Original Article

AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTIVITY, FARMERS' INCOME, AND INCLUSIVE RURAL LIVELIHOODS IN MAHARASHTRA (2014-2024)

Dr. Shinde S. R.

A & C College, Pusegaon Tal. Khatav Dist. Satara

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Corresponding Author:

Dr. Shinde S. R.

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Abstract:

This research paper examines the trends in agricultural productivity, farmers' income, and inclusive rural livelihoods in Maharashtra from 2014 to 2024. Drawing on secondary data from government reports, economic surveys, and academic studies, it highlights a modest growth in agricultural productivity, with notable increases in crops like soybean and maize, driven by favourable monsoons and government interventions. Farmers' incomes have seen nominal rises, but real growth has been constrained by input costs and market volatility, with schemes like PM-KISAN providing partial relief. Inclusive rural livelihoods have been bolstered through programs such as the Maharashtra State Rural Livelihoods Mission (MSRLM), focusing on women, tribal, and marginalized groups, leading to enhanced financial inclusion and diversification. However, challenges like climate variability and uneven scheme implementation persist. The analysis underscores the need for targeted policies to sustain gains. Objectives include assessing trends and impacts, while assumptions centre on data reliability. Methods involve literature review and statistical analysis. Limitations include data gaps post-2022. Overall, the period reflects progress amid vulnerabilities, with recommendations for integrated approaches.

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Introduction:

Maharashtra, India's second-largest state by population and a key agricultural hub, contributes significantly to the national economy, with agriculture employing over 50% of its workforce. From 2014 to 2024, the sector faced multifaceted challenges, including climate change, water scarcity, and market fluctuations, while benefiting from

policy reforms under successive governments. The period aligns with national initiatives like the Doubling Farmers' Income goal announced in 2016, aiming to enhance productivity and livelihoods by 2022. In Maharashtra, agriculture's share in Gross State Value Added (GSVA) hovered around 13-14%, lower than the national average of 19-20%, yet it remains pivotal for rural economies.



Agricultural productivity in Maharashtra has shown variability. Economic surveys indicate an average annual growth of 4-5% in the agriculture and allied sectors, with surges in foodgrain production, such as a 29.2% rise in 2024-25 projections to 86.71 lakh tonnes, attributed to 118% normal monsoon rainfall. Key crops like soybean (73.27 lakh tonnes) and maize (29.39 lakh tonnes) doubled outputs, reflecting improved yields from 1,584 kg/ha to 2,656 kg/ha for maize. However, issues like drought in Marathwada and declining sugarcane production highlight regional disparities.

Farmers' incomes have been a focal point, with nominal monthly incomes rising from Rs. 6,426 in 2012-13 to Rs. 10,218 in 2018-19 nationally, but real growth slowed to 2.54% CAGR in Maharashtra during Modi's first term. State-specific data show doubling for crops like soybean (2x in five years), yet overall growth lagged due to rising input costs and low MSP realizations.

Inclusive rural livelihoods emphasize equity, targeting marginalized groups through schemes like MSRLM, which mobilized 73 lakh families into SHGs by 2024, promoting diversification into horticulture, livestock, and non-farm activities. Programs like PM-KISAN disbursed Rs. 6,000 annually to over 11 crore farmers nationwide, with Maharashtra benefiting significantly. This paper analyzes these dimensions, evaluating policy impacts amid evolving socio-economic contexts

Objectives:

The primary objectives of this study are:

1. To analyze trends in agricultural productivity in Maharashtra from 2014 to 2024, identifying key drivers and bottlenecks.
2. To evaluate changes in farmers' incomes, assessing the role of government schemes in income stabilization and growth.

3. To examine the impact of inclusive rural livelihood programs on marginalized communities, focusing on financial inclusion, diversification, and sustainability.
4. To provide policy recommendations for enhancing productivity, income, and livelihoods in the face of climate and market challenges.

Assumptions:

This analysis assumes that secondary data from official sources, such as economic surveys and government reports, accurately reflect ground realities, despite potential underreporting in rural areas. It presumes that policy interventions like subsidies and MSPs are uniformly implemented, though regional variations exist. Economic growth metrics are assumed to correlate with livelihood improvements, ignoring non-monetary factors like social capital. Climate data is taken as reliable for productivity impacts, and farmer surveys represent broader trends without significant biases.

Methods:

This study employs a mixed-methods approach, primarily relying on secondary data analysis. Data sources include Economic Survey of Maharashtra (2024-25), India Budget documents, RBI reports, and academic publications from ResearchGate and AgEcon Search. Quantitative data on productivity (e.g., yield per hectare), incomes (e.g., CAGR), and program coverage (e.g., SHG mobilization) were compiled from 2014-2024.

Statistical methods involved calculating growth rates using CAGR formulas:

$$\text{CAGR} = \left(\frac{\text{End Value}}{\text{Start Value}} \right)^{\frac{1}{n}} - 1$$

$$\text{CAGR} = (\text{Start Value} \text{End Value})^{n1-1}$$

For example, agricultural GVA growth was computed from FY2012-2024 data. Qualitative



insights from scheme evaluations (e.g., MSRLM annual plans) assessed impacts on inclusion. Literature review synthesized trends, with thematic coding for productivity, income, and livelihoods. Limitations in primary data were mitigated by cross-verifying multiple sources.

Analysis:

1. Agricultural Productivity Trends: From 2014 to 2024, Maharashtra's agricultural productivity exhibited moderate growth, averaging 4.5% annually in real terms, though volatile due to monsoon dependency. The sector's GSVA share remained around 13%, with crops contributing 7-8%. Key advancements include a shift towards high-value crops; horticulture output surged, with grapes from Nashik exporting 343,982 MT in 2023-24, boosting productivity by 67% in leading districts. Food grain production rose from 67.09 lakh tonnes in 2023-24 to projected 86.71 lakh tonnes in 2024-25, a 29.2% increase, driven by 118% monsoon rainfall. Soybean yields improved to 73.27 lakh tonnes, and maize doubled to 29.39 lakh tonnes, with productivity jumping from 1,584 kg/ha to 2,656 kg/ha. Vegetable production grew at 5.64-6.24% CAGR across periods. However, sugarcane declined due to water stress, and regional disparities persisted—Western Maharashtra intensified cropping towards wheat and rice, while Vidarbha saw mixed trends. Government schemes like Per Drop More Crop (PDMC) under NMSA enhanced irrigation efficiency, covering 7.13 lakh hectares under Rainfed Area Development since 2014. Organic farming initiatives under Paramparagat Krishi Vikas Yojana targeted 7.5 lakh hectares, promoting sustainability. Yet, challenges like heat waves (e.g., 3.5 MT wheat loss in 2022) underscore vulnerability.

2. Farmers' Income Trends: Farmers' incomes in Maharashtra grew nominally but lagged in real terms. From 2012-13 to 2018-19, average monthly income rose 59% nominally to Rs. 10,218, but only 26% in real terms. State CAGR was 3.46% from 2002-03 to 2018-19, with cultivation income up 3.32% and livestock 8.96%. Per capita income rose from Rs. 2.78 lakh in 2023-24 to Rs. 3.09 lakh in 2024-25. For cash crops, incomes doubled: soybean in Maharashtra (2x from 2017-22), cotton in Karnataka (comparable). However, overall growth slowed to 2.54% CAGR during 2014-19, below UPA's 3.73%. Input costs doubled, exacerbating distress—1,088 farmer suicides in Marathwada in 2023. Schemes like PM-KISAN transferred Rs. 6,000/year, benefiting 11 crore farmers nationally, with Maharashtra receiving substantial aid. PMFBY insured crops, but profits accrued to companies (Rs. 11,776 crore profit in Maharashtra 2018-23). MSP alignments (1.5-2.3x since 2014) aided price discovery, yet imports depressed oilseed prices. Diversification into livestock (107.3% growth 2012-19) boosted incomes.

3. Inclusive Rural Livelihoods: Inclusive programs transformed rural dynamics, with MSRLM (UMED) mobilizing 73.47 lakh families into SHGs by 2024, achieving saturation. Targeting SC/ST, PWDs, and women, it upscaled livelihoods for 17 lakh families, doubling incomes via horticulture, livestock, and fisheries. Food, Nutrition, Health, and WASH (FNHW) interventions covered 38,000 villages, reducing anemia and promoting nutri-gardens. Convergence with schemes like PM-KMY (pension for small farmers) and AIF (infrastructure fund) sanctioned 48,611 projects, disbursing Rs. 4,795 crore. MAHAFFPC



empowered 646 FPOs, benefiting 1.7 lakh farmers with MSP procurement. Land leasing innovations, inspired by Kerala's model, improved access for SHGs. Impacts include 44% households (25 lakh) targeted for income uplift from Rs. 25,000-60,000 via multiple interventions. However, migration and poverty persist in tribal belt.

Limitations:

Data availability post-2022 is limited, relying on projections that may overestimate due to unforeseen events like droughts. Regional disparities (e.g., Marathwada vs. Western Maharashtra) are underrepresented. Assumptions on scheme uniformity ignore implementation gaps. Lack of primary surveys restricts depth on farmer perceptions.

Conclusion:

From 2014 to 2024, Maharashtra's agriculture advanced in productivity and livelihoods, yet income growth remained subdued. Policies like MSRLM and PM-KISAN fostered

inclusion, but climate risks and market issues demand resilient strategies. Future efforts should integrate digital tools, sustainable practices, and equitable resource allocation to achieve holistic rural transformation.

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