

# Preface

Indian agriculture has been diversifying from cereals to high-value crops and livestock products in accordance with the changing consumption pattern in favour of livestock, fruits and vegetables. The production strategy has been changing to encourage diversification of the production system without sacrificing the basic obligation of ensuring food security. Diversification of agriculture generates greater employment opportunities and higher incomes for farm households. Indian agriculture in general and Eastern India in particular, have been facing the challenges of the new economic regime, besides the usual problems of rising population, unemployment and poverty; declining investment in agriculture and degradation of natural resources. Diversification of agriculture may help to overcome these overriding problems in a more competitive environment.

This edited volume examines various aspects of agricultural diversification in Eastern India, namely, the rationale and extent of diversification, the nature and problems of diversification, food and livelihood security through diversification, etc. These issues are discussed against the background of significant structural transformation of the Indian economy from agriculture to non-agriculture (services and industry) and changing cropping pattern from cereals to non-cereals associated with changing consumption pattern.

This volume includes 19 chapters, besides an Introduction, covering various aspects of diversification of agriculture in Eastern India with special reference to the states of Assam, Bihar, Jharkhand, Orissa and West Bengal. The papers are organised into three parts, each part including a set of articles dealing with a particular issue of agricultural diversification. Earlier versions of the papers were presented at the 'Regional Seminar on Diversification of Agriculture in Eastern India', organized by the Agro-Economic Research Centre, Visva-Bharati in collaboration with the Indian Society of Agricultural Economics (ISAE), Mumbai and National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD) during March 23-25, 2012. We are thankful to ISAE and NABARD for sponsoring the Seminar.

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