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Article in *Journal of AgriSearch* · September 2016

DOI: 10.21921/jas.v3i3.11381

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# Pulses Production in Bihar: An Overview of Constraints and Opportunities

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## ABSTRACT

Traditionally pulses have been considered important elements of cropping systems in Bihar, but with the introduction of irrigation and high profitability of alternative sources of soil nutrients in the form of inorganic fertilizers in 1960s, pulses were replaced or relegated to marginal lands and were substituted by high-yielding varieties of rice and wheat. Bihar ranks 9<sup>th</sup> in terms of production with a contribution of 0.52 million tons to the national pulse pool but shares only 7.06 per cent of total area under food grains, with productivity ranging between 819 kg/ha in 2000-01 to 897 kg/ha in 2013-14. There has been an incessant decline in pulses area, production and productivity during last three and half decades accounting for about 437.24 thousand hectares, 428.93 thousand tons and 981 kg ha<sup>-1</sup> respectively in 2014 - 15 against the corresponding figures of 717.2 thousand hectares, 620.7 thousand tons and 865 kg ha<sup>-1</sup> in 2000-01, registering a compound annual decline of -2.5 percent in area and -0.41 percent in production but productivity increased by 2.15 percent per annum. Lentil is only crop which has performed well in Bihar whereas area and production of most of the major pulses have gone down. About 2.2 million ha of rice fallows in Bihar, are most suitable for pulses cultivation. Also there are some indigenous practices like broadcasting pulses like moong, urad, and lathyrus in standing rice crop 7-10 days before harvest making full use of available moisture in the field can be promoted for converting mono-cropped areas into double cropped ones can help increase pulse production. There is also an urgent need to popularize this system by developing varieties suitable for relay cropping and standardization of this agro-technology. The paper examines the current production and productivity scenario along with various factors affecting their performance both biotic and abiotic stresses. It also advocates the various strategies to improve the production and productivity by overcoming these constraints, in the state.

**Key words:** Pulses, Bihar, Productivity, Biotic stress, Abiotic stress

## INTRODUCTION

Pulses constitute an essential part of the Indian diet for nutritional security and environmental sustainability. They are important food crops due to their high protein content 20 to 25 per cent, carbohydrates 55 to 60 per cent, rich in calcium and iron also. All pulses play a key role in improving of soil fertility through biological nitrogen fixation with the help of Rhizobium bacteria found their root nodules playing an important role in enhancing the fertility of soil in term of yield of subsequent crop. Increase in yield of subsequent crop to the tune of about 20-40 per cent has been recorded (Joshi, 1998). The net per capita per day availability of pulses has decreased from 61 gms to 32 gms during 1951 to 2010, with decreased production there has been an imbalance in demand and supply resulting in soaring import bills, unpredictable price rises and low net profit compared to competing crops. It is estimated that deficit of pulses will be to the tune of 24.9 MT by 2020. The demand-supply gap pulses flagged and shortfall in pulses has been attributed to number of factor, major ones being the increasing population, rising income of the people, geographical shift, abrupt climate change, complex

disease-pest syndrome, socio-economic policies and input constraints. This along with other economic factor like lack of assured market, ineffective government procurement, lack of minimum support price and trade liberalization make pulses cultivation less remunerative as compared to other crops.

Bihar one of the important pulses growing and consuming state in India contributes about 2.35 percent of area which is 7-8 percent of the gross cropped area in the state and 3.06 percent of production. The productivity of pulses range between 819 kg/ha in 2000-01 to 897 kg/ha in 2013-14. It is mostly grown in rain fed condition and resulting in high yield fluctuation every year. In India average yield of pulses in rice fallow system is about 11% higher than national average, whereas in Bihar it is higher than 30% and in Madhya Pradesh by 15% Traditionally pulses have been considered important elements of cropping systems in the Bihar, but with the introduction of irrigation and high profitability of alternative sources of soil nutrients in the form of inorganic fertilizers in 1960s, pulses were replaced or relegated to marginal lands and were substituted by high-yielding varieties of rice and wheat.

## Pulses Profile of Bihar

Bihar ranks 9<sup>th</sup> in terms of production with a contribution of 0.52 million tons to the national pulse pool, It is the third most

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populous state sharing 2.8 percent of geographical area and 8.6 per cent population of India. Food grains are the major agricultural commodity, produced on about 93 percent of cropped area, of which pulses share merely 7.06 per cent. Adaptability of pulses to diverse climatic and agro-ecosystems is phenomenal making them victim of human apathy. Pulses are often cultivated on marginal lands under rain-fed conditions on residual soils moistures after harvesting of kharif crops. Owing to high instability in productivity there has been an incessant decline in area of pulses area, production and productivity during last three and half decades which accounted for about 437.24 thousand hectares, 428.93 thousand tons and 981 kg ha<sup>-1</sup> respectively in 2014 - 15 against the corresponding figures of 717.2 thousand hectares, 620.7 thousand tons and 865 kg ha<sup>-1</sup> in 2000-01, registering a compound annual decline of -2.5 percent in area and -0.41 percent in production but productivity increased by 2.15 percent per annum. It is obvious that there has been a

radical fall in pulse area with a corresponding decline in pulse production. There has been a compound annual growth in productivity of pulses during 2000-01 and 2014-15, probably due to adoption of improved seeds and steps taken by the government to accelerate pulse production in recent years. Lentil is only crop which has performed well in Bihar whereas area and production of most of the major pulses have gone down. It is worth noting that there has been a negative correlation between irrigation and acreage of pulses indicating that farmers prefer to allocate irrigated lands to cereals and other crops substituting pulses. Bihar contributes about 3.06 percent in production and 2.35 percent in area. Important pulses like lentil, Lathyrus, Pigeon pea, Green gram, Chickpea etc are mostly grown in under rainfed conditions on marginal land with poor level of management practices resulting in low production and productivity which was of 897 Kg/ha in 2013-14.:

**Table 1: Area, Production and Yield of total Pulses in Bihar**

Year	Area (‘000 hectare)	Production (‘000 tonnes)	Yield (Kg/ha)
1970-71	1644.8	987.4	600
1975-76	1531.3	822.4	537
1980-81	1367.8	833	609
1985-86	1233.1	887.4	720
1990-91	1175.7	915.8	779
1995-96	921.8	560.7	608
2000-01	717.2	620.7	865
2005-06	596.9	446.8	749
2010-11	605.0	556.0	918
2013-14	500.0	522.0	1044

Source: Agricultural Statistics at a Glance, various issues

#### **Spatial and Temporal Scenario of Pulses in Bihar**

Pulse cultivation was an integral part of cropping system in Bihar with 1644.8 thousand ha area under total pulses and production of 987.4 thousand tones and yield of 600Kg/ha as compared to national yield of 524Kg/ha in 1970-71. In last four decades there has been drastic with reduction in pulses area with only 500 thousand ha area only under pulses in 2013-14 and these area substituted by other crops mainly rice and wheat. This decline in pulses area has been largely attributed to relatively higher profitability of rice and wheat as comparison to legumes (Malik 1994). The spatial distribution and temporal changes of important pulses in Bihar are discussed as under:

#### **Chickpea**

Chickpea once the most important pulse crop of Bihar is at present most affected by change in cropping preference of

farmers. In 1965-66 it covered an area of 450.9 thousand ha with production of 334.4 thousand tones and yield of 742Kg/ha. Thereafter there has been steady decline in chickpea area with nearly 50% reduction in 1970-71 with 244.4 (‘000ha), 195.8(‘000ha) in 1980-85, 167.7(‘000ha) in 1990-95 and 76.2(‘000ha) in 2000-01. In 2013-14 the area under chickpea was only 61.3 thousand ha. If we look at the yield data we observe that there has been slight rise with 1182 kg/ha in 2010-11 and 1147 kg/ha in 2013-14 but production has drastically fallen due to rapid decline in area. Tal area which was famous for chickpea cultivation has been replaced by other pulses with only isolated patches of chickpea area. As soon as the any area develops irrigation facilities, the chickpea area gets diverted to other more remunerative crops like wheat, mustard, sunflower, sugar cane, potato, etc. This area has also reduced drastically because the existing varieties are not responsive to high input conditions and show excessive

vegetative growth and lodging when grown in fertile soil, receive rains or irrigations during crop growth. Drought and heat are the major abiotic stresses affecting chickpea at reproductive and terminal phases of crop growth. Pod borer (*Helicoverpa armigera*) continues to remain a major and challenging insect-pest of chickpea and dry root rot (DRR) and Fusarium wilt are other biotic stresses which deter farmers to grow chickpea. The vast rice fallow area (2.2mha) offer opportunities for expanding chickpea area in Bihar as experiments clearly demonstrates that chickpea is a very suitable pulse crop for rice-fallows, provided suitable varieties and technologies for crop establishment are available. The important traits required in chickpea varieties for rice fallows include early to extra-early maturity and reproductive stage heat tolerance.

### Pigeon pea

Pigeon pea is one of the most preferred pulse consumed in Bihar but the area and production has been reduced to 21.9 thousand ha and 36.5 tonnes respectively in 2013-14 which was in 1965-66 172 thousand ha and production of 147.8 thousand tones. If we look at the decadal data in 1970-71, 1980-81, 1990-91 and 2000-01 the area and production of pigeon pea was 150.3('000ha) and 147.8('000t); 93.7('000ha) and 91 ('000 t); 66.2('000ha) and 82.3('000t) and 43.7('000ha) and 58.9('000t) respectively showing a steady decline in area and thereby production. The productivity of pigeon pea has always been more than the national average with highest yield in 2013-14 of 1147Kg/ha, but the matter of concern is very few farmers are opting for pigeon pea cultivation and one the reason is also its being long duration crop with maximum field occupancy. In Bihar traditionally long duration varieties (>200 days) of pigeon pea are grown which are highly photoperiod-sensitive taking about 40 weeks to mature exposing the crop to terminal drought stress and frosts. Almost every year the crop is damaged by frost leading to lower yields and poor quality seeds. There is need to identify sources of tolerance/ resistance for this constraint and design appropriate breeding strategies to develop suitable varieties. Besides a number of biotic and abiotic factors also deter farmers to take up pigeon pea cultivation.

### Lentil

Lentil is the only pulse crop whose area has remained more or less stagnant over the years with fluctuations. In year 1970-71 the total area under lentil was 140.7('000ha) and production of 90.5('000t) and now in 2013-14 its area and production is 159.7 ('000ha) and 183.2('000t). But over the years the productivity has always been more than national with 1147 Kg/ha in 2012-13 but much less than potential yield. So it is one of those pulse crop whose area and production can be easily improved with better agro-technology management and policy improvement. Productivity of lentil is also limited by several biotic stresses such as diseases and pests and weeds, Systematic transfers of available technologies have potential to enhance lentil yield by at least 20-25%. A substantial area of lentil is sown under late sown condition in rice-fallow fields. Early maturing varieties possessing high biomass and

tolerance to high temperature at reproductive stage are required. They should also have resistance to diseases like Stem phylum blight, rust and wilt, tolerance to low temperature at vegetative stage and high temperature at reproductive stage, and terminal soil moisture stress with the rice varieties should be early maturing.

### Mung Bean

Mung bean is a minor pulse grown in Bihar with nearly 80% of the mung bean sown in summer after harvest of wheat, mustard and potato. In the indo-gangetic plains nearly 60% of mung bean is grown in Bihar (largely the northern part), and more than 25% in Uttar Pradesh (mostly in the western part). These two states of India contribute about 17% of total mung bean production in India. Mung bean area in Bihar, has steadily risen from 103.0 ('000 ha) in 1970-71 to 155.1('000 ha) in 2013-14 with productivity of 680 Kg/ha. Mung bean offers good potential for bringing additional area and enhancing production and productivity, as varieties with varying maturity groups exist to meet the needs of different cropping systems. Large numbers of viruses, fungal and bacterial diseases are known to damage mung bean crop at different stages of crop growth and during storage so management of abiotic and biotic stresses will lead to increased productivity. Results of the front-line demonstrations indicates scope for enhancing yields at farmers' fields following systematic technology transfer particularly in spring/summer season. As the crop fits well in small window after harvest of rabi crop (such as wheat and rabi maize) mung bean cultivation will help in sustaining productivity of the cereal based cropping systems in Bihar.

### Urd Bean

The area under mung bean and urad bean was nearly same in 1970-71 i.e., 103.0 and 108.8 ('000ha) respectively. In 2013-14 this area has come down to only 15.5 ('000ha) showing a severe dip in area over the years. Urd bean is grown mostly during rainy season, however, being a short duration and nitrogen fixing crop, urd bean fits well in multiple cropping systems and can provide desired sustainability to cereal based cropping systems. Much scope exists to bring additional area under urd bean through inclusion of short duration urd bean varieties between two cereal crops in irrigated areas of Bihar with further scope for increasing area, by introducing short duration and high yielding varieties with better biomass for spring/summer or rabi seasons.

### Lathyrus

Lathyrus was one of the most important pulse crop grown in Bihar with maximum coverage of an area of 668.3 ('000ha) in 1970-71 and production of 388.1 ('000t), and the scenario remained more or less same with 447.8 and 304.1('000ha) in 1980-81 and 1990-91 respectively. Thereafter, this area under Khesari declined to 73.8 ('000ha) although the yield has increased to 998kg/ha in 2011-12. It can be grown in semi arid and arid region and hence serve as only protein source food during drought and famine period. But as the stress level of environment increases the level of ODAP ( $\beta$ -N-oxalyl-L- $\alpha$ -diamino propionic acid) increases which is a neurotoxin



amino acid causing neuro-lathyrism (paralysis) in human beings and animals if consumed on a regular basis for a long period.

#### Field Pea and Kulthi

Kulthi or Horse gram and field pea are other minor pulses generally grown as mixed with other crops. Kulthi is grown mainly in two different seasons i.e. Rabi and Kharif. It is rich in antioxidant properties which are mainly present in the seed coat, helps to cure several diseases like cure kidney stones, diabetes and even fever. Now in 2011-12 Kulthi is grown in 8.6 ('000ha) with production of 8.2 ('000t) and yield of 953Kg/ha. Whereas, field pea covers an area of 36.8 ('000ha) and production of 22.3('000t) in 1975-76 is cultivated only in 18.6('000ha) in 2012-13.

#### Constraints of Pulses Production in Bihar

The area under pulses has undergone drastic reduction resulting in low production, although the productivity of major pulses has either increased or remained stagnant but still there is huge gap with potential yield. Pulses are generally grown on marginal lands due to the low productivity-low input nature as rainfed crop, with main focus on high productivity-high input crops like paddy and wheat by most farmers. In a study regarding impact of NFSM on pulse production, marketing it was found that in NFSM and non NFSM district of Bihar about 64% of sample farmers mainly grows pulses for home consumption needs, followed by lack of irrigation and inferior land (14% each) and profitability ranked important only by large farmers (8%). In NFSM and non-NFSM districts pest problem has been mentioned as main limitation (28-30%), other being lower profitability (24%), yield instability (20%) and lack of assured market (16%) were listed as main reasons for shifting away from pulse cultivation (Singh *et al.*, 2016). As a crop of low priority and status they do not get best of management practices of farmers besides being adversely affected by a number of biotic and abiotic stresses, responsible for a large extent of the instability and low yields. The major abiotic, biotic and socio-economic constraints in Pulse production are enumerated below.

#### Abiotic Constraints

Drought, water logging, temperature extremes, wind or hail (causing lodging), alkaline and saline soils, acid soils, and deficiencies or toxicities of various mineral nutrients are the common abiotic stresses that limit pulse production in Bihar.

**Drought:** In chickpea, Pigeon pea, green gram, lentil, black gram drought is the main cause of reduction in yield as these are grown in residual receding soil moisture environment or face soil moisture deficit conditions during their reproductive phase and are exposed to terminal drought stress. To overcome such situation better management techniques to conserve soil moisture and maximize crop transpiration over soil evaporation can help to reduce drought effects in pulses. In some situation excess soil moisture in tal and other areas induces excess vegetative growth with more disease incidence as well as lodging in gram and lentil, whereas, Khesari (*Lathyrus*) has good drought resistance and production even

when sown on drought-prone upland soils.

**Temperature:** Terminal drought stress during maturity in chickpea and lentil results in poor pod filling whereas, low temperatures results in frost injury.

**Water logging:** Khesari (*Lathyrus*) and horse gram can establish well in waterlogged soils, even when relay-sown in rice, and can grow until maturity in waterlogged soils. All other pulses do not tolerate water logging condition.

**Micronutrient deficiencies:** Deficiency of micronutrients adversely affects production of lentil, chickpea and other pulses, which become more evident once the biotic stresses are managed. Experiment have shown that deficiency of micronutrients like sulphur and zinc is common in pulse growing regions and application of sulphur and zinc has been found with a cost benefit ratio of 10-21%.

**Nitrogen fixation:** In traditional pulses grown area *Rhizobium* spp present in soil results in effective nodulation, but when introduced in new areas the host specific *Rhizobium* also needs to be introduced through inoculation. In Bihar Khesari (*Lathyrus*) nodulates prolifically meeting its own nitrogen (N) requirements as well as also fix N<sub>2</sub> to the cropping system. Pulses are very sensitive to alkaline, saline, and acidic soil which limits its prospects of cultivation in irrigated areas where there is such increase incidence.

**Biotic Constraints:** More than 250 insect species are reported to affect pulses, of which nearly one dozen cause heavy crop losses. Pod borer (*Helicoverpa armigera*) causes the most harm, followed by pod fly, wilt and root rot, important diseases wilt in chickpea, sterility mosaic virus (SMV) in pigeon pea, yellow mosaic virus (YMV) and powdery mildew (PM) are also common and damaging. Another important pest affecting pulses are nematodes, among which root-knot nematodes are important in terms of spread and damage to crop yield, which have been effectively controlled by bio-agents. Recently many successful trials have been conducted to control pod borer through using nuclear polyhedrosis virus (HaNPCV) and *Bacillus thuringiensis* Berliner (*Bt*) var. *kurstaki*, which has been found to be more efficacious in bringing about higher and quick mortality.

**Physiological Limitations:** Pulses in general have a high rate of flower drop. In pigeon pea, over 80% of the flowers produced in a plant are shed by decreasing flower drop, yield can be increased considerably. Recent increase in yield levels in pigeon pea is due to release of long duration (annual) varieties, which maximize utilisation of assimilates in filling the available sink of a large number of flowers.

**Bio-fertilisers:** Most pulses growing areas have low to medium population of native *rhizobium* and seed inoculation with biofertiliser (*rhizobium*) can increase pulses productivity by 10-12%. Lack of quality culture is also one of the major constraints in use of bio-fertilisers. *Vesicular-arbuscular mycorrhizae* (VAM) promises for improving supply of phosphate and micronutrients like zinc pulse crops. Phosphate solubilising bacteria (PSB) in rainfed pulses production systems in soils with poor phosphorus availability can help in production improvement. Combined use of culture, like dual inoculation of *Rhizobium* and VAM results in higher yield as compared with *rhizobium* alone.

**Irrigation:** Pulses are mostly cultivated on marginal lands as

rainfed crops and experimental results at IIPR have shown improvement in productivity due to one irrigation at a critical stage. There was 50% increase in grain yield in sole crop and more than double in intercropped pigeon pea with two irrigations given at the vegetative and flowering stages at ICRISAT (Sharma and Jodha 1982).

**Post-Harvest Technology:** Post-harvest losses account for 9.5% of total pulses production of which storage accounts for the maximum loss of 7.5% and processing, threshing and transport results in 1%, 0.5% and 0.5% losses, respectively. Pulses are more susceptible to damage by storage insects (5%) as compared to wheat (2.5%), paddy (2%) and maize (3.5%). There is need to popularize storage structures like metal storage bins. Processing efficiency of dal mills has recently increased to 70-75% as compared to 65-66% in traditional dal mills. To decrease post harvest loss and increase rural employment mini dal mills should be popularized by formation of pulse producer groups and processor associations.

#### **Socio-economic Constraints**

**Awareness and access to new technology:** Farmers' awareness on improved varieties and seed availability of improved varieties are the key factors in the spread of improved varieties. The television will be the most popular media for increasing awareness; trials and farmers' fairs/field days will also be helpful. The identified technology needs to be subsidized for wider adoption.

**Lack of Quality and improved seed:** In any crop, generally an increase in the production and productivity is brought about by the wider availability and adoption of improved varieties of seeds but there is a shortage of Certified/Truthful seed at farmers' level. Since the beginning of coordinated pulses improvement programme in 1967, 400 improved varieties of different pulse crops have been released in India but only 124 varieties are in the production chain. There is a huge gap in demand and supply of quality seed and seed replacement ratio is very low (2-5%), while the required seed replacement ratio is 10% as both public and private agencies have not been able to meet the requirement of quality seed and the seed replacement ratio is very low.

**Cash and Credit:** Cash is a key element for enabling small holder farmers to shift from low input-low output to high-input-high-output agriculture. But access to credit by these farmers is low because of their low asset base, low risk bearing ability and high risk environments. This can be effectively tackled by the insurance-linked credit to pulse crops without any collateral security. The scale of finance should be sufficient enough to cover all the costs of there commended practices (Reddy 2009).

**Farm mechanization:** In Andhra Pradesh increased mechanization of farm operations is one of the reasons for success of expansion of area under chickpea which needs to be replicated in Bihar. It can further be enhanced by developing varieties suitable for harvesting by combine harvesters. In peak season farm mechanization activities such as harvesting and threshing needs to be encouraged through the distribution of subsidized farm machinery to cope with labor shortage and higher wage rates.

**Marketing:** Markets for legumes are thin and fragmented due to scattered production and consumption across states. Farmers sell their marketed surplus immediately after harvest, while some large traders/wholesalers trade between major markets and hoard pulses to take advantage of speculative gains in the off-season, for pulses like khesari, demand is localized and markets are underdeveloped. Due to this, farmers do not benefit from the higher market prices of pulses. Investments in market infrastructure, warehouses, market information systems both in public and private sectors through Public-Private Partnership (PPP) models and economic viability gap funding models need to be encouraged.

#### **Prospects of Increasing Area and Production**

Bihar had been a traditional pulse growing state but the focus with time shifted to more remunerative and assured cropping system of cereal-cereal. With policy apathy it has reached to low which can be reversed with more focus on pulses. New initiatives can change this trend with following steps:

##### **Short-duration pigeonpea in sequence with wheat:**

Introduction of short duration pigeon pea in uplands of Bihar can be successfully grown. As this region receives heavy rainfall it is important that sowing should be done in the first fortnight of June with pre-planting irrigation so that by the time monsoon rains start the seedlings are strong enough to combat adverse effects of excess moisture. Development of varieties tolerant to excess soil moisture, would help in popularization of short-duration pigeon pea.

##### **Spring/summer cultivation of black gram and mung bean:**

Bihar has good scope of cultivation of kharif spring black gram and mung bean as well as summer mung bean. With nearly 155.1 thousand hectare area under mung bean there is great scope of widening this area. They are very suitable for intercropping with spring-planted sugarcane and sunflower. Under resource constraints, rice-chickpea is found to be more beneficial than rice-wheat and northern Bihar show most potential for this system. In excessive moisture area i.e., in lowland lentil is a more assured crop than chickpea. So the rice-lentil system is also very popular in the lowlands of Bihar.

**Utilization of rice fallows** In Bihar 2.2 million ha rice fallow land in district like Kisanganj, Sahibganj, Gaya, Aurangabad, Katihar and Bhagalpur is there which are most suitable for pulses cultivation. In large area medium and long duration paddy is cultivated and after field vacating due to lack of irrigation facility and delay normally the field remains vacant. Pulses like lentil, mung bean, urdbean, Lathyrus, peas etc. in rice fallows can increase the productivity as well as sustainability of rice-wheat production system. In low land areas with excessive soil moisture, lentil is more suitable and assured than chickpea so it can be made more popular in the lowlands of Bihar. Groundnut can also be introduced in rice fallows in Char area of Bihar.

**Area expansion:** Besides rice-fallow there is further scope of increasing pulse area by cropping system manipulation, like mung bean and urd bean as catch crop in summer/spring under cereal-based cropping systems of Bihar, intercropping of short-duration pulses like mung bean, urd bean, cowpea in sugarcane etc. Mung bean with ratooned Sugarcane during

spring/summer (irrigated), Chickpea or lentil with autumn planted sugarcane and advocating new cropping systems like rice–lentil.

**Integrated Pest Management:** Integrated pest management (IPM) gives wider scope for cost-effective control of multiple pests and diseases. It is basically pest management technique which uses one or more management options to reduce pest population below the economic injury level, while ensuring productivity and profitability of the entire farming system. Pulse crop is attacked by more than one disease and pest at a time. However, farmers are hesitant to use knowledge intensive, systems approach IPM as it needs community approach and takes time to yield results.

**Cultivation of post rainy pigeon pea and common bean:** Varieties like Sharad and Pusa 9 are suitable for September planting, are found best for extension of post rainy pigeon pea

on uplands of, northern Bihar which receives very heavy rainfall in July causing damage to Jul planted Pigeon Pea. As the September sown varieties are thermo sensitive any delay after mid-Sept. causes heavy loss in yield.

**Introduction of black gram and mung bean as winter crops:** In some part of northeastern Bihar where the winter temperature are moderate black gram and green gram can be introduced in rice fallow areas utilizing residual moisture and bringing additional area under pulses increasing system productivity too. Another important practice widely applied is that of “growing of short duration legumes” such as moongbean, cluster bean, cowpea and horse gram in widely spaced crops and incorporation of their biomass after harvesting (green manuring), which increases the yield of subsequent crops.

**Table 2: Productivity of major Pulses grown in Bihar**

Year	Chickpea	Pigeon-pea	lentil	Mung bean	Lathyrus	Urad bean	Peas	Kulthi
1965-66	742	855	-	-	-	-	-	-
1970-71	713	896	643	351	581	487	-	-
1975-76	550	705	582	336	612	377	606	352
1980-81	718	971	641	466	619	470	534	387
1985-86	839	1142	772	485	787	456	665	546
1990-91	941	1243	892	556	790	670	747	537
1995-96	651	929	581	557	657	505	554	455
2000-01	1033	1348	981	581	915	634	965	771
2005-06	902	1291	705	556	853	770	892	858
2010-11	1182	1515	900	669	998	841	1051	980
2013-14	1147	1667	1147	680	-	912	1041	953

## CONCLUSIONS

Rice-wheat and rice-based systems are the predominant cropping systems in Bihar, as a result natural resources soil and water, are threatened due to their over-exploitation and after affects of climate change is putting an extra stress on such systems. Pulses can play an important role in reversing this process of degradation of soil and water resources, and improving the production potential of the total cropping

system. Pulses are an effective source of reversing the process and can contribute significantly to achieving the twin objectives of increasing productivity as well as improving the sustainability of the rice and wheat based cropping system in the Bihar. Efforts are also needed to develop appropriate models for crop insurance to encourage Pulse production in Bihar.

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**Citation:**

Singh P, Shahi B and Singh KM. 2016. Pulses Production in Bihar: An Overview of Constraints and Opportunities. *Journal of AgriSearch* 3(3):176-184