

The Context

1. Project Context:

Balrampur district lies in East Uttar Pradesh close to Nepal border (North Eastern Plain Agro-Climatic Zone).



The region is characterised by:

- Erratic rainfall pattern: High intensity rainfall spread over few days, resulting into crop losses.
- High dependence on ground water extraction: 90 % of net sown area is irrigated by groundwater.
- Water intensive crop patterns: Paddy-wheat — sugarcane covers 80% of total sown area.
- High proportion of small farmers: 'v 90 % farmers are small holders with average landholding size 1.64 acres.
- Poor farm extension services in agriculture: Inefficient agricultural practices, poor productivity, and incomes to farmers
- Unviability of agriculture for small farmers: Combination of high input costs (including water); poor yields and poor price realisation for produce is adversely affecting small farmers.

The region lacks effective functioning of the extension system to transfer knowledge of advanced agriculture practices and resource conservation technologies to the farming community.

2. Problem Statement

Small farmers in the region believe that increased use of farm inputs viz. water, fertilizers and seeds in water-intensive cash crops will lead to higher yields. Instead, this belief is creating a vicious cycle of high input costs, low returns and depleting resources (water and soil).