

## **Abstract**

Poverty is a condition in which a person is not able to maintain a standard of living due to inadequate income or imprudent expenditure. The official estimates of poverty in India shows that 28.3 per cent of rural poor and 25.7 per cent of urban poor are below the poverty line. There exists wide disparities in rural poverty across the Indian states. Uttar Pradesh (UP), one of the most populous states of India, is characterized by high rural poverty. Addressing the issue of rural poverty and focusing on the factors causing reduction in rural poverty may help to break the vicious circle of poverty. Therefore, the present study attempts to estimate rural poverty for the regions and districts of UP and examine the impact of factors such as agricultural productivity, average farm size, economic growth, technology and infrastructure on rural poverty. Key indicators under technology and infrastructure are also identified that influence agricultural productivity and eventually rural poverty in the state. The study is based on secondary data and appropriate statistical techniques are used to analyse the objectives. The trends in rural poverty, across the regions, show that rural poverty has declined during 1987-88 to 2004-05 in some regions, while they are fluctuating in other regions. There also exists sharp inter-district disparities in rural poverty, though the regional differences are found to be insignificant. However, imbalances in the average farm size, economic growth, agricultural productivity, indicators of technology and infrastructure are significant across the regions and districts of the state. The agricultural productivity has a significant negative impact on rural poverty though the relationship has weakened in subsequent five years. Fragmentation of farms adversely affected the consumption of rural poor, while economic growth has gradually resulted in the reduction of rural poverty. The impact of technology is relatively higher as compared to infrastructure in raising agricultural productivity. The study contributes in identifying the districts with high level of rural poverty and also the districts with perpetuating poverty, which helps in targeting specific districts for rural poverty alleviation and provides direction for policy formulation.

**Keywords:** Rural poverty, agricultural productivity, farm size, economic growth, technology and infrastructure.