



Agriculture: means land cultivation. In wider terms, agriculture is the science and art of raising crops, rearing of livestock, forestry and fishing.

Importance of Agriculture:

1. Most of the population of the world still depends on agriculture for its livelihood. It is a major occupation of people in the developing countries of the world.
2. India is an agricultural country. Hence, it is the backbone of our country's economic development.
3. Agriculture not only supplies food to the people but also creates huge market for tractors, threshers, harvesters, fertilizers, pesticides and other industrial products.
4. Agriculture also plays an important role in strengthening global relations by encouraging international trade of agricultural products.

FACTORS AFFECTING AGRICULTURE

Agricultural development is possible only in certain regions of the world. Physical and economic factors influence its development. Some of the factors are mentioned below.

i. Physical or geographical factors:

Relief: plains are more suitable for agriculture than the highlands. Density of population is generally high in plains. This helps in providing cheap labour and market for farm products. The river basins and deltas are more suitable for agriculture than mountainous regions.

Climate: agriculture is highly sensitive to climate variability. Each crop has its own requirement of temperature and rainfall. That is why, the variation in climatic conditions supports different crop patterns.

Soil: soil rich in minerals and organic matter supports agriculture. Chemical composition and fertility of soil differs from place to place which leads to variation in soil type. Each crop has its own requirement of soil.

ii. Economic factors:

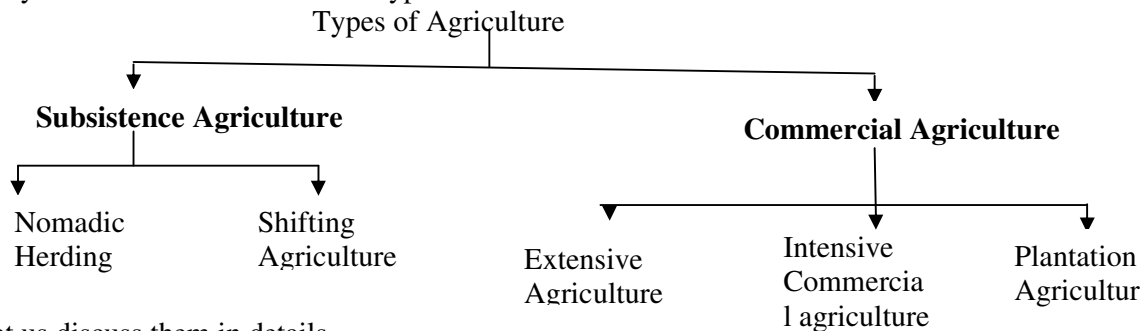
Means of irrigation, availability of HYV (High Yield Variety) of seeds, fertilizers and pesticides. Availability of labour is some of the other important factors that affect agriculture development.

TYPES OF AGRICULTURE

Broadly, it may be divided into two categories, i.e

1. Subsistence agriculture
2. Commercial agriculture

They are further divided into sub-types.



Let us discuss them in details.

1. **Subsistence Agriculture:** It is a type of farming in which a farmer and his family grow crops for self-sustenance. Generally, they grow cereals to meet the requirement of their family and local community.

Subsistence agriculture includes **nomadic herding** and **shifting agriculture**.





Nomadic herding: people migrate along with their animals from one place to another in search of fodder for their animals. Generally, they rear cattle, sheep, goats, camels and yaks for milk, skin, meat and wool.

Shifting agriculture: shifting agriculture is also called slash and burn agriculture. After the soil loses its fertility, the land is abandoned and the cultivators move to a new plot. People who follow shifting agriculture do not lead a settled life.

2. **Commercial Agriculture:** In this type of agriculture, crops are raised on a large scale for the purpose of selling the products in the market. This type of agriculture is broadly divided into extensive agriculture, intensive agriculture and plantation agriculture.

Extensive Agriculture: it is practiced in developed countries, such as the Australia, Canada, Russia and USA. Agriculture is done on a large scale on big land holdings by using modern machines. Proper storage facilities are required to store the yield.

Intensive Agriculture: it is a type of farming in which farmers apply all modern techniques of agriculture to obtain maximum production from limited area. It requires huge labour and capital investment. Land holdings are small and yield per hectare is high. When animals are reared along with the cultivation of land, it is known as **mixed farming**.

Both food crops and fodder are cultivated. This gives a boost to the income of the farmers.

Plantation Agriculture: it is a large farm or estate usually in a tropical or sub-tropical country where crops are grown for sale in distant markets rather than local consumption. It is a very well-organized system of agriculture wherein single crop farming is done. It requires huge capital investment, scientific method of farming, transport facilities, efficient management and skilled but low cost labour in large number. Plantation agriculture is commonly practiced in hot and humid regions of the world. It includes crops like coffee, rubber and tea.

