

10th – Geography- Agriculture I



India is an agriculture important country. Agriculture is a primary activity, which produces most of the food that we consume. Besides food grains, it also produces raw material for various industries.

Types of farming:

Agriculture is an age- old economic activity in our country. Over these years, cultivation methods have changed significantly depending upon the characteristics of physical environment, technological know- how and socio- cultural practices. Farming varies from subsistence to commercial type. At present, in different parts of India, the following farming systems are practiced.

Primitive subsistence farming:

this type of farming is practiced in few pockets of India. Primitive subsistence agriculture is practiced on small patches of land with the help of primitive tools like hoe, dao and digging sticks, and family/community labour. This type of farming depends upon monsoon. Natural fertility of the soil and suitability of other environmental conditions to the crops grown.

It is a 'slash and burn' agriculture. Farmers clear a patch of land and produce cereals and other food crops to sustain then family. When the soil fertility decreases, the farmers shift and clear a fresh patch of land for cultivation. This type of shifting allows nature to replenish the fertility of the soil through natural processes;

Intensive subsistence farming:

This type of farming is practiced in areas of high population pressure on land. It is labour- intensive farming. Where high doses of biochemical inputs and irrigation are used for obtaining higher production.

Commercial farming:

The main characteristic of this type of farming is the use of higher doses of modern inputs, e.g. high yielding variety (HYV) seeds, chemical fertilizers, insecticides and pesticides in order to obtain higher productivity.

Plantation:

Plantation is also a type of commercial farming. In this type of farming, a single crop is grown on a large area. The plantation has an interface of agriculture and industry. Plantations cover large tracts of land, using capital intensive inputs, with the help of migrant laborers. All the produce is used as raw material in respective industries.

In India, tea, coffee, rubber, sugarcane, banana, etc.. are important plantation crops. Tea in Assam and north Bengal coffee in Karnataka are some of the important plantation.

Cropping pattern:

The physical diversities and plurality of culture in India are also reflected in agriculture practices and cropping patterns in the country. Various types of food and fibre crops, vegetables and fruits, spices and condiments, etc. constitute some of the important cropping seasons- rabi, kharif and zaid.

Rabi crops:

1. Rabi crops are sown in winter from October to December and harvested in summer from April to June.
2. Some of the important rabbi crops are wheat, barley, peas, gram and mustard.



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3. These crops are grown in large parts on India, states from the north and north-western parts such as Punjab, Haryana, Himachal Pradesh, Jammu and Kashmir, Uttaranchal and Uttar Pradesh are important for the production of wheat and other rabi crops.
4. Availability of precipitation during winter months due to the western temperate cyclones helps in the success of these crops.

Kharif crops:

1. Kharif crops are grown with the onset of monsoon in different parts of the country and these are harvested in September- October.
2. Important crops grown during this season are paddy, maize, jowar tur (arhar) , moong, urad, cotton, jute, groundnut and soyabean.
3. Some of the most important growing regions are Assam, west Bengal, coastal regions of Orissa, Andhra Pradesh, Tamilnadu, kerala and Maharashtra, particularly the (konkan coast) along with Uttar Pradesh and Bihar.
4. Paddy has also become an important crop of Punjab and Haryana.
5. In between the rabbi and the kharif seasons, there is a short season during the summer months known as the Zaid season, some of the crops produced during 'zaid' are water melon, muskmelon, cucumber, vegetables and fodder crops.

Major crops:

A variety of food and non food crops are grown in different parts of the country depending upon the variations in soil, climate, and cultivation practices. Major crops grown in India are rice, wheat, millets, pulses, tea, coffee, sugarcane, oil seeds, cotton and jute, etc.

Rice: it is the staple crop of a majority of the people in India. Our country is the second largest producer or rice in the world after china. It is a kharif crop which requires high temperature, (above 25°C) and high humidity with annual rainfall above 100 cm. in the areas of less rainfall; it grows with the help of irrigation. rice is grown in the plants of north and north- eastern India, coastal areas and the deltaic regions.

Wheat: wheat is the second most important cereal crop. It is the main food crop, in north and north- western part of the country. This rabi crop requires a cool growing season and a bright sunshine at the time of ripening. It requires 50 to 75 cm. of annual rainfall evenly- distributed over the growing season. There are two important wheat- Satluj plains in the north- west and black soil region of the Deccan. The major wheat- producing states are Punjab, Haryana, Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Rajasthan and parts of Madhya Pradesh.

Millets: jowar, bajra and ragi are the important millets grown in India. Though, these are known as coarse grains, they have very high nutritional value. For example, ragi is very rich in iron, calcium, other micro nutrients and roughage. Jowar is the third most important food crop with respect to area and production. It is a rain-fed crop mostly grown in the moist areas which hardly needs irrigation.



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Maharashtra is the largest producer of jowar followed by Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh.

Maize: it is a crop which is used both as food and fodder. It is a kharif crop which requires temperature between 21°C to 27°C and grows well in old alluvial soil. In some states like Bihar maize is grown in rabi season also. Use of modern inputs such as HYV seeds, fertilizers and irrigation have contributed to the increasing production of maize. Major maize- producing states are Karnataka, Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Andhra Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh.

Pulses: India is the largest producer as well as the consumer of pulses in the world. These are the major source of protein in a vegetarian diet. Major pulses that are grown in India are tur(arhar), urad, moong, masur, peas and gram.

Food crops other than grains:

Sugarcane: sugar cane is a tropical as well as a subtropical crop. It grows well in hot and humid climate with a temperature of 21°C to 27°C and an annual rainfall between 75cm. and 100cm. irrigation is required in the regions of low rainfall. It can be grown on a variety of soils and needs manual labour from sowing to harvesting. India is the second largest producer of sugar cane only after Brazil. It is the main source of sugar, gur(jaggary), khandsari and molasses. The major sugarcane- producing states are Uttar Pradesh, Maharashtra, Karnataka, Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh, Bihar, Punjab and Haryana.

Oil seeds: India is the largest producer of oil- seeds in the world. Different oil seeds are grown covering approximately 12 per cent of the total cropped areas of the country. Main oil- seeds produced in India are groundnut, mustard, coconut, sesamum (til), soyabean, castor seeds, cotton seeds, linseed and sunflower. Most of these are edible and used as cooking mediums. However, some of these are also used as raw material in the production of soap, cosmetics and ointments.

Tea: Tea cultivation is an example of plantation agriculture. It is also an important beverage crop introduced in India initially by the British. Today, most of the tea plantations are owned by Indians. The tea plant grows well in tropical and subtropical climates endowed with deep and fertile well- drained soil, rich in humus and organic matter. Tea bushes require warm and moist frost- free climate all through the year. Frequent showers evenly distributed over the year ensure continuous growth of tender leaves. Tea is a labour- intensive industry. It requires abundant, cheap and skilled labour. Major tea- producing states are Assam, hills of Darjeeling and Jalpaiguri districts, west Bengal, Tamil Nadu and Kerala.

Coffee: Indian coffee is known in the world for its good quality. The Arabica variety initially brought from Yemen is produced in the country. This variety is in great demand all over the world. Initially its cultivation was introduced on the Baba Budan hills and even today its cultivation is confined to the Nilgiri in Karnataka, Kerala and Tamil Nadu.

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Horticulture crops: India is the largest producer of fruits and vegetables in the world. India is a producer of tropical as well as temperate fruits. Mangoes of Maharashtra, Andhra Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh and west Bengal, oranges of Nagpur and Cherrapunjee (Meghalaya), bananas of Kerala, Mizoram, Maharashtra and Tamil Nadu, lichi and guava of Uttar Pradesh and Bihar, Pineapples of Meghalaya, grapes of Andhra Pradesh and Maharashtra, apples, pears, apricots and walnuts of Jammu and Kashmir and Himachal Pradesh are in great demand the world over. It stands first in the production of pea and cauliflower, second in onion, cabbage, brinjal and fourth in potato.

