

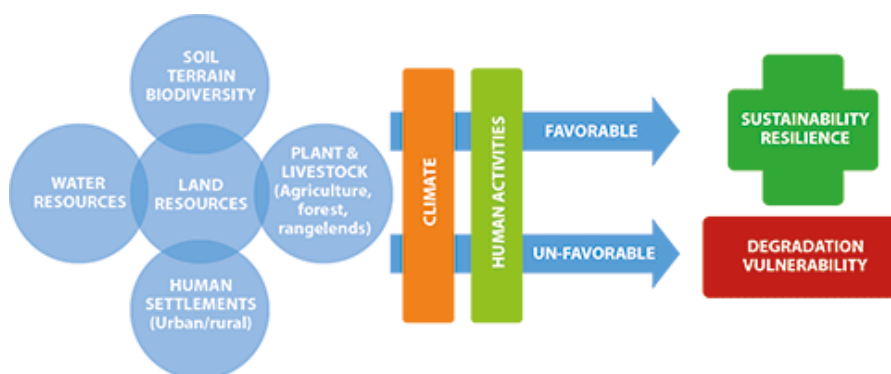
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Land Use and Agriculture: Objectives, General Land Use, Agricultural Land Use

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- We have already studied climate, soils, various types of resources, and human activities in the previous chapters. In this chapter, we will study agriculture. For agriculture, land is a very important resource. For its large area size, and physical and socio-cultural diversities, India has different types of land uses. Agriculture is a predominant economic activity in India, engaging nearly 3/5th of its working population.
- Though the share of the agricultural sector in gross domestic product has considerably declined to about 1/4th yet the importance of agriculture as employment provider to workforce especially in the countryside is very high. Obviously, agriculture forms the hub of Indian economy as a large number of industries are also heavily dependent on agriculture for supply of raw materials. Agriculture involves not only crops rising but also animal ranching and fishing.



Objectives

The major objectives of this chapter are:

- To know the availability of land in India and its different uses
- To appreciate the significance of studying land use and agriculture
- To examine various factors responsible for the development of agriculture in India

- To describe the different types of crops grown in various parts of India
- To locate and identify the areas under different crops on a map of India
- To infer changing pattern of crop cultivation
- To explain the concept and significance of Agro-climatic Region
- To identify the different strategies adopted for the agricultural development in India during five-year plans
- To explain the impact of economic liberalisation on agriculture in India

General Land Use

Land is the most vital resource of a country. It is a fixed asset and cannot be expanded to meet the needs of an increasing population. Therefore, it must be used carefully and in the best possible manner. The total geographical area of India is 32.88 lakh sq. kms. The major land uses in India are:

Net Sown Area (NSA)

- The total land area on which crops are grown in a region is called net sown area. The net sown area and the area sown more than once together are called gross cultivated area. In India, about 47% of total reporting area is under the net sown area.
- States namely Punjab, Haryana, West Bengal, and Uttar Pradesh have the high proportional share of NSA than the national average. Against this, the share of NSA is less than one half of the national average in states of Himachal Pradesh, Uttarakhand, Meghalaya, Manipur, Nagaland, Mizoram, Sikkim, and Arunachal Pradesh. All these states suffer from physical disabilities, such as undulating terrain due to hilly topography, limiting the availability of plain land, and fertile soils which are important for cultivation. This is evidently clear from state wise distribution of proportional share of NSA that physiographic factors play an important role in availability of net cropped area in a region.

Forest

The area under forest cover is about 68 million hectares or 22% of the total area in the country. This area has increased from 40 million hectares in 1951 to 68 million hectares in 2000. For the ecological balance the forest cover should be at least 33% of the total geographical area of a country. The states of Arunachal Pradesh, Mizoram, Jammu and Kashmir, and Tripura have relatively larger proportion of area under forest cover.

Land Not Available for Cultivation

The land under the settlements, roads, mines, and quarries along with barren lands are included in this category. The sandy waste land of Rajasthan, marshy land of Kachchh (Gujarat) and, rugged and eroded areas of northeast and northern mountains are few examples of barren lands. About 13% of the total reported area is recorded under this category. Nagaland, Manipur, and Assam registered a very high percentage of area not available for cultivations.

Fallow Lands

When lands are left unused to regain their lost fertility in a natural way is called fallow land. On the basis of usability, fallow lands can be divided into two groups- current and old. Current fallow is the

land in which no crop is raised during the current year. Old fallow land remains unused for a period of one or more years but not exceeding 5 years. This is due to low investment capacity of numerous small and marginal farmers in advanced technology, lack of awareness, loss of fertility of soil, inadequacy of rainfall, lacking in irrigational facility etc. The fallow land occupies about 7.5% of the total reported area. The states of Mizoram, Tamil Nadu, Meghalaya, Bihar, Andhra Pradesh, and Rajasthan have a high percentage of area under fallow land. From ecological point of view fallow land is important category of land.

Cultivable Waste

It is the land in which crops were raised for some period of time but has not been cultivated for the last five years due to certain deficiencies such as alkalinity and salinity in the soils. Such cultivable wastes are locally known as reh, bhur, usar, and khola in some part of north India. Meghalaya, Himachal Pradesh, and Rajasthan have a very high share of cultivable waste land in total land use.

Permanent Pastures and Grazing Lands

Notwithstanding the highest livestock population in the world, India has only less than 4% of the country under pastures and grazing lands. The states of Himachal Pradesh, Karnataka, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Gujarat, and Rajasthan have high above 5% of area under this category. The area under different land uses are given below.

Land Utilization in India

Land Uses	Area	
	In lakhs hectare	In percentage
1. Area under non-agricultural uses	212	6.95
2. Barren and uncultivable land	197	6.46
3. <u>Net</u> area sown	1442	46.64
4. Forest lands	679	22.27
5. Miscellaneous tree crops and groves	37	1.21
6. Cultivable waste lands	150	4.92
7. Current fallows	138	4.53
8. Old fallows	96	3.15
9. Permanent pastures and grazing land	118	3.87
Total	3049 *	100
<i>Land Utilization in India</i>		

* Total geographical area of which land utilization data is available.

Agricultural Land Use

- The net sown area, current fallows, and land under tree crops and groves are included in agricultural land use. The agricultural land in India is little more than 50% of the total geographical area in the country. This is the highest share of land in any country of the world. But due to large size of population in India, per capita arable land is available only 0.17 hectares, which is lower than the world average (0.24 hectares) . The per capita agricultural land in some select countries is much higher than India. In Australia it is 2.8 hectares, in Canada 1.35 and in Brazil 0.33 hectares.
- The lower per capita availability of land is an indicator of high pressure of population on land resources. Since there is little scope for increasing land under the plough, the way out to feed the growing population can be found in increasing land productivity. Over the period, area sown more than once has been increasing which is about 15% . If the same piece of land is sown more than once in a year, it is called cropping intensity. Which stands for the ratio between gross cropped area and net sown area. The use of new technology, fertilizers, good quality of seeds, and irrigation facilities are necessary for increasing intensity of cropping. The so-called Green Revolution is also nothing but technological package, which include HYV seeds, chemical fertilizers, and artificial irrigation. After the adaptation of Green Revolution by India in 1966 onwards agricultural land use has undergone a significant change.