



Collegedunia NCERT Notes

The Ultimate NCERT Revision Guide for Class 12 Geography

India: People and Economy (Part 2) – 2026-27 Syllabus

NCERT Notes Class 12 Geography Chapter 3 Land Resources and Agriculture

These notes cover the full NCERT chapter plus exam pointers for CBSE Board, CUET and UPSC aspirants.

Also see for this chapter: [NCERT Solutions](#)

How to use these notes

Read each section once for understanding, then revise from the boxes and diagrams. Yellow **Quick Tip** boxes carry exam shortcuts. Red **Common Mistake** boxes flag errors examiners love to catch. Green **Real-World** boxes link the topic to daily life, and purple **Memory Aid** boxes give you tricks to recall long lists.

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1 Land Use in India

Land is the most basic resource a country has. We grow food on it, build homes, roads and factories on it, and graze animals on it. But unlike money or labour, the area of land is fixed. So the way we share this fixed land between farms, forests, cities and wasteland tells us a lot about how the economy is changing. This chapter studies how India uses its land, what crops it grows, how farming has developed since 1947, and the problems that still hold Indian agriculture back.

1.1 Land Use Categories

The Land Revenue Department keeps records of how land is used. These records add up to the **reporting area**, which is slightly different from the **geographical area** measured by the Survey of India. The geographical area stays fixed; the reporting area can change a little as revenue estimates are revised.

Reporting area vs Geographical area

Geographical area is measured by the **Survey of India** and never changes. **Reporting area** is the total of all land-use categories in the revenue records and may change slightly. Land-use percentages in this chapter are worked out on the reporting area.

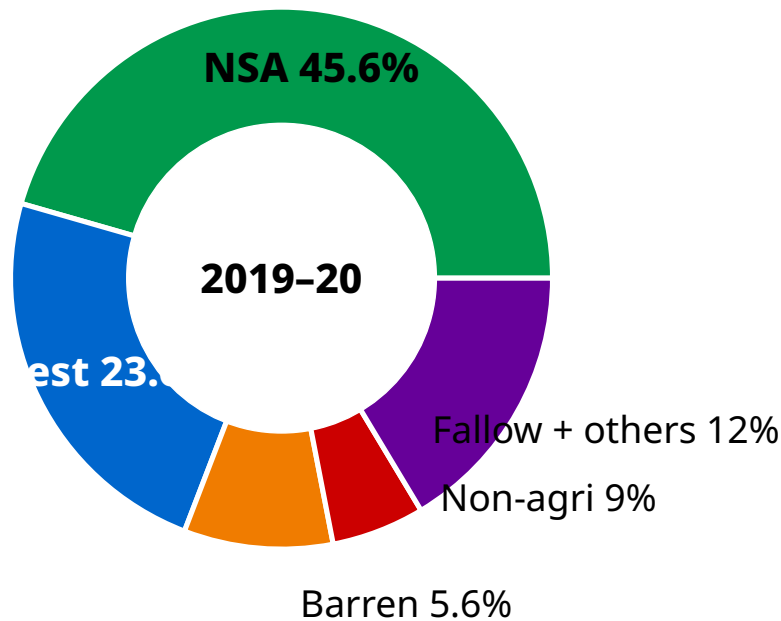
The revenue records group all land into nine categories:

1. **Forests:** Area marked by Government for forest growth. This is not the same as actual forest cover, so this figure can rise even if real tree cover does not.
2. **Barren and Wastelands:** Hilly terrain, deserts and ravines that cannot be farmed with current technology.
3. **Land put to Non-agricultural Uses:** Land under settlements, roads, canals, industries and shops. It grows as the secondary and tertiary sectors expand.
4. **Permanent Pastures and Grazing Lands:** Mostly owned by the village panchayat or Government; used for grazing animals.
5. **Miscellaneous Tree Crops and Groves:** Orchards and fruit trees, not counted in net sown area. Mostly privately owned.
6. **Culturable Wasteland:** Land left fallow (uncultivated) for more than five years. Can be farmed again after reclamation.
7. **Current Fallow:** Land left uncultivated for one agricultural year or less, to let it recover fertility.
8. **Fallow other than Current Fallow:** Cultivable land left idle for more than one but less than five years.
9. **Net Area Sown (NSA):** The actual physical extent of land on which crops are sown and harvested.

Classify it fast

A fallow-land question turns on **time**: idle $\leq$ 1 year is **Current Fallow**; idle 1 to 5 years is **Fallow other than Current Fallow**; idle $>$ 5 years becomes **Culturable Wasteland**.

This pie shows how the reporting area splits across the main categories. The largest single slice is always Net Area Sown.

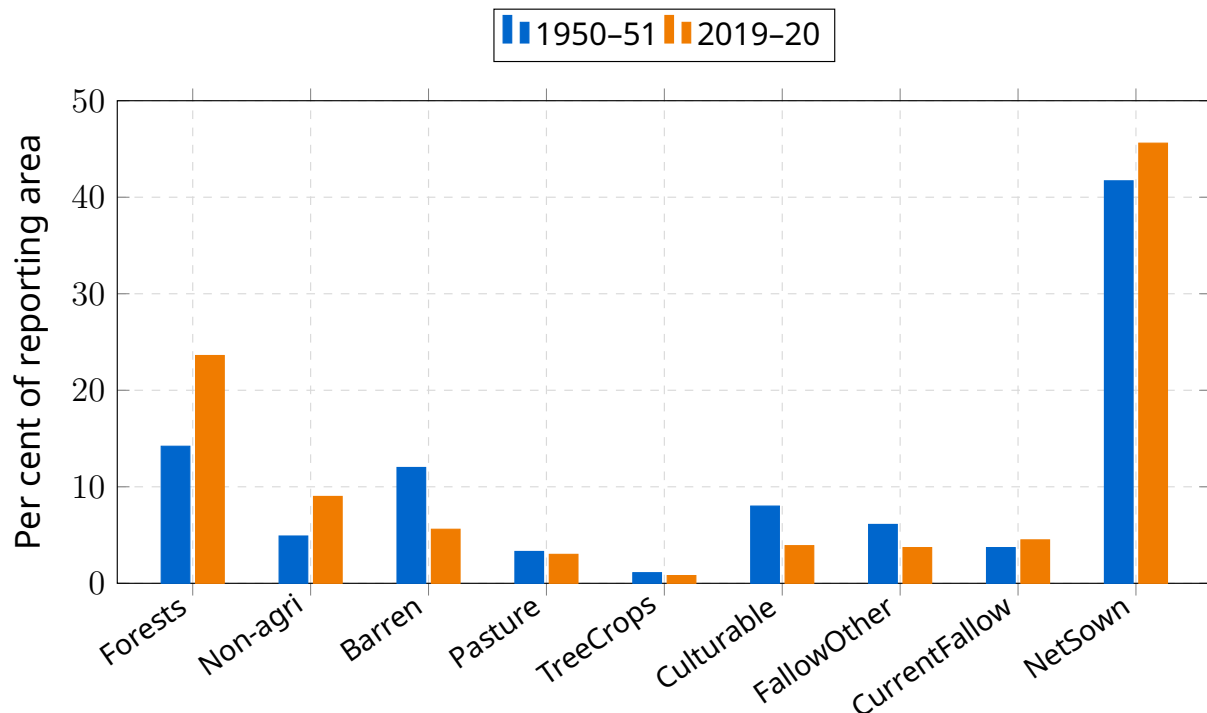


1.2 Land-Use Changes in India

Land use in any region depends on the economic activities there. As the economy grows, three changes happen that affect land:

- The **size** of the economy grows with population, income and technology, so pressure on land rises and even marginal land gets used.
- The **composition** of the economy shifts: secondary and tertiary sectors grow faster than agriculture, moving land from farming to non-farm uses, especially around cities.
- Even though agriculture's share of GDP falls, **pressure on farmland does not fall**, because the population dependent on farming declines slowly and there are more mouths to feed.

Between 1950–51 and 2019–20, five categories rose and four fell. The biggest riser was **land under non-agricultural uses**, driven by industry, services and the spread of towns and villages.



The five categories that increased were forest, non-agricultural use, permanent pasture, current fallow and net area sown. Notes on these rises:

- Non-agricultural use rose fastest, due to the changing structure of the economy and the spread of urban and rural settlements onto wasteland and farmland.
- The forest share rose mainly because more area was **demarcated** as forest, not because real tree cover went up.
- Current fallow swings a lot from year to year with rainfall and cropping cycles, so two-point comparison is misleading.
- Net area sown rose recently as culturable wasteland was brought under the plough.

The four categories that declined were barren and wasteland, culturable wasteland, tree crops and groves, and fallow other than current fallow. The main reason is rising pressure on land from both farm and non-farm sectors.

Demarcated forest is not real forest

A common slip is to say forest share rose because of afforestation. The NCERT reason is that more area was **notified/demarcated** for forest growth. The actual forest cover need not have increased at all.

1.3 Common Property Resources

By ownership, land is either **private land** (owned by an individual or group) or **Common Property Resources (CPRs)** (owned by the state or community for shared use).

Common Property Resources (CPR)

A CPR is a **community's natural resource** where every member has the right of access and use with specified obligations, but **no one has private property rights** over it. Examples: community forests, pasture lands, village water bodies and public spaces.

CPRs matter most for **landless and marginal farmers** who depend on livestock, because they have little land of their own. CPRs supply fodder, fuel and minor forest products like fruits, nuts, fibre and medicinal plants. They are especially important for **rural women**, who spend long hours collecting fuel and fodder, often from degraded CPR land.

Why CPRs are an equity issue

When a village pasture or pond is encroached upon, it is the poorest households that lose the most, since they cannot buy fodder or fuel from the market. Protecting CPRs is therefore a way of protecting rural livelihoods, not just the environment.

2 Agricultural Land Use and Cropping

Land matters far more to farming than to factories or offices. In farming, land itself is the main input, so output depends directly on how much land there is and how good it is. Lack of access to land is closely linked to rural poverty. This section looks at how much of India's land is cultivable, why we must use it more intensively, and the cropping seasons and farming types that organise Indian agriculture.

2.1 Total Cultivable Land

The total stock of agricultural land (total cultivable land) is found by adding three categories:

Total Cultivable Land

Total Cultivable Land = Net Sown Area + All Fallow Lands + Culturable Wasteland

Over the years this has shown a **marginal decline** as a share of reporting area.

The table below (NCERT Table 3.1) shows how the make-up of cultivable land changed. Net area sown grew, while culturable wasteland and long fallow shrank.

Agricultural Land-use Category	% of Reporting Area		% of Cultivable Land	
	1950-51	2019-20	1950-51	2019-20
Culturable Wasteland	8.0	3.9	13.4	6.8
Fallow other than Current Fallow	6.1	3.7	10.2	6.4
Current Fallow	3.7	4.5	6.2	7.8
Net Area Sown	41.7	45.6	70.0	79.0
Total Cultivable Land	59.5	57.7	100.0	100.0

The scope for adding new land under the plough is now limited. So India must adopt **land-saving technologies** of two kinds: those that raise the yield of a crop per unit area, and those that raise total output per unit area over a year by raising land-use intensity. The second kind also creates more jobs, which suits a land-scarce, labour-rich country.

2.2 Cropping Intensity

Cropping intensity tells us how many times a piece of land is cropped in one agricultural year.

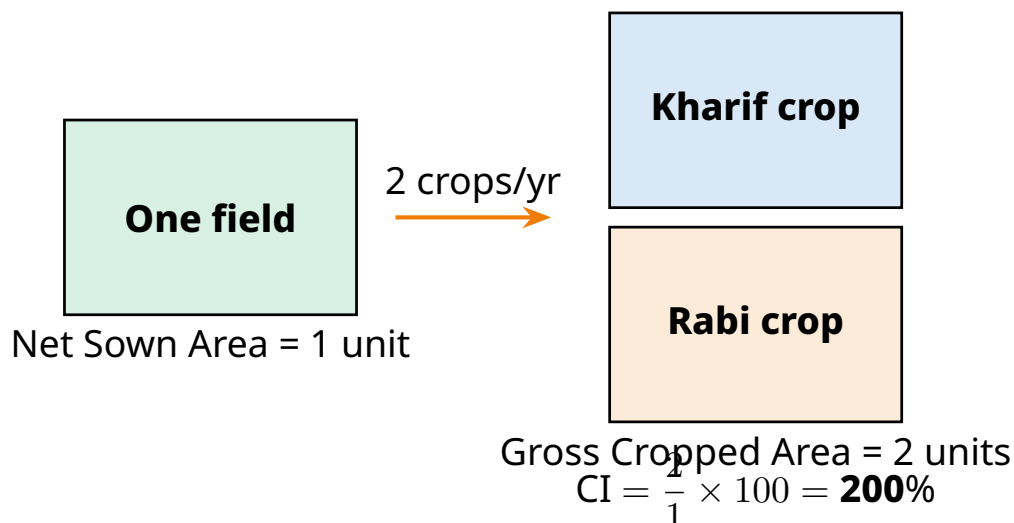
Cropping Intensity (CI)

$$\text{Cropping Intensity} = \frac{\text{Gross Cropped Area (GCA)}}{\text{Net Sown Area (NSA)}} \times 100$$

GCA counts a field twice if two crops are grown on it in the same year; NSA counts it once.

Net Sown Area vs Gross Cropped Area

NSA = physical area sown at least once. **GCA** = total area sown counting repeat cropping. If CI = 100%, each field is cropped once a year; CI = 200% means it is cropped twice.



High CI is good for India

For a country with little spare land but plenty of labour, a **high cropping intensity** is desirable: it uses land fully *and* cuts rural unemployment by spreading work across more crops.

2.3 Cropping Seasons in India

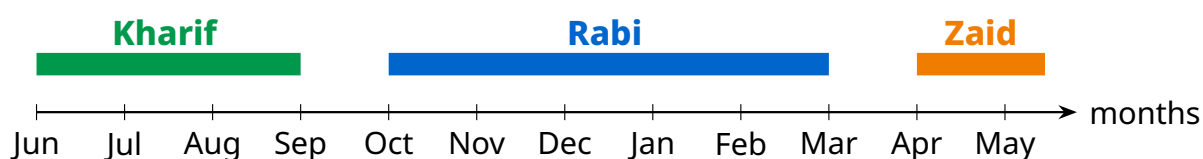
Northern and interior India has three crop seasons: **kharif**, **rabi** and **zaid**. In the south, high temperatures allow crops to grow all year if soil moisture is available, so the same crop can be grown thrice.

Season	Months	Northern States	Southern States
Kharif	June–September	Rice, Cotton, Bajra, Maize, Jowar, Tur	Rice, Maize, Ragi, Jowar, Groundnut
Rabi	October–March	Wheat, Gram, Rapeseed and Mustard, Barley	Rice, Maize, Ragi, Groundnut, Jowar
Zaid	April–June	Vegetables, Fruits, Fodder	Rice, Vegetables, Fodder

Remember the three seasons

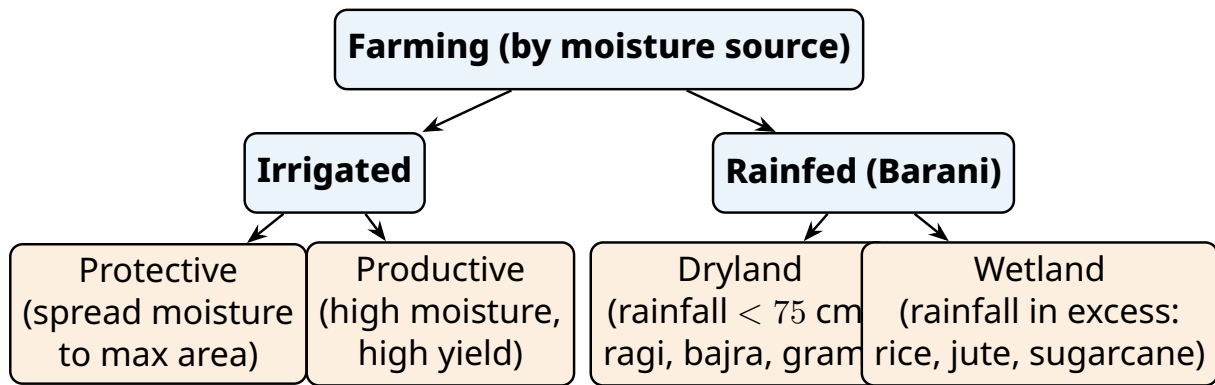
“KaRiZ” → **Ka**rif (monsoon sowing), **Ri** for Rabi (winter sowing), **Za**id (short summer crop). Kharif = sown with rains, Rabi = sown in winter, Zaid = sown in the gap between them.

The timeline below shows how the three seasons sit across the agricultural year.



2.4 Types of Farming

Based on the main source of moisture, farming is **irrigated** or **rainfed (barani)**. Irrigated farming is further split by purpose, and rainfed farming by how much soil moisture is available.



- **Protective irrigation:** guards crops against moisture shortage; acts as a supplement to rainfall and tries to cover the maximum area.
- **Productive irrigation:** supplies enough moisture for high productivity; water input per unit area is higher than in protective irrigation.
- **Dryland farming:** in regions with annual rainfall under 75 cm; grows hardy, drought-resistant crops (ragi, bajra, moong, gram, guar) with soil-moisture conservation and rainwater harvesting.
- **Wetland farming:** rainfall is more than crop needs; areas may face floods and erosion; grows water-intensive crops (rice, jute, sugarcane) and supports aquaculture.

Protective vs Productive irrigation

Do not mix these up. **Protective** = minimum water spread over a *large* area to save the crop. **Productive** = plenty of water on a *smaller* area to push up yield. The water input per hectare is the giveaway.

[Download the Full NCERT Solutions PDF for this chapter](#)

3 Major Crops of India

Crops are the heart of this chapter. About two-thirds of India's cropped area is under foodgrains, which are split into cereals (rice, wheat and coarse grains) and pulses. Alongside these are oilseeds, fibre crops and plantation crops. For the exam you should know, for each major crop, its season, the climate it needs, the leading producing states and where its yield is highest. This section organises all of that.

3.1 Foodgrains: Cereals

Foodgrains occupy about two-thirds of the total cropped area. **Cereals** alone take about 54%; India ranks third in cereal output after China and the U.S.A. Cereals are split into **fine grains** (rice, wheat) and **coarse grains** (jowar, bajra, maize, ragi).

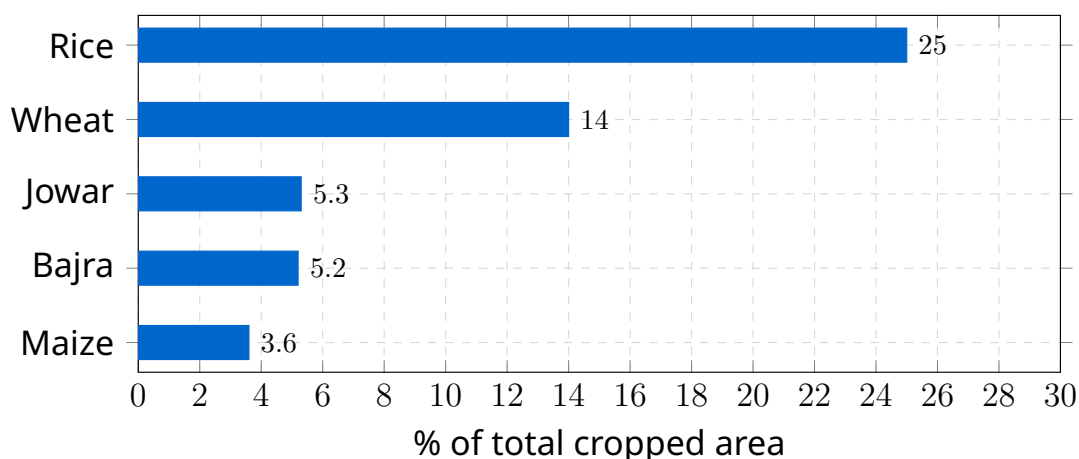
Rice – the staple

Rice is grown from sea level up to 2,000 m, from humid east India to irrigated Punjab and Haryana. India produces about **22% of world rice** and ranks second after China. About a quarter of cropped area is under rice. Leading states: **West Bengal, Uttar Pradesh, Punjab**. Highest yields: Punjab, Tamil Nadu, Haryana, Andhra Pradesh.

Wheat – the rabi cereal

Wheat is the second cereal after rice and a temperate, rabi crop. India produces about **12.8% of world wheat**. About 85% of its area is in the north and centre (Indo-Gangetic Plain, Malwa Plateau, Himalayas). Leading states: **Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Punjab, Haryana, Rajasthan**; highest yields in Punjab and Haryana.

The chart compares the share of total cropped area held by the main cereals.



Coarse cereals together occupy about 16.5% of cropped area:

- **Jowar (sorghum):** about 5.3% of cropped area; main food crop of semi-arid central and southern India. Maharashtra alone grows more than half. Kharif in the north, both seasons in the south.
- **Bajra:** about 5.2%; a hardy crop of hot, dry north-west India; leading states Rajasthan, Maharashtra, Gujarat, Uttar Pradesh, Haryana.
- **Maize:** about 3.6%; food and fodder crop on inferior soils; grown all over India except Punjab and the north-east; leaders Karnataka, Madhya Pradesh, Bihar.

Fine vs coarse grains

Fine = "RW" (Rice, Wheat). Everything else among cereals (jowar, bajra, maize, ragi) is **coarse**. Fine grains feed cities; coarse grains feed dryland regions and livestock.

3.2 Foodgrains: Pulses

Pulses are protein-rich legumes that raise soil fertility through **nitrogen fixation**. India is the world's leading producer. They are mostly grown in the drylands of the Deccan, central plateaus and the north-west, and occupy about 11% of cropped area. Being rainfed dryland crops, their yields are low and swing year to year. **Gram** and **tur** are the main pulses.

- **Gram:** subtropical rabi crop; about 2.8% of cropped area; main states Madhya Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh, Maharashtra, Rajasthan. Displaced by wheat in Punjab, Haryana and northern Rajasthan after the Green Revolution.
- **Tur (Arhar / red gram / pigeon pea):** about 2% of cropped area; grown on marginal, rainfed land in central and southern India; Maharashtra contributes about one-third of output.

Pulses and the soil

Because legumes fix nitrogen, growing pulses in rotation cuts the need for nitrogen fertiliser and keeps the soil healthy. When pulses were pushed out of irrigated areas by wheat, that natural fertilisation was lost, which is one reason soils in those belts now need heavy chemical inputs.

3.3 Oilseeds

Oilseeds are grown for edible oil and cover about 14% of cropped area, mostly in the drylands of the Malwa Plateau, Marathwada, Gujarat, Rajasthan, Telangana, Rayalaseema and the Karnataka Plateau.

Oilseed	% cropped area	Key points and leading states
Groundnut	3.6	Mainly rainfed kharif crop of drylands; Gujarat, Rajasthan, Tamil Nadu, Telangana, Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka. Yield high in Tamil Nadu (partly irrigated).
Rapeseed and Mustard	2.5	Subtropical rabi crop of north-west and central India; frost-sensitive; about two-thirds irrigated; Rajasthan leads (about one-third).
Soyabean and Sunflower	part of 14	Soyabean mainly in Madhya Pradesh and Maharashtra (about 90% together); sunflower in Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh, Telangana.

Crop-state matching trick

For oilseed questions, anchor on the **lead state**: Groundnut → Gujarat, Mus-

tard → Rajasthan, Soyabean → Madhya Pradesh. These three pairs answer most one-mark MCQs.

3.4 Fibre and Plantation Crops

Fibre crops give us material for cloth, bags and sacks. The two main ones are cotton and jute.

- **Cotton:** tropical kharif crop of semi-arid areas; about 4.7% of cropped area; India ranks second after China. Three belts: north-west (Punjab, Haryana, north Rajasthan), west (Gujarat, Maharashtra) and the southern plateau (Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Tamil Nadu). Needs clear sky during flowering.
- **Jute:** cash crop of West Bengal and the eastern region; used for coarse cloth, bags and sacks; about 0.5% of cropped area; West Bengal grows about three-fourths. India lost large jute areas to East Pakistan (Bangladesh) at Partition.

Plantation and other crops include sugarcane, tea and coffee.

- **Sugarcane:** tropical crop, largely irrigated; about 2.4% of cropped area; Uttar Pradesh grows about two-fifths; also Maharashtra, Karnataka, Tamil Nadu. India is a top producer (about 19.7% of world output).
- **Tea:** plantation beverage crop on hilly, well-drained soil; started in Assam in the 1840s; Assam grows over half of India's tea; also Darjeeling (West Bengal) and the Nilgiris.
- **Coffee:** tropical plantation crop of the Western Ghats; India mostly grows the superior **arabica**; Karnataka grows more than two-thirds.

Plantation-crop homes

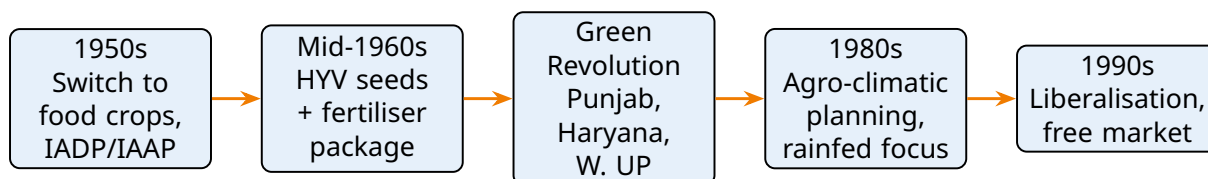
Tea → Assam, **Coffee** → Karnataka (Western Ghats), **Sugarcane** → Uttar Pradesh. Three crops, three states, three quick marks.

4 Agricultural Development in India

Indian farming was largely subsistence and stagnant before Independence, scarred by droughts and famines. Partition sent about one-third of undivided India's irrigated land to Pakistan. Since 1947 the country has moved through several phases: a push to grow more food, the Green Revolution of the mid-1960s, attention to rainfed areas in the 1980s, and liberalisation in the 1990s. This section traces that journey and the gains in output and technology.

4.1 The Road to the Green Revolution

After Independence the immediate goal was to raise foodgrain output by switching from cash crops to food crops, cropping the same land more intensively, and bringing fallow and cultivable land under the plough. This worked at first but output stagnated in the late 1950s. The **IADP** (Intensive Agricultural District Programme) and **IAAP** (Intensive Agricultural Area Programme) were launched, but two droughts in the mid-1960s caused a food crisis and forced imports.



In the mid-1960s, **High Yielding Varieties (HYVs)** of wheat (from Mexico) and rice (from the Philippines) became available. India introduced a **package technology** of HYV seeds plus chemical fertilisers in irrigated areas of Punjab, Haryana, Western Uttar Pradesh, Andhra Pradesh and Gujarat. Assured irrigation was the key requirement. This spurt of growth is the **Green Revolution**.

Green Revolution in one line

HYV seeds + assured irrigation + chemical fertilisers and pesticides = a sharp, fast rise in foodgrain output that made India self-reliant in food. It was first confined to irrigated areas, which created regional disparities until the technology spread eastward in the 1970s.

Where HYVs came from

A favourite MCQ: HYV wheat came from **Mexico** and HYV rice from the **Philippines**. Pair “Mexico and Philippines” with the Green Revolution.

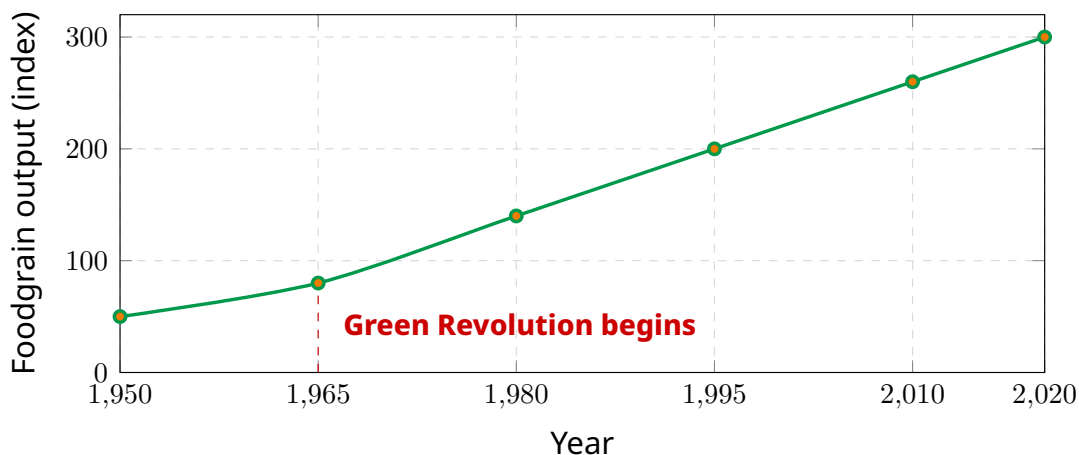
4.2 Later Phases and Output Growth

In the 1980s the Planning Commission turned to **rainfed areas** and began **agro-climatic planning** (1988) for regionally balanced growth, stressing diversification into dairy, poultry, horticulture, livestock and aquaculture. **Liberalisation** and the free-market economy of the 1990s then reshaped Indian agriculture.

Over the last five decades, output and technology improved a great deal:

- Production and yield of rice and wheat rose sharply; sugarcane, oilseeds and cotton also gained.
- **Expansion of irrigation** was central: it let HYV seeds, fertilisers, pesticides and machinery be used effectively.
- Modern technology spread fast: chemical fertiliser use rose about **15 times** since the mid-1960s, and pesticide use grew because HYVs are prone to pests.

The line chart shows the long-run rise in foodgrain production after the Green Revolution.



The Farmer's Portal and NMSA

Today a farmer can use the **Farmer's Portal** to check insurance, market prices, seeds, machinery and welfare schemes through an interactive map. The **National Mission for Sustainable Agriculture (NMSA)**, with schemes like **PKVY** (organic farming) and **RKVY**, aims to make farming productive, sustainable and climate-resilient.

5 Problems of Indian Agriculture

Despite big gains, Indian agriculture still faces serious problems. Some are region-specific, but several are common across the country and range from physical limits like erratic rainfall to institutional weaknesses like poor land reforms. Understanding these problems is important for the 150-word board questions and for any policy discussion. This section lists the main constraints and links each to its cause.

5.1 Physical and Productivity Problems

- **Dependence on erratic monsoon:** Irrigation covers only about 33% of cultivated area; the rest depends on rain. Rainfall in drought-prone areas like Rajasthan is meagre and unreliable, and even high-rainfall areas swing between drought and flood. **Droughts and floods are the twin menace** of Indian farming.
- **Low productivity:** Per-hectare yields of rice, wheat, cotton and oilseeds are far below the U.S.A., Russia and Japan. Heavy pressure on land also keeps **labour productivity** low. Rainfed drylands growing coarse cereals, pulses and oilseeds have the lowest yields.
- **Degradation of cultivable land:** Faulty irrigation and farming have caused **alkalisation, salinisation and waterlogging**, especially in irrigated areas.

Excess pesticides build up to toxic levels, and shorter fallows have cut natural fertilisation. Rainfed areas suffer soil erosion by wind and water.



Salinisation is the irrigated-area problem

For “main form of degradation in irrigated areas”, the answer is **salinisation of soils** (with alkalinisation and waterlogging), not gully or wind erosion. Wind and gully erosion belong to dryland and rainfed areas.

5.2 Institutional and Social Problems

- **Constraints of finance and indebtedness:** Modern inputs are costly. Small and marginal farmers with little saving borrow from banks and moneylenders; crop failures push them into a debt trap.
- **Lack of land reforms:** Of the British-era systems (Mahalwari, Ryotwari, Zamindari), **Zamindari** was the most exploitative. Post-1947 land reforms were poorly implemented due to weak political will, so land stayed unequally distributed.
- **Small farm size and fragmentation:** Average holdings are shrinking under population pressure and are split into scattered plots, making them uneconomic. Many states have not even consolidated holdings once.
- **Lack of commercialisation:** Many farmers grow only for self-consumption; commercialisation has mostly reached irrigated areas.
- **Vast underemployment:** In unirrigated tracts there is seasonal unemployment of 4 to 8 months, and even in the cropping season work is not available all the time.

Why farmland pressure stays high

Even as agriculture's GDP share falls, the population dependent on it declines slowly and the number of people to feed keeps rising. So farmland faces

steady pressure, which deepens fragmentation, low productivity and indebtedness together.

Indebtedness and farmer distress

The chain runs: expensive inputs → borrowing → crop failure or low returns → inability to repay → severe distress. NCERT links this distress to the farmer-suicide incidents reported in several states, which is why credit reform and crop insurance are policy priorities.

6 Quick Revision and Exam Pointers

This final section pulls the chapter together for last-minute revision: the key formulae, the must-know crop facts, and the common mistakes to avoid in the exam.

6.1 Formulae and Key Facts

The two formulae you must know

Total Cultivable Land = NSA + All Fallow Lands + Culturable Wasteland

$$\text{Cropping Intensity} = \frac{\text{GCA}}{\text{NSA}} \times 100$$

Crop	Season	Lead state(s) and quick fact
Rice	Kharif (mostly)	West Bengal; about 22% of world output, rank 2
Wheat	Rabi	Uttar Pradesh; temperate, Indo-Gangetic Plain
Jowar	Both/Kharif	Maharashtra (over half)
Bajra	Kharif	Rajasthan; hardy dryland crop
Maize	Kharif	Karnataka; food and fodder
Gram / Tur	Rabi / Kharif	MP / Maharashtra; pulses, nitrogen fixing
Groundnut	Kharif	Gujarat; rainfed oilseed
Mustard	Rabi	Rajasthan; frost-sensitive oilseed
Cotton	Kharif	Gujarat/Maharashtra; rank 2 after China
Jute	Kharif	West Bengal; lost areas to Bangladesh
Sugarcane	All year	Uttar Pradesh; largely irrigated
Tea / Coffee	All year	Assam / Karnataka; plantation crops

Five risers in land use

“FoNPCN” → **F**orest, **N**on-agricultural use, **P**asture, **C**urrent fallow, **N**et sown area all rose between 1950–51 and 2019–20. The other four fell.

6.2 Top Exam Mistakes to Avoid

- Forest-share rise is from **demarcation**, not real afforestation.
- Irrigated-area degradation is **salinisation, alkalisation and waterlogging**, not wind erosion.
- Sugarcane is **not** a dryland crop; it is largely irrigated.
- HYVs of wheat and rice came from **Mexico and Philippines**.
- Marginal land is **not** one of the nine land-use categories.

Answering the 150-word question

For “strategies for agricultural development”, sketch the timeline: food-crop switch and IADP/IAAP → Green Revolution (HYV + irrigation + fertiliser) → rainfed and agro-climatic planning (1980s) → liberalisation (1990s) → NMSA today. A timeline answer reads better than a list.

6.3 Previous-Year Question Trends

Boards and CUET keep returning to a few favourites in this chapter. Knowing the pattern tells you where to put your revision time.

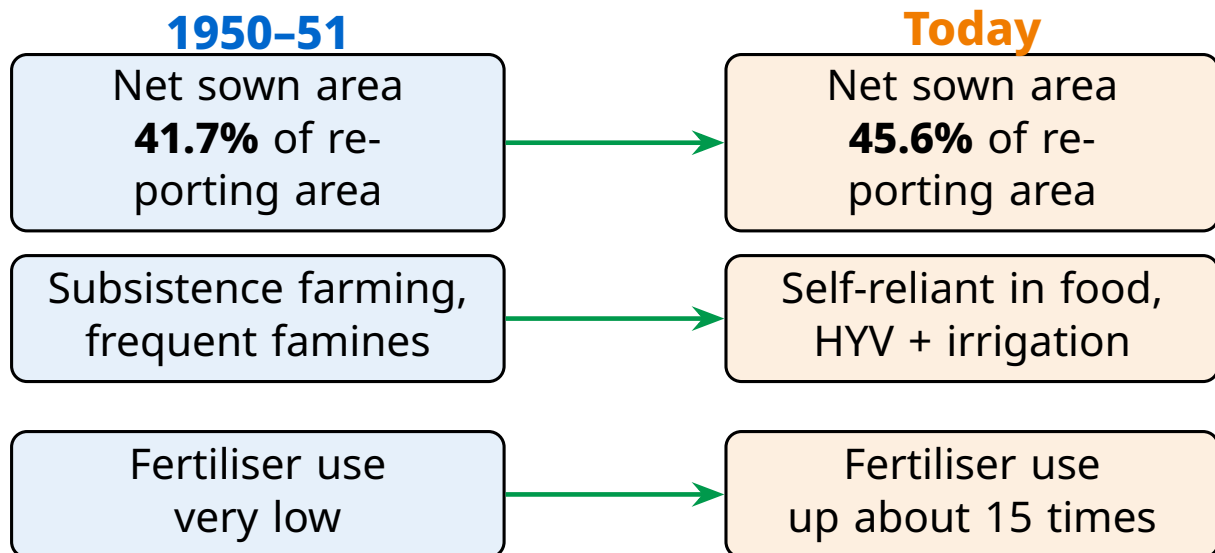
Topic	Usual marks	What is asked
Land-use categories	1 (MCQ)	“Which is NOT a category?”
Net sown vs gross cropped area	1–3	Define and distinguish
Cropping intensity	1–3	Formula and why it matters for India
Dryland vs wetland farming	3	Distinguish, with example crops
Green Revolution	3–5	Inputs, regions, HYV source
Problems of Indian agriculture	5	List and explain physical + institutional

Three definitions examiners love

Be word-perfect on three pairs: **barren vs culturable wasteland**, **net sown vs gross cropped area**, and **dryland vs wetland farming**. Each is a near-certain short-answer question.

6.4 Snapshot: Then vs Now

A single comparison of 1950–51 with today captures the chapter’s storyline: more land sown, more irrigation, far higher output, but persistent low productivity and rising pressure on a fixed land base.



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