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Major Crops and Cropping Patterns in Various Parts of the Country



Indian agriculture is an important aspect of India's economy; learn here about the major crops, and cropping patterns in various parts of the country to understand the agriculture sector better.

Agriculture accounted for 14% of India's GDP in 2016-17 and

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Open agriculture/) sector employs the largest female labor force in the country which is close to 65%.

But it suffers from the twin problems of low productivity and excess workforce employed in it resulting in a low per capita productivity of the workforce. This leads to lesser wages and a high level of poverty.

The agriculture sector in India has undergone very limited liberalization. The state still plays a predominant role in Indian agriculture. It is one of the highly subsidized sectors of the economy because concerns about food security and poverty (<https://www.clearias.com/poverty/>) lead the government to remain strongly involved through fixing prices for key agricultural products at the farm and consumer levels, high border protection, bans on or support for exports, and massive subsidies for key inputs such as fertilizers, water, and electricity.

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Cropping seasons

India is geographically very vast, hence it has various food and non-food crops which are cultivated in three main cropping seasons which are rabi, Kharif, and Zaid.

- The Kharif season starts with the southwest monsoon and supports the cultivation of tropical crops.
- Rabi season is for winter crops as these crops require less amount of water for growth.
- While Zaid season comes between Rabi and Kharif.

Season	Time		Examples of crops	Features	States
	Sown	Harvested			

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			tea and coffee	monsoon crops.	Nadu, Kerala and Maharashtra
Rabi	October-December	April-June	Wheat, barley, gram, peas, mustard	Need cold weather for growth hence called winter crops.	Punjab, Haryana, Himachal Pradesh, Jammu and Kashmir, Uttarakhand and Uttar Pradesh
Zaid	March	July	Seasonal fruits, vegetables, fodder crops	Requires warm & dry weather for growth and a longer day-length for flowering	North and north-western states

Major crops in India can be classified into:

Food crops: Rice, Wheat, Millets, Maize, and Pulses.

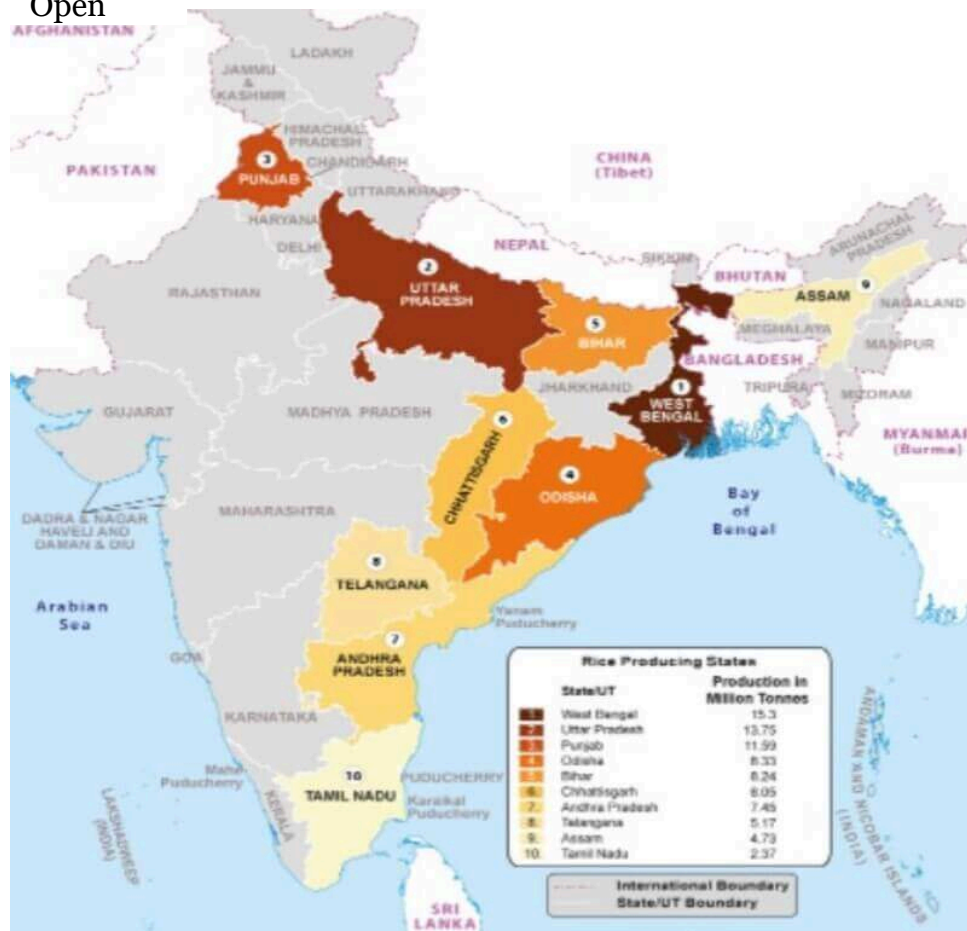
Cash crops: Sugarcane, Oilseeds, Horticulture crops, Tea, Coffee, Rubber, Cotton, and Jute.

Major Food crops in various parts

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Courtesy: mapsofindia.com

India is an important center of rice cultivation. Rice is cultivated in the largest areas in India.

- Historians believe that while the **Indica** variety of rice was first domesticated in the area covering the foothills of the Eastern Himalayas (i.e. north-eastern India), stretching through Burma, Thailand, Laos, Vietnam, and Southern China, the **japonica** variety was domesticated from wild rice in southern China which was introduced to India.
- Perennial wild rice is still growing in Assam and Nepal.

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In India rice is grown under widely varying conditions of altitude and climate.

- Rice cultivation in India extends from 8 to 35°N latitudes and from sea level to as high as 3000 meters.
- The Rice crop needs a hot and humid climate. It is best suited to regions that have high humidity, prolonged sunshine, and an assured supply of water.
- It required around 150-300 cm of rainfall and deep clayey and loamy soil.
- The average temperature required throughout the life period of the crop ranges from 21 to 37° C.
- The maximum temperature which the crop can tolerate is 40° C to 42° C.

Nutritional value of Rice

- Rice is a nutritional staple food that provides instant energy as its most important component is carbohydrate (starch).
- Rice is poor in nitrogenous substances with an average composition of these substances being only 8 percent and fat content or lipids only negligible, i.e., 1 percent, and due to this reason, it is considered a complete food for eating.
- Rice flour is rich in starch and is used for making various food materials. It is also used in some instances by brewers to make alcoholic malt.

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Crop Production Practices

In India Rice is mainly grown in two types of soils- uplands and low lands. The method of cultivation of rice in a particular region depends largely on factors such as the situation of the land, type of soil, irrigation facilities, availability of laborers intensity, and distribution of rainfalls. The crop of rice is grown with the following methods:

- Dry or Semi-dry upland cultivation
- Broadcasting the seed
- Sowing the seed behind the plow or drilling
- Wet or lowland cultivation
- Transplanting in puddled fields.
- Broadcasting sprouted seeds in puddled fields.

Selection of Seeds

The use of quality seeds in the cultivation of rice is an important factor to get a better crop yield. Seeds intended for sowing should satisfy the following requirements:

- The seed should belong to the proper variety, which is proposed to be grown.
- The seed should be clean and free from obvious mixtures of other seeds.
- The seed should be mature, well developed, and plump

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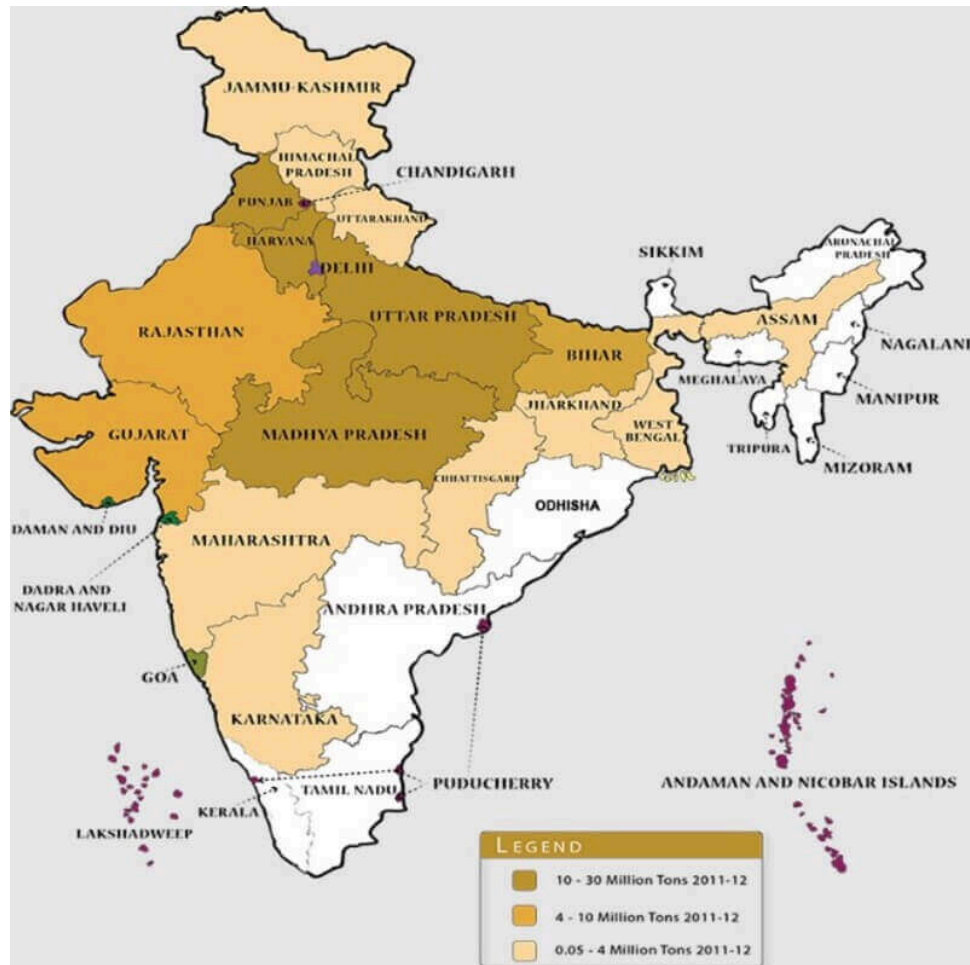
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Before sowing the seed should be treated with fungicides which protect the seed against soil-borne fungi and also give a boost to the seedlings.

Wheat



Courtesy: farmer.gov.in

Wheat is the main cereal crop in India. Indian wheat is

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- India also produces around 1.0-1.2 million tons of durum wheat, mostly in the state of Madhya Pradesh.
- Most Indian durum is not marketed separately due to segregation problems in the market yards.

The Government of India appointed a commission in 1961 to assess the feasibility of increasing crop productivity under prevailing Indian ecological conditions. As a result of various steps taken by Govt. of India, the Wheat scenario in our country has completely changed.

In the post-Independence era, the country used to import Wheat for our needs but due to a bumper increase in the production and productivity of Wheat in the 'Green Revolution (<https://www.clearias.com/green-revolution/>)' period in the late sixties, our country became self-dependent on Wheat production.

At present, the country is producing much more excess Wheat than the requirement.

Climate requirement

The wheat crop has wide adaptability:

- It can be grown not only in the tropical and sub-tropical zones but also in the temperate zone and the

cold tracts of the far north, beyond even the 60-degree

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The best wheat is produced in areas favored with cool, moist weather during the major portion of the growing period followed by dry, warm weather to enable the grain to ripen properly.

- The optimum temperature range for the ideal germination of wheat seed is 20-25° C.
- Rains just after sowing hamper germination and encourage seedling blight.
- Areas with a warm and damp climate are not suited for wheat growing.

During the heading and flowering stages, excessively high or low temperatures and drought are harmful to wheat. Cloudy weather, with high humidity and low temperatures, is conducive to rust attack. Wheat is mainly a rabi (winter) season crop in India.

Soil

Wheat is grown in a variety of soils in India:

- Soils with a clay loam or loam texture, good structure, and moderate water holding capacity are ideal for wheat cultivation.
- Heavy soil with good drainage is suitable for wheat cultivation under dry conditions.
- These soils absorb and retain rainwater well. Heavy

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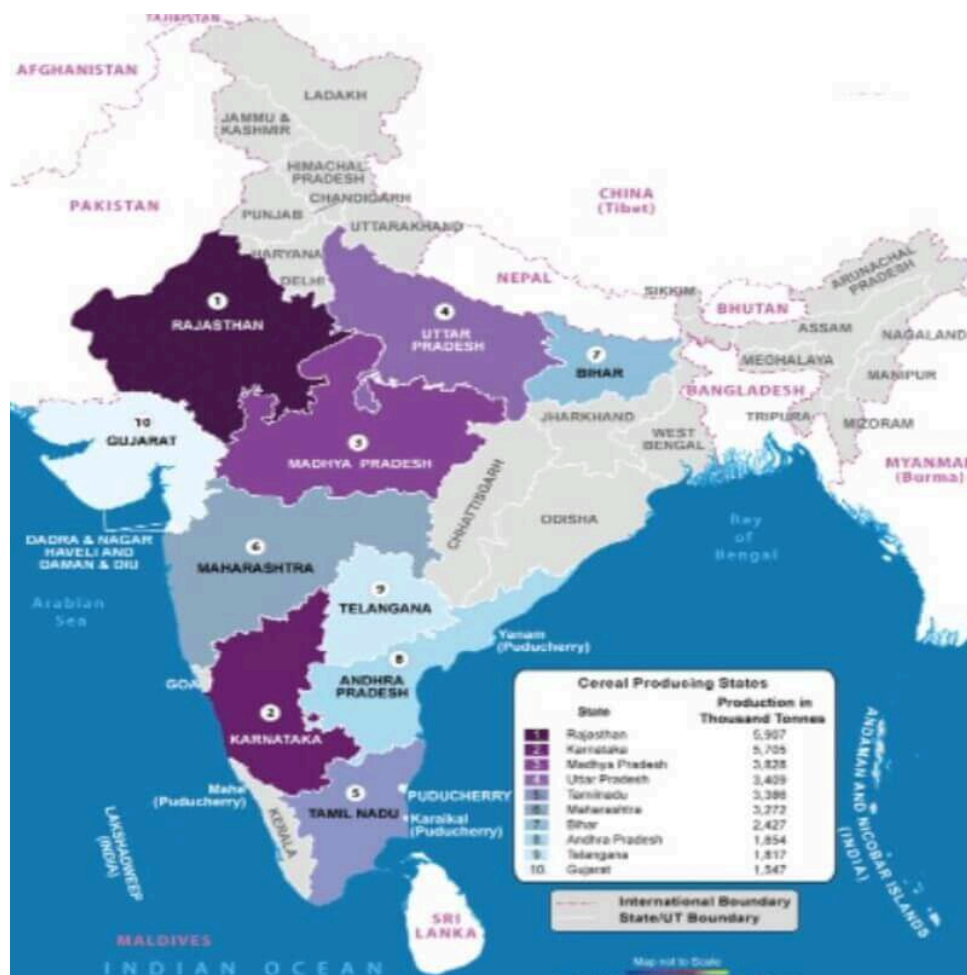
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Millets



Courtesy: mapsofindia.com

Given the nutritional value of the millets, the Government has notified millets as Nutri-cereals in April 2018. Millets are a rich source of Protein, Fibre, Minerals, Iron, and Calcium and have a low glycemic index. The National Year of Millets was celebrated in 2018.

Climate requirement

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Open because they are less sensitive to soil deficiencies.

Jowar is a rain-fed crop grown in moist areas with less or no irrigation.

Bajra grows in sandy soils and shallow black soil.

Ragi requires red, black, sandy, loamy, and shallow black soils which are found in dry regions mostly.

These are the small-seeded hardy crops that can grow well in dry zones or rain-fed areas under marginal conditions of soil fertility and moisture.

- Millets are cultivated in low-fertile land, tribal and rain-fed, and mountainous areas.
- These areas include Haryana, Uttar Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Gujarat, Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Tamil Nadu, and Telangana.

Due to their short growing season, millets can develop from seeds to ready-to-harvest crops in just about 65 days.

- This highly beneficial characteristic of the millets is of vital importance in thickly populated regions of the world.
- If stored properly, millets can keep well for two years or beyond.

Millets can not only grow in poor climatic or soil conditions



- These also have medicinal properties. By-products of pulses like leaves, pod coats, and bran are given to animals in the form of dry fodder.
- Some pulse crops like Gram, Lobia, Urdbean &

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Open – Pulse crops are grown in India and the world.

Among the crops, major ones are Gram, Pigeonpea, Lentil, Fieldpeas, etc. According to history, the origin of Gram is in South West Asia – probably Afghanistan and Persia, Pigeonpea in Africa, Lentil in Turkey to South Iran, and Fieldpeas in Mediterranean Region of Southern Europe and Western Asia.

Climatic Requirement

Pulse crops are cultivated in the Kharif, Rabi, and Zaid seasons of the Agricultural year.

- Rabi crops require a mild cold climate during the sowing period, during vegetative to pod development cold climate, and during maturity/harvesting warm climate.
- Kharif pulse crops require a warm climate throughout their life from sowing to harvesting. Summer pulses are habitants of a warm climate. Seed is required to pass many stages to produce seed like germination, seedling, vegetative, flowering, fruit setting, pod development, and grain maturity/harvesting.

Maize

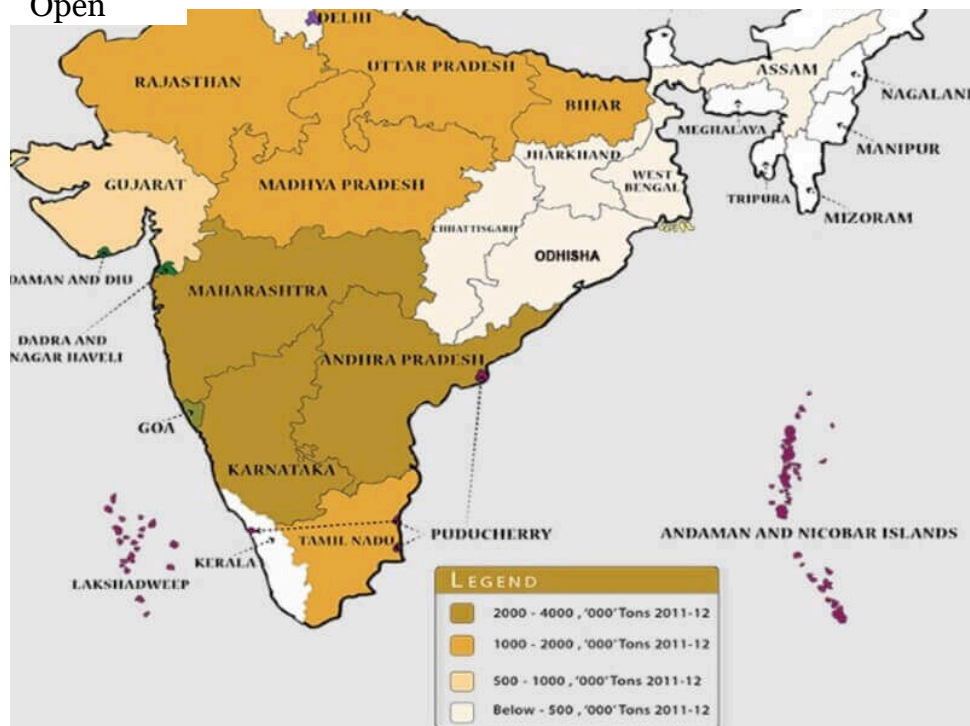
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Courtesy: farmer.gov.in

Maize (*Zea mays L*) is one of the most versatile emerging crops having wider adaptability under varied agro-climatic conditions. Globally, maize is known as the queen of cereals because it has the highest genetic yield potential among the cereals.

Maize in India contributes nearly 9 % to the national food basket. In addition to staple food for human being and quality feed for animals, maize serves as a basic raw material as an ingredient in thousands of industrial products that includes starch, oil, protein, alcoholic beverages, food sweeteners, pharmaceutical, cosmetic, film, textile, gum, package and paper industries, etc.

Climatic conditions

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can be grown successfully in a variety of soils ranging from loamy sand to clay loam.

- Soils with good organic matter content having high water holding capacity with neutral pH are considered good for higher productivity.

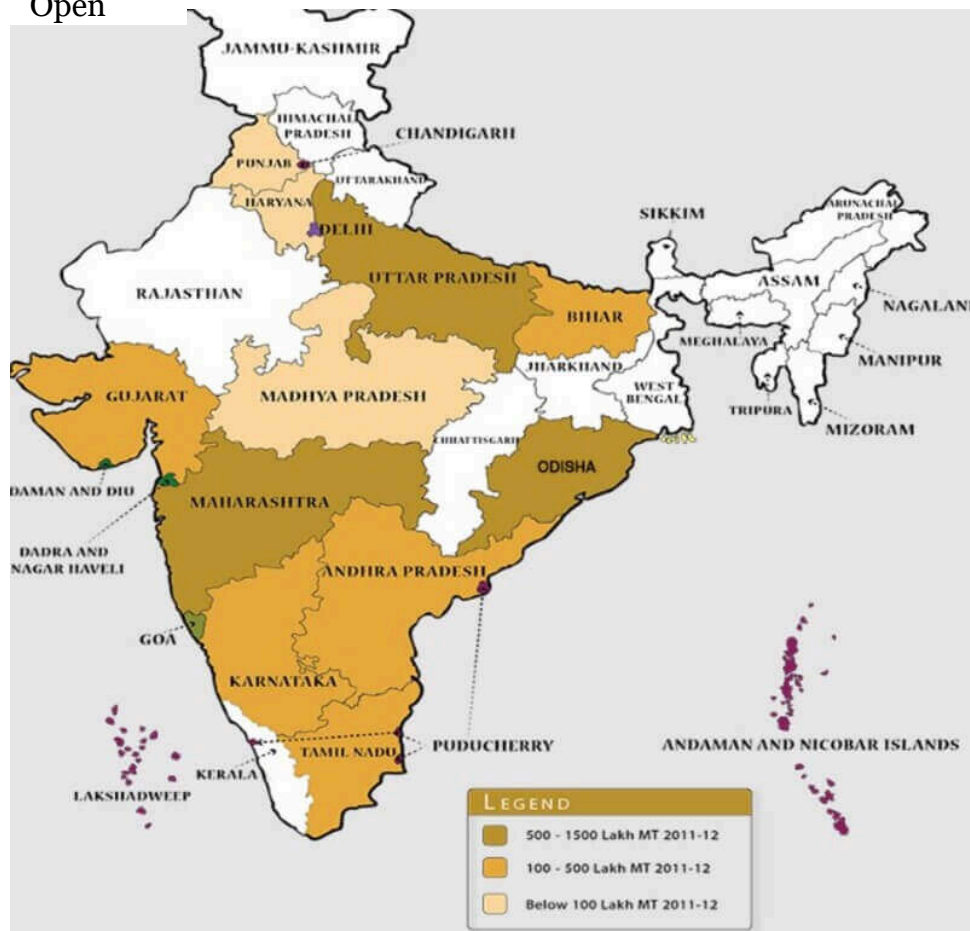
Being a sensitive crop to moisture stress particularly excess soil moisture and salinity stresses; it is desirable to avoid low lying fields having poor drainage and also the field having higher salinity. Therefore, the fields having provision of proper drainage should be selected for the cultivation of maize.

Major cash crops in various parts

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Courtesy: farmer.gov.in

Sugarcane (*Saccharum officinarum*) family Gramineae (Poaceae) is a widely grown crop in India. It employs over a million people directly or indirectly besides contributing significantly to the national exchequer.

- Sugarcane growing countries of the world lay between the latitude 36.7° north and 31.0° south of the equator extending from tropical to subtropical zones.

Sugar cane originated in New Guinea where it has been

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sugar cane we know today.

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Important regions/ zones for sugarcane cultivation in India

Broadly there are two distinct agro-climatic regions of sugarcane cultivation in India, viz., tropical and subtropical. However, five agro-climatic zones have been identified mainly for varietal development. They are (i) North Western Zone (ii) North Central Zone (iii) North Eastern Zone (iv) Peninsular Zone (v) Coastal Zone.

Tropical Sugarcane region

The tropical sugarcane region consists of sugarcane agro-climatic zone 4 (peninsular zone) and 5 (Coastal zone) which includes the states of Maharashtra, Andhra Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, Karnataka, Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh, Goa, Pondicherry, and Kerala.

Sub-tropical sugarcane region: Around 55 percent of the total cane area in the country is in the sub-tropics. U.P, Bihar, Haryana, and Punjab come under this region.

Crop distribution: Sugarcane growing countries of the world are lying between the latitude 36.70 north and 31.00 south of the equator extending from tropical to sub-tropical

zones. In India sugarcane is cultivated all over the country

from latitude 36°N to 8°N extending from 113°E to 75°E.

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The different critical stages are germination, tillering, early growth, active growth, and elongation.

- The optimum temperature for sprouting (germination) of stem cuttings is 32°C to 38°C.
- It slows down below 25°C and reaches a plateau between 30°-34°C.
- Temperatures above 38°C reduce the rate of photosynthesis and increase respiration.
- For ripening, however, relatively low temperatures in the range of 12°C to 14°C are desirable.

Reduction in yield of sugarcane due to rise in temperature

The sugarcane productivity and juice quality are profoundly influenced by weather conditions prevailing during the various crop-growth sub-periods.

- Sugar recovery is highest when the weather is dry with low humidity; bright sunshine hours, cooler nights with wide diurnal variations, and very little rainfall during the ripening period.
- These conditions favor high sugar accumulation.
- The climatic conditions like very high temperatures or very low temperatures deteriorate the juice quality and thus affecting the sugar quality.
- Favorable climates like warm and humid climates favor

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Courtesy: mapsofindia.com

In colonial India, the British had to import tea from China, which caused huge dents in their treasury, so the East India Company started tea plantations in Assam. As the production of tea increased, India started exporting tea to the rest of the world. This contributed to the nation's economy. By the 1850s, India became one of the biggest tea producers in the world. After independence, local tea brands were introduced as beverages to the masses.

India is the second-largest tea producer in the world, right

behind China.

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- Rainfall is around 150-300 cm.
- Deep and fertile well-drained soil, rich in humus and organic matter.

Coffee



Courtesy: Coffee Board of India

Coffee was initially brought from Yemen and introduced to the Baba Budan Hills. Hills with a well-defined shade canopy, comprising evergreen leguminous trees provide the

optimal condition for coffee cultivation which is why it is

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Open	Arabica	Robusta
Soils	Deep, fertile, rich in organic matter, well drained and slightly acidic (Ph6.0-6.5)	Same as Arabica
Slopes	Gentle to moderate slopes	Gentle slopes to fairly level fields
Elevation	1000-1500m	500-1000m
Temperature	150 C – 25 0 C ; cool, equable	200 C – 300 C; hot, humid
Relative humidity	70-80%	80-90%
Annual rainfall	1600-2500 mm	1000-2000 mm
Blossom showers	March- April (25-40mm)	February – March (25-40 mm)
Backing showers	April-May (50-75 mm) well distributed	March-April (50-75 mm) well distributed

India cultivates all of its coffee under a well-defined two-tier mixed shade canopy, comprising evergreen leguminous trees. Nearly 50 different types of shade trees are found in coffee plantations. Shade trees prevent soil erosion on a sloping terrain; they enrich the soil by recycling nutrients from deeper layers, protect the coffee plant from seasonal fluctuations in temperature, and play host to diverse flora and fauna.

Coffee plantations in India are essential spice worlds too: a

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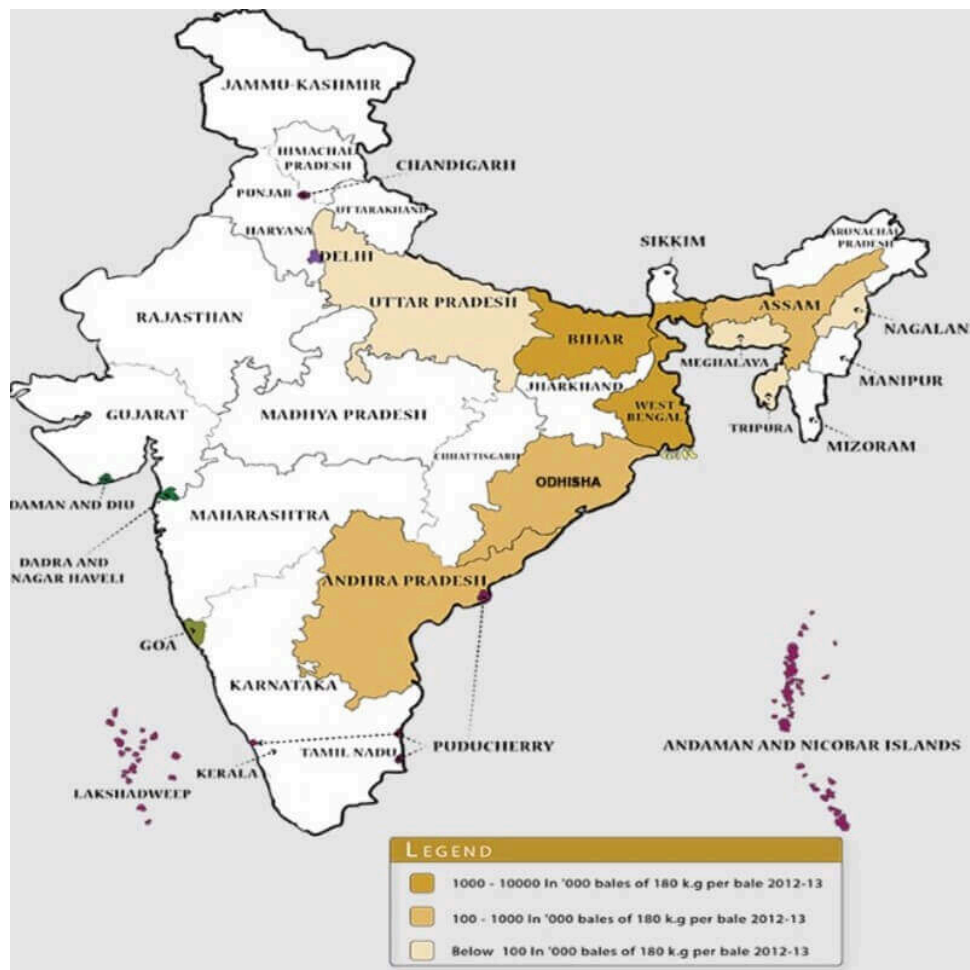
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different varieties of coffee. Some regions with high elevations are ideally suited for growing Arabicas of mild quality while those with warm humid conditions are best suited for Robustas.

Jute



Courtesy: farmer.gov.in

Jute is an important natural fiber crop in India next to cotton. In trade and industry, jute and Mesta crop together known as raw jute as their uses are almost the same. Raw jute plays an important role in the country's economy.

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Applications, such as textile industries, paper industries, building, and automotive industries, use as soil savers, use as decorative and furnishing materials, etc.

- Raw jute being a bio-degradable and annually renewable source, it is considered an environment-friendly crop and it helps in the maintenance of the environment and ecological balance.
- A further attraction of Jute lies in its easy availability, and inexhaustible quantity at a comparatively cheaper rate.
- Moreover, it can easily be blended with other natural and manmade fibers.

Jute cultivation is mainly concentrated in eastern and northeastern India while mesta cultivation is spread almost throughout the country. The crop can be grown in low, medium, and high land situations, with both moisture stress and water stagnating condition.

Climatic conditions:

- Temperature: Between 25-35°C
- Rainfall: Around 150-250 cm
- Soil Type: Well-drained alluvial soil

Cotton

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valuation which is about 37% of the world's area under cotton cultivation. Cotton is one of the most important fibers and cash crops of India and plays a the dominant role in the industrial and agricultural economy of the country.

In India, there are ten major cotton-growing states which are divided into three zones, viz. north zone, central zone, and south zone. The North zone consists of Punjab, Haryana, and Rajasthan. The central zone includes Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, and Gujarat. The South zone comprises Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, Karnataka, and Tamil Nadu.

Besides these ten States, cotton cultivation has gained momentum in the Eastern State of Orissa. Cotton is also cultivated in small areas of non-traditional States such as Uttar Pradesh, West Bengal & Tripura.

Climatic conditions:

- Cotton is a tropical or sub-tropical crop grown in semi-arid areas of the country (mainly in the Deccan Plateau).
- A hard frost is injurious to cotton cultivation and it requires at least 210 frost-free days.
- Only light rainfall (50 to 100 cm) is preferred. Cotton can also be cultivated under irrigated conditions.
- It requires high temperature and bright sunshine for its

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The cropping pattern in India is determined mainly by rainfall, climate, temperature, and soil type.

Cropping Pattern describes the proportion of area under cultivation of different crops at a point of time, changes in this distribution over time, and factors determining these changes.

The multiplicity of cropping systems has been one of the main features of Indian agriculture and it is attributed to rain-fed agriculture and the prevailing socio-economic situations of the farming communities.

Two distinct irrigated cropping systems emerged in India:

1. One is the Indo-Gangetic Plain region comprising the states of Punjab, Haryana, the plains of Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, and the plains of Jammu & Kashmir.
2. The other ecosystem may be carved out of coastal areas of Andhra Pradesh and Tamil Nadu.

Based on homogeneity and commonness, major crop regions in India may be divided as follows:

- Rice Region
- Wheat Region
- Jowar-Bajra Region
- Cotton Region
- Millet and Maize Region

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Monocropping: Monocropping is when the field is used to grow only one crop season after season. This is harmful to soil health.

Crop Rotation: Crop Rotation means changing the type of crops grown in the field each season or each year (or changing from crops to fallow). Crop rotation improves the soil structure and fertility, and because it helps control weeds, pests, and diseases.

Sequential Cropping: Sequential Cropping involves growing two crops in the same field, one after the other in the same year.

Intercropping: Intercropping means growing two or more crops in the same field at the same time.

Mixed Intercropping: Planting the main crop in rows and then spreading the seeds of the intercrop (such as a cover crop) in between is called mixed intercropping.

Row Intercropping: Planting both the main crop and the intercrop in rows. The rows make weeding and harvesting easier than with mixed intercropping.

Stir Cropping: Stir Cropping involves planting broad strips of several crops in the field.

Changing cropping patterns in

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Green Revolution also led to changes in the cropping patterns. Rice was introduced to Punjab, Haryana, and Uttar Pradesh.

New technologies in Indian agriculture play a vital role in determining the cultivation of crops.

Farmers have changed their crop patterns to reap the benefits of economic expansion due to which they are intensively moving towards the cultivation of cash crops from traditional crops.

Population explosion and urbanization (<https://www.clearias.com/urbanization/>) have led to land conversion, boosting intensive farming, and have brought changes in cropping patterns.

Cropping patterns may also be influenced by government action undertaken in the form of an administrative and legislative measures. Supply of inputs by the government, intensive schemes for various crops, various government campaigns, transportation, and marketing provisions also influence the cropping pattern in the country.

Conclusion

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Indian farmers are very much poverty-stricken and conservative still their cropping pattern can be changed through appropriate changes in economic motives.

There is a need to shift to sustainable agriculture. The policies should consider the environmental cost as well. The planning should be done with the fact that the next generation also needs to have food security.

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