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JUST AGRICULTURE™

Magazine

TRANSFORMING AGRICULTURE:

THE ROLE OF GIS IN MODERN FARMING

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FROM THE FOUNDER EDITOR'S DESK

Dear Readers,

Welcome to the latest issue of Just Agriculture—a publication dedicated to empowering, informing, and inspiring the agricultural community.

As we step into another year, the landscape of agriculture continues to evolve. We are witnessing significant advancements in technology, sustainability practices, and global trends that are reshaping the way we produce, consume, and think about food. From precision farming to the integration of AI in crop management, innovation is at the heart of the agricultural revolution. However, alongside these opportunities, challenges like climate change, supply chain disruptions, and labor shortages remain pressing concerns that require our collective action and resilience.

At Just Agriculture, we are committed to being a bridge between these emerging technologies and the farmers, agribusinesses, and stakeholders who will shape the future of agriculture. In this issue, we delve into topics that matter most: sustainable farming practices, the rise of ag-tech, and the crucial role of policy in ensuring a thriving agricultural ecosystem. We also highlight success stories from across the globe, demonstrating how adaptability and innovation are driving positive change.

I believe that the future of agriculture is bright, but it requires all of us—farmers, scientists, policymakers, and consumers—to work together toward a common goal: ensuring food security, environmental sustainability, and the well-being of future generations.

Thank you for your continued support and for being a part of this incredible journey. I hope this issue inspires you as much as it has inspired us to bring it to you.

Dr. D.P.S. BADWAL
Founder Editor,
Just Agriculture-the Magazine

FROM THE DESK OF
CHIEF EDITOR

Welcome to the New issue of Just Agriculture for 2025!

As we step into a new year, we're presented with both challenges and exciting opportunities in the world of agriculture. The theme for this issue is "Innovating the Future of Farming," a nod to the evolving landscape of agriculture in our increasingly tech-driven world. From the rise of smart farming and precision agriculture to the need for sustainable practices, 2025 promises to be a pivotal year for farmers, researchers, and policy-makers alike.

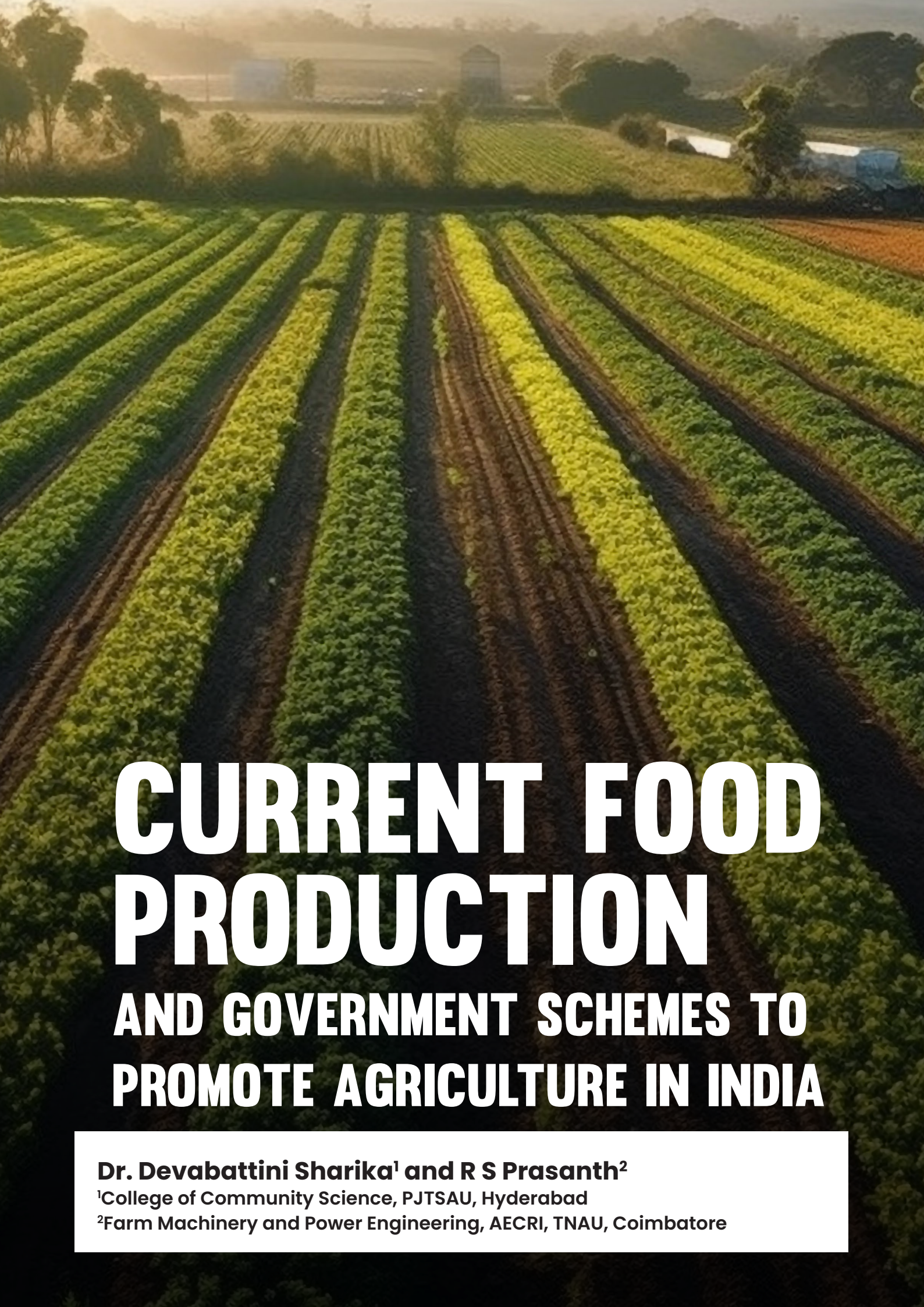
In this issue, we take a deep dive into how technology is reshaping the way we grow food and manage resources. We also explore the critical importance of environmental stewardship as the agricultural community works toward greater sustainability and resilience in the face of climate change.

But while innovation is at the forefront, we must never forget the roots of agriculture—the hard work, dedication, and resilience of farmers who continue to feed the world. It is their spirit that drives the industry forward, and their stories of innovation and perseverance inspire us all.

As always, Just Agriculture strives to bring you the most insightful, forward-thinking, and practical content. This issue features expert opinions, the latest trends, and inspiring stories from every corner of the agricultural world. Whether you are a farmer, a policy-maker, a student, or simply an advocate for the industry, we hope this magazine continues to serve as your trusted resource for all things agriculture.

Here's to a productive and prosperous 2025!

Dr. Mohit Bharadwaj
Editor-in-Chief
Just Agriculture-the Magazine



CURRENT FOOD PRODUCTION

AND GOVERNMENT SCHEMES TO PROMOTE AGRICULTURE IN INDIA

Dr. Devabattini Sharika[1] and R S Prasanth[2]
[1]College of Community Science, PJTSAU, Hyderabad
[2]Farm Machinery and Power Engineering, AECRI, TNAU, Coimbatore

Food production in India is a critical component of the country's economy and sustenance, driven by its vast agricultural sector. India's diverse climate and geography support the cultivation of a wide variety of crops. The United Nations Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO) projects that food and feed production will need to increase by 70 percent by 2050 to meet the world's food needs.

India's food production faces several challenges, despite being one of the largest agricultural producers globally. These challenges can be categorized into various aspects. Small and fragmented landholdings make it difficult to achieve economies of scale. This leads to inefficient farming practices and lower productivity. Many crops, particularly in arid and semi-arid regions, rely heavily on irrigation. Water scarcity limits the availability of water for irrigation, leading to reduced crop yields and productivity. Overuse of chemical fertilizers and pesticides has led to soil degradation, reducing fertility and leading to lower yields. Soil erosion, due to deforestation and unsustainable farming practices, also contributes to declining productivity. Poor infrastructure for storage, transportation, and marketing of agricultural produce leads to significant post-harvest losses. Lack of cold storage facilities and poor transportation networks mean that a substantial portion of food gets wasted before reaching consumers. Many farmers in India still rely on traditional farming methods. Limited access to modern technology and mechanization hampers productivity. There is also a digital divide that restricts farmers from accessing information on weather forecasts and best farming practices. Limited access to credit and insurance hampers the ability of farmers to invest in high-quality seeds, fertilizers, and modern equipment. The presence of informal moneylenders also subjects farmers to high-interest rates and debt traps. Climate change poses a growing

threat with changing rainfall patterns, increased frequency of droughts, floods, and other extreme weather events, which severely impact crop yields and food production stability. Labor shortages can delay planting and harvesting, leading to suboptimal growing conditions. Crops may be planted too late in the season, reducing yields, or harvested late, resulting in spoilage.

Addressing these problems requires a multi-faceted approach involving technological advancements, infrastructure development, sustainable farming practices, improving farmer education are also crucial to overcoming the challenges faced by India's food production system.

The Government of India is implemented National Food Security Mission (NFSM) in the country for increasing production of rice, wheat, coarse cereals, nutri cereals (Shree Anna) and pulses. National Food Security Mission (NFSM) is a Centrally Sponsored Scheme launched in 2007. Thrust areas of NFSM are sustainable increase in the production of targeted crops such as rice, wheat, pulses primarily and then extended to coarse cereals, nutri-cereals, and oilseeds as well. Restoration of soil fertility and productivity at the individual farm level. Rise in farm level net income.

Under NFSM, assistance is given through State/UT to the farmers for interventions like: Promoting the use of HYV seeds to boost crop production. Providing subsidies for the purchase of farm machinery to reduce labor costs and enhance productivity. Supporting eco-friendly pest control measures and fertilizers to reduce crop losses. Assistance in post-harvest processes like storage, processing, and marketing to reduce post-harvest losses. Demonstrations might include techniques of intercropping and conservation farming. These interventions aim to enhance agricultural productivity, ensure food security, and improve the livelihoods of farmers.

THERE ARE VARIOUS GOVERNMENT SCHEMES ARE IMPLEMENTED TO PROMOTE AGRICULTURE IN INDIA

➢ Soil Health Card Scheme:

The Soil Health Card scheme was launched in 2015. Soil Health Cards are issued to all farmers under this scheme. These cards provide information regarding nutrient status of the soil. Based on this information, farmers can ascertain the dosage of nutrients required for improve their soil fertility. SHC is a printed report that a farmer will be handed over for each of his holdings. It will contain the status of his soil with respect to 12 parameters, namely N,P,K (Macro-nutrients); S (Secondary- nutrient) ; Zn, Fe, Cu, Mn, Bo (Micro - nutrients) ; and pH, EC, OC (Physical parameters).

➢ Gramin Bhandaran Yojana

Gramin Bhandaran Yojana, also known as the Rural Godown Scheme, is an initiative by the Indian government aimed at developing rural storage infrastructure. Launched by the Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare in 2001-02, this scheme helps farmers and rural entrepreneurs to create scientifically designed storage facilities that can store farm produce, processed farm products, and agricultural inputs.

➢ Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana (PMFBY) – Crop insurance

The PMFBY launched in 2016. To provide insurance coverage and financial support to the farmers in the event of failure of any of the notified crops as a result of natural calamities, pests & diseases. Farmer has to be pay maximum premium of 1.5% for Rabi and 2% for Kharif crops and 5% for horticulture crops. The remaining premium is shared equally by the Center and State Governments. Claims are settled promptly based on yield data and timely intimation by the farmer.

➢ Pradhan Mantri Krishi Sinchai Yojana (PMKSY) – Agriculture Irrigation

This scheme was launched in 2015. The Pradhan Mantri Krishi Sinchayee Yojana (PMKSY) has been formulated with the vision of extending the coverage of irrigation 'Har Khet ko pani'. The aim is to ensure that every farm gets sufficient water through efficient water distribution and management practices. Promoting precision irrigation technologies like drip and sprinkler irrigation to conserve water and reduce wastage.

➢ Paramparagat Krishi Vikas Yojana (PKVY) – Agriculture Development

This scheme promotes organic farming in the country. Organic farming improves soil health and organic matter content. Further, the organic produce increases the ability of the farmer to charge premium prices. It supports farmers in getting their produce certified as organic, which can help them fetch better prices in the market. The scheme also facilitates the creation of market linkages for organic produce.

THERE ARE VARIOUS GOVERNMENT SCHEMES ARE IMPLEMENTED TO PROMOTE AGRICULTURE IN INDIA

Estimates of production of major crops is released by the Department of Agriculture, Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare. The production of most of the crops for the agricultural year 2022-2023 has been estimated higher than in the year of 2021-2022.

Crop	2019-2020	2020-2021	2021-2022	2022 - 2023	
				Target	Third Advance estimates
Rice	1188.70	1243.68	1294.71	1305.00	1355.42
Wheat	1078.61	1095.86	1077.42	1120.00	1127.43
Millets	172.61	180.21	160.00	205.00	171.49
Pulses	230.25	254.63	273.02	295.50	275.04
Oil seeds	332.19	359.46	379.63	413.45	409.96
Sugar cane	3705.00	4053.99	4394.25	4150.00	4942.28

PRODUCTION OF IMPORTANT CROPS IN THREE LARGEST PRODUCING STATES IN 2023 – 2024

Groups of Crops	States	Production	Percent share of production to all india
Rice 	Telangana	16.63	12.17
	Uttar Pradesh	15.72	11.50
	West Bengal	15.12	11.06
Wheat 	Uttar Pradesh	35.43	31.38
	Madhya Pradesh	21.28	18.84
	Punjab	17.78	15.75
Maize 	Karnataka	5.49	15.39
	Bihar	4.61	12.93
	Madhya Pradesh	4.33	12.14
Total Nutri-cereals 	Rajasthan	8.03	14.66
	Karnataka	7.61	13.90
	Madhya Pradesh	5.49	10.02
Total pulses 	Madhya Pradesh	6.18	25.23
	Maharashtra	4.00	16.33
	Rajasthan	3.63	14.83

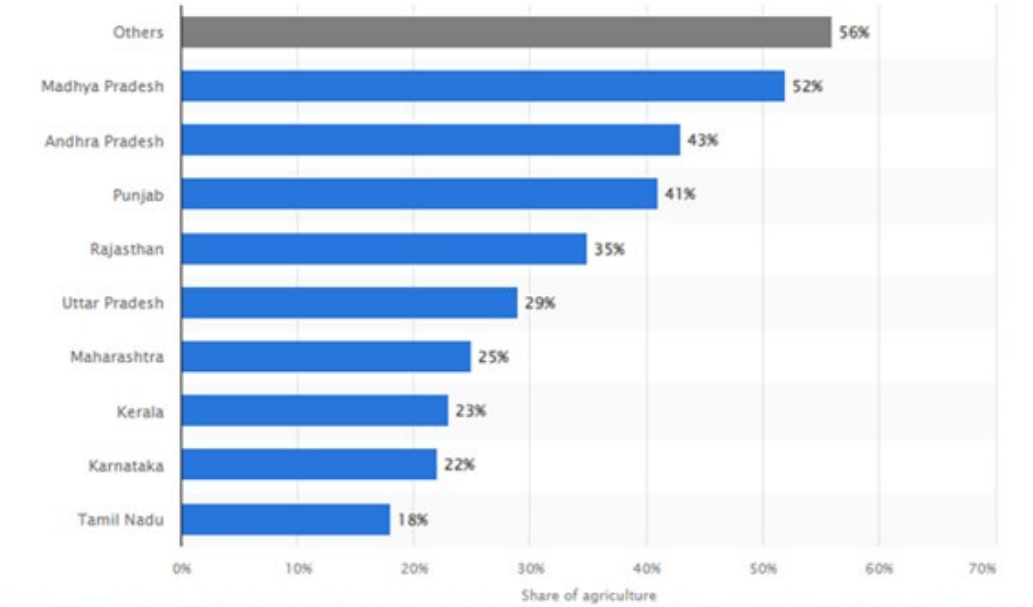
Source: ES&E Division, Department of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare.
* As per 3rd Advance Estimates

*Production in million tonnes

Groups of Crops	States	Production	Percent share of production to all india
Total Food Grains 	Uttar Pradesh	59.29	18.03
	Madhya Pradesh	39.84	12.12
	Punjab	32.59	9.91
Total oil seeds 	Rajasthan	9.57	24.17
	Madhya Pradesh	8.37	21.15
	Gujarat	7.19	18.15
Sugar cane 	Uttar Pradesh	205.56	46.45
	Maharashtra	112.09	25.33
	Karnataka	41.81	9.45
Cotton@ 	Gujarat	9.06	27.86
	Maharashtra	8.05	24.74
	Telangana	5.08	15.62
Jute $ 	West Bengal	7.87	80.97
	Bihar	0.99	10.15
	Assam	0.68	7.05

@ Production in million bales of 170 kg. each. $ Production in million bales of 180 kg. each.

Distribution of agriculture in rural Gross Domestic Product (GDP) contribution in India in Financial Year (FY) 2023, by state

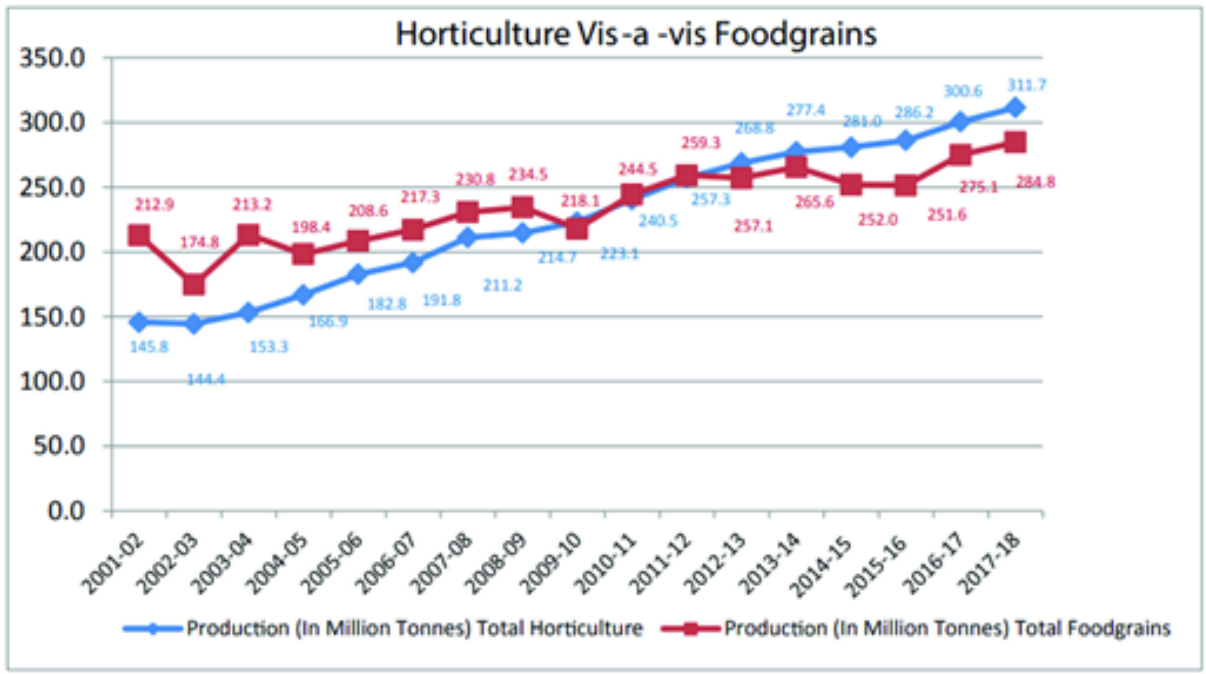


The central state of Madhya Pradesh had the highest rural GDP contribution of agriculture at 52 percent.

Source: *Statista, 2023

HORTICULTURE PRODUCTION

As per the 2nd advance estimates for 2022-23, the total horticulture production is estimated to be 351.92 Million Tonne, surpassing the total foodgrain production of 329.69 Million Tonne during the year. At present, India is the second largest producer of vegetables and fruits in the world. Country ranks first in the production of number of crops like Banana, Lime & Lemon, Papaya, Okra.



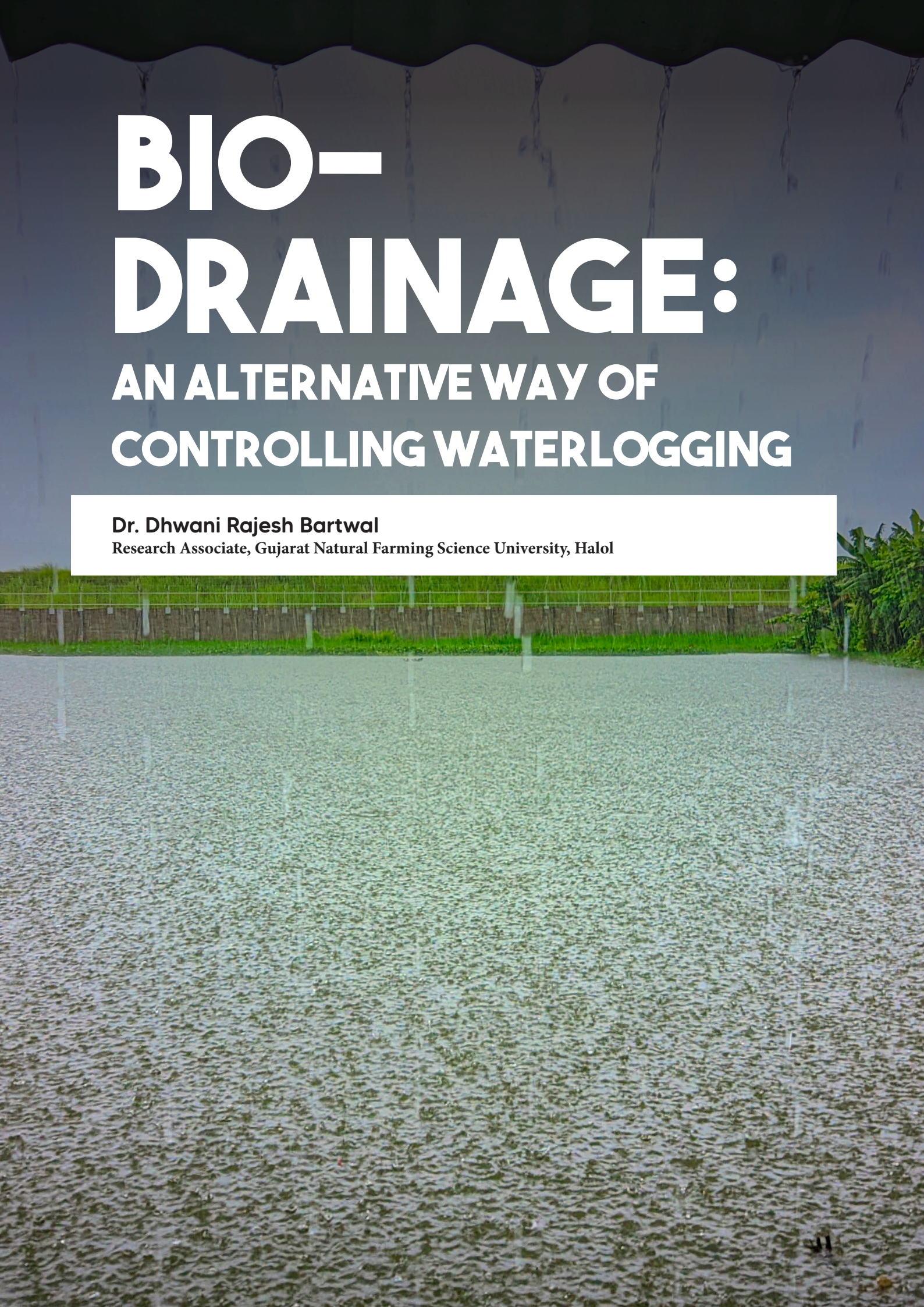
HORTICULTURE PRODUCTION FROM 2021 TO 2023 – MILLION TONNES

S.No	State/UTs	2020-2021	2021-2022	2022-2023
1.	Uttar Pradesh	408.14	440.95	462.05
2.	Madhya Pradesh	337.04	353.14	372.91
3.	West Bengal	348.62	332.07	354.82
4.	Maharashtra	267.98	307.74	299.82
5.	Andhra Pradesh	267.66	259.99	276.93
6.	Gujarat	242.07	262.43	256.43
7.	Bihar	225.95	229.58	231.98
8.	Tamil Nadu	188.79	208.50	213.50
9.	Karnataka	220.48	220.53	197.84
10.	Odisha	129.58	129.49	134.78

BIO–DRAINAGE:

AN ALTERNATIVE WAY OF CONTROLLING WATERLOGGING

Dr. Dhwani Rajesh Bartwal
Research Associate, Gujarat Natural Farming Science University, Halol



WATERLOGGING

Waterlogging refers to a condition where the soil becomes saturated with water due to factors such as excessive rainfall or poor drainage. In waterlogged soils, oxygen availability decreases, making it difficult for plants to access essential air for respiration. This can result in root rot and other problems. Waterlogging also contributes to erosion, hinders agricultural productivity, and creates habitats for pests such as mosquitoes. It is a common issue in regions with heavy rainfall or inadequate drainage systems.

CAUSES OF WATERLOGGING

Addressing waterlogging effectively requires identifying its exact causes. The causes can be broadly categorized as natural or artificial:

1. Natural Causes

These arise from inherent geographical or physical characteristics of an area:

- Geographical and Physical Characteristics: Low-lying regions or areas with flat topography are prone to waterlogging as water tends to accumulate in depressions with limited drainage. Impermeable soils like clays also contribute to this problem.
- Slope of the Land: Flat or gently sloping areas often face slower water runoff, resulting in waterlogging. Conversely, steep slopes may prevent waterlogging but can lead to erosion.
- Soil Water-Holding Capacity: Soils rich in clay retain water for longer periods, making them susceptible to

waterlogging. Sandy soils, with their lower water-holding capacity, are less prone to this issue.

- Water Flow Characteristics: Regions near rivers, streams, or floodplains often face waterlogging during heavy rains or flooding. High groundwater levels in such areas exacerbate the problem.

2. Artificial Causes

These result from human activities:

- Seepage from Water Systems: Poorly maintained reservoirs, canals, or irrigation systems can leak water into nearby areas, causing waterlogging.
- Over-Irrigation: Excessive irrigation can oversaturate soil, especially when drainage infrastructure is inadequate.
- Poor Water Disposal: Inadequate stormwater or runoff management can prevent excess water from being removed, resulting in waterlogged fields.

EFFECTS OF WATERLOGGING

Waterlogging significantly impacts agriculture, the environment, and communities. Major effects include:

- Salinization: Saturated soils reduce evaporation, leading to salt accumulation and increased soil salinity, which harms plants.
- Oxygen Deficiency: Reduced soil aeration suffocates roots, impairing nutrient absorption and plant health.
- Temperature Changes: Waterlogged soils retain less heat, slowing essential biological processes for plant growth.
- Weed Growth: Excess moisture promotes the growth of weeds and aquatic plants, which compete with crops for resources.
- Crop Diseases: High moisture levels create favorable conditions for fungal diseases like root rot, reducing crop yields.
- Restricted Root Growth: Saturated soils limit root expansion, reducing plants' ability to absorb nutrients and water.

PROPERTIES OF WATERLOGGED SOIL

Waterlogged soils exhibit unique physical, biological, electrochemical, and chemical properties:

1. Physical Properties

- Oxygen Depletion: Saturated conditions reduce air pockets, hindering soil processes and root respiration.
- CO2 Accumulation: Anaerobic decomposition in waterlogged soils produces carbon dioxide, further depleting oxygen.
- Soil Compaction: Saturated soils are more prone to compaction, reducing pore

spaces for air and water movement.

- Reduced Gas Diffusion: The movement of gases like oxygen and carbon dioxide is slower in waterlogged soils.

2. Biological Properties

- Reduced Aerobic Activity: Limited oxygen curtails the activity of aerobic microorganisms, slowing organic matter decomposition.
- Slower Mineralization: Nutrient release from organic matter decreases due to reduced microbial activity.
- Increased Immobilization: Microorganisms immobilize nutrients in anaerobic conditions, reducing their availability for plants.

3. Electrochemical Properties

- Soil pH: Anaerobic conditions often lower soil pH due to organic acid production and mineral reduction, affecting nutrient availability.
- Electrical Conductivity (EC): Poor drainage leads to salt accumulation, increasing soil salinity and affecting plant growth.

4. Chemical Properties

- Soil Reduction Reactions: Anaerobic microbes utilize alternative electron acceptors, leading to the release of reduced forms of elements like ammonia and sulfides.
- Micronutrient Toxicity: Excess iron, manganese, and aluminum under anaerobic conditions can harm plant roots and inhibit nutrient uptake.

Understanding the causes, effects, and properties of waterlogging is essential for mitigating its impact on agriculture and the environment. Effective management strategies include improving drainage systems, adopting efficient irrigation practices, and promoting sustainable land management. These measures help prevent waterlogging and support resilient agricultural systems in vulnerable areas.

BIO-DRAINAGE

Definition

Bio-drainage refers to the removal of excess soil water through transpiration using the energy derived from plants and solar radiation. Although the concept of using vegetation for soil drying has existed for a long time, the term "bio-drainage" gained prominence in 1994, credited to Gafni. Earlier, Heuperman (1992) used "bio-pumping" to describe the use of trees for managing water tables.

How It Works

Bio-drainage operates by removing excess water through plant uptake and transpiration. The process involves the absorption of water by plants, followed by its release into the atmosphere via metabolic transpiration, effectively draining the soil-plant system.

Key Mechanism: Phreatophytes

The term "phreatophytes" originates from the Greek words phreatos (well) and phyte (plant). These plants can extract water from both unsaturated and saturated soil layers. Examples include Eucalyptus tereticornis, Prosopis juliflora, and Tamarix articulata.

Concept of Bio-Drainage

1. Plant Selection

Specific plant species, known as "bio-drainage crops," are chosen for their ability to absorb significant water volumes and transpire it through their leaves.

2. Water Uptake and Transpiration

Plants in waterlogged areas absorb soil water via their roots, lowering the water table and alleviating waterlogging.

3. Soil Improvement

Roots of these plants penetrate compact soil layers, enhancing soil structure, porosity, and fertility.

4. Additional Benefits

Bio-drainage also stabilizes soils, prevents erosion, and creates habitats, contributing to biodiversity.

PRINCIPLES OF PLANNING AND DESIGN

1. Water Balance
A proper assessment of water inflow and outflow, considering precipitation, evapotranspiration, and infiltration, ensures optimal design for managing waterlogging and boosting productivity.

2. Plantation Area
Strategically placed vegetation facilitates water uptake, stabilizes soils, and promotes biodiversity.

3. Salt Tolerance
Salt-tolerant species mitigate soil salinity through processes like phytoremediation, enhancing soil productivity.

4. Water Table Management
Bio-drainage lowers groundwater levels, ensuring better root aeration and nutrient uptake.

5. Salt Management
Effective bio-drainage systems manage soil salinity through leaching, evapotranspiration, and salt sequestration in plants.

6. Economic Aspects
Low installation and maintenance costs, along with benefits like increased yields and land value, make bio-drainage economically viable.

7. Social Acceptance
Community engagement ensures effective implementation and sustainability of bio-drainage projects.

CRITERIA FOR PLANT SELECTION

1. Rapid Growth
Fast-growing plants quickly establish themselves in waterlogged areas.

2. High Water Consumption
Plants with high water uptake reduce soil moisture and waterlogging.

3. Deep Root Systems
These enable access to deeper water reserves, lowering the water table efficiently.

4. Tolerance
Salt- and waterlogging-tolerant plants thrive in challenging conditions.

5. High Biomass Production
Rapid biomass accumulation improves soil health and organic matter content.

6. Salt Sequestration
Plants that store salts in their tissues contribute to soil desalination.

ADVANTAGES OF BIO-DRAINAGE OVER CONVENTIONAL SYSTEMS

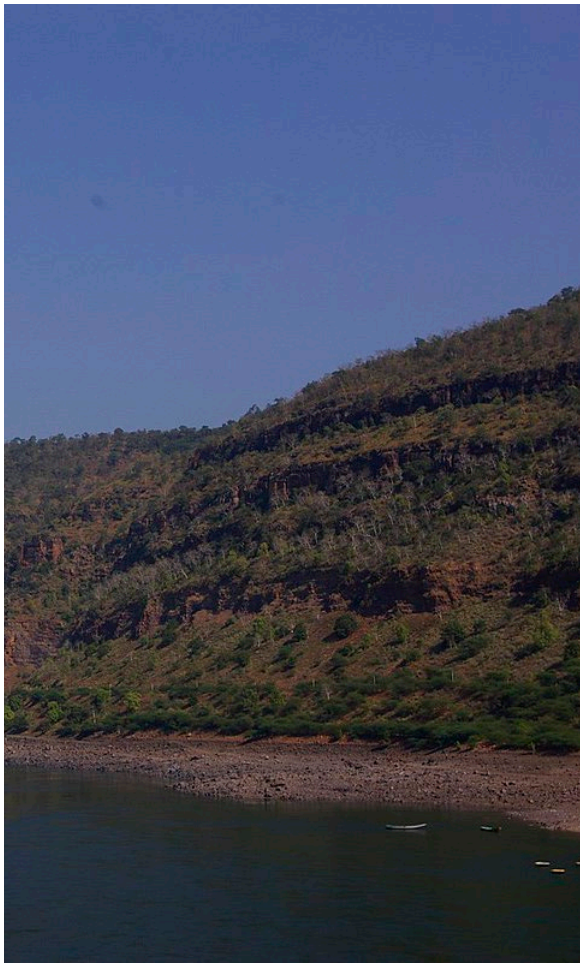
1. Low Maintenance and Cost
Bio-drainage requires minimal upkeep and incurs no operational costs after establishment.

2. Eco-Friendly
It enhances biodiversity, supports pollinators, and improves environmental sustainability.

3. Economic and Agricultural Benefits
Bio-drainage increases land productivity, generates additional income, and supports diverse cropping systems.

4. Climate Mitigation
Vegetation sequesters carbon and moderates temperatures, contributing to climate resilience.

5. No Drainage Infrastructure
Bio-drainage operates without outfall systems, reducing infrastructure costs and environmental risks.



LIMITATIONS

1. Land Requirement
Bio-drainage needs 10-15% of farmland, which may reduce the area for other crops.
2. Delayed Effectiveness
Young trees take years to establish and start lowering water tables effectively.
3. Competition for Resources
Trees may compete with crops for light, water, and nutrients.
4. Potential Soil Toxicity
Some species, like Eucalyptus, may release chemicals that inhibit crop growth.
5. Salt Accumulation
Water discharge can lead to salt buildup, affecting nearby soil productivity.
6. Wildlife Challenges
Tree plantations may attract wild animals, causing crop damage.

CONCLUSION

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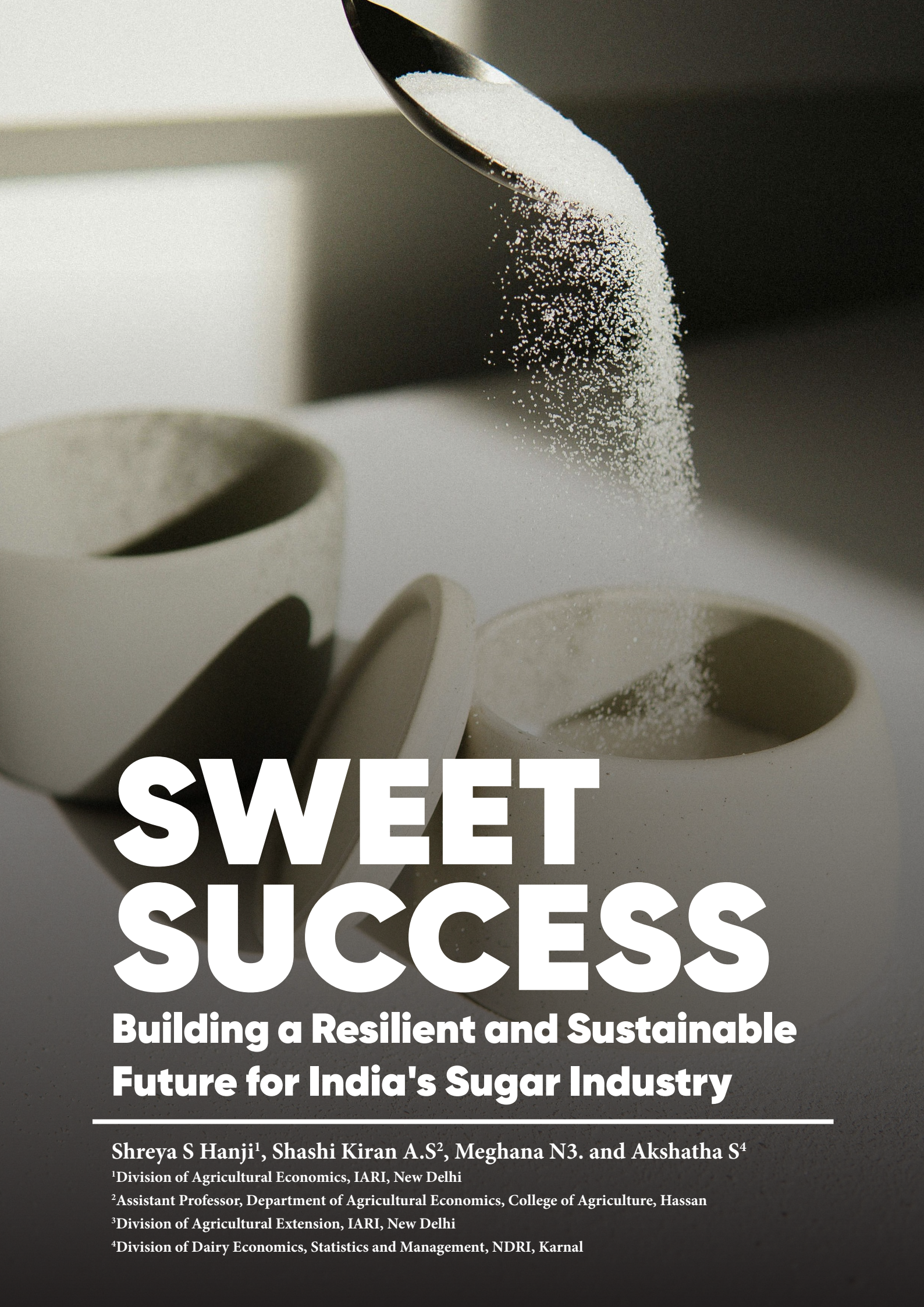


SWEET SUCCESS

Building a Resilient and Sustainable Future for India's Sugar Industry

Shreya S Hanji[1], Shashi Kiran A.S[2], Meghana N3. and Akshatha S[4]

[1]Division of Agricultural Economics, IARI, New Delhi

[2]Assistant Professor, Department of Agricultural Economics, College of Agriculture, Hassan

[3]Division of Agricultural Extension, IARI, New Delhi

[4]Division of Dairy Economics, Statistics and Management, NDRI, Karnal

INTRODUCTION:

Sugar industry is second most important agro-based industry in India after textile industry that impacts rural livelihood of about 50 million sugarcane farmers and around 5 lakh workers directly employed in sugar mills. India ranks as the world's second-largest sugar producer and the largest sugar consumer, contributing approximately 19% to global sugar production and 16.6% to global consumption. During the Triennium Ending (TE) 2022-23, around 5.3 million hectares was under sugarcane cultivation with production of 445.1 million tonnes with an average productivity of 83.9 tonnes per hectare. The First Advance Estimates for 2023-24 project sugarcane production at 434.8 million tonnes, reflecting an 11.4% decline from the previous year due to decreases in both acreage (-7.3%) and yield (-4.4%). Sugar industry is viewed as a game changer mainly for India as its products have potential to shift crude oil dependence which is economically and environmentally sustainable in achieving Net Zero emission and SDG targets.

The sugar industry in India is one of the most heavily regulated sectors, with the central government setting the Fair and Remunerative Price (FRP) for sugarcane each year, based on recommendations from expert bodies like the CACP and CCEA. For the 2024-25 sugar season, the FRP was set at ₹340 per quintal. This increase is part of the government's strategy to support sugarcane farmers and fulfill its commitment to doubling their income, which, in turn, aims to boost rural prosperity. However, while the government continues to raise the FRP, the Minimum Selling Price (MSP) of sugar—the lowest price at which sugar mills can sell sugar—is fixed at ₹31 per kg.

CHALLENGES IN THE SUGAR INDUSTRY

The sugar industry in India faces several interconnected challenges, leading to financial stress for both farmers and sugar mills.

1. Constant Increase in Fair and Remunerative Price (FRP): The government announces the FRP to ensure fair payment to farmers. However, the continuous increase in FRP, without commensurate improvements in sugar price, places an unsustainable burden on sugar mills. Many mills struggle to pay the arrears owed to farmers, leading to financial distress for both parties.

2. Mounting Cane Arrears: Cane arrears-delayed payments to farmers-remain a significant issue. As sugar mills grapple with low profitability due to stagnant sugar prices, increased production costs and surplus sugar stock, they fail to clear these dues promptly. This adversely impacts farmers' livelihoods, causing unrest and financial instability.

3. Farmer Protests and Suicides: The inability of sugar mills to pay arrears leads to farmer protests. These delays, coupled with dependency on sugarcane as a primary income source, push many farmers into debt. In extreme cases, this has led to farmer suicides, particularly in states like Maharashtra and Uttar Pradesh, where sugarcane farming is prominent.

4. Market Glut and Low Sugar Prices: Excessive sugar production often leads to a market surplus, driving down sugar prices. Despite government interventions like export subsidies and minimum selling prices (MSP), mills face difficulties in covering costs, further exacerbating the arrears issue.

5. Dependence on Monsoons: Sugarcane cultivation is highly water-intensive and dependent on adequate rainfall. Erratic monsoons or drought conditions severely affect crop yields, leading to fluctuations in both production and income.

6. Policy and Regulatory Issues: A lack of alignment between state and central policies adds complexity. Disparities in state-advised prices (SAP) and FRP create further challenges for mills and farmers.

PROSPECTS IN THE SUGAR INDUSTRY

Despite these challenges, the sugar industry has considerable potential for growth and diversification, which can help reduce cane arrears and ensure sustainability.

1. Diversification into Ethanol Production: The government has been promoting ethanol production as part of its biofuel policy. By diverting surplus sugarcane to ethanol production, mills can improve their profitability. The guaranteed buyback through ethanol purchase agreements and the significant rise in ethanol prices in recent years have led to a substantial increase in ethanol supply. By ESY 2022-23 (as of October 29, 2023), ethanol supply had reached 5,027 million litres, with a petrol blending rate of 12.1%. To achieve the ambitious goal of a 20% ethanol blend in petrol by 2025-26, Oil Marketing Companies (OMCs) will need around 10,160 million liters of ethanol.

2. Waste-to-Wealth Initiatives: The strategic use of by-products like molasses and bagasse can further strengthen the industry's sustainability. Molasses, a key raw material for ethanol production, and bagasse, which is used for electricity generation, enable sugar mills to diversify their revenue streams while contributing

to the production of renewable energy and eco-friendly fuels. This integrated approach not only ensures the financial viability of sugar mills but also supports broader economic and environmental goals.

3. Revamping Policy Frameworks: Diversification efforts, such as the Ethanol Blending Programme and co-generation of electricity, have introduced new opportunities for the sugar industry. Given the evolving dynamics of the Indian sugar sector, the Commission recommends the formation of a High Power Expert Committee to assess these changes and propose a revised revenue-sharing formula that ensures the interests of both sugarcane farmers and the sugar industry are protected.

4. Discontinue Distortionary State advised Price: The State Advised Price (SAP) has distorted the sugar sector's economics, with states like Haryana, Punjab, Uttarakhand, and Uttar Pradesh setting SAPs significantly above the FRP. This leads to growing cane price arrears and financial strain on sugar mills. Additionally, SAP is not linked to sugar recovery, failing to incentivize higher yields. The Commission notes that in Uttar Pradesh, improved recovery rates have narrowed the gap between SAP and FRP. Therefore, the Commission recommends discontinuing SAP nationwide. If any state continues with SAP, it should directly compensate the difference to farmers through Direct Benefit Transfer (DBT), as done in Haryana. Aligning state and central policies and setting up a revenue-sharing model between farmers and mills can bring long-term stability.

5. Dual Pricing of Sugar: The dual pricing system proposes that sugar be sold to household consumers at an affordable price, while allowing sugar mills to sell sugar to industrial consumers at a higher price. The Commission recommends implementing this system as a means to bridge the gap between rising production costs and the current sugar prices.

6. Technology and Yield Improvement: Introducing new varieties such as Co 14005, Co 11015 and Co 18009 ensure higher yield, higher sugar content and sugar recovery which are tolerant to drought and floods also. Mechanization and precision farming techniques can also reduce labor costs and enhance efficiency.

7. Strengthening Export Policies: Encouraging exports through subsidies and exploring international markets can help address the domestic surplus issue. Building trade relations with countries with a sugar deficit can provide a sustainable export avenue.

8. Crop Diversification: Promoting alternative, less water-intensive crops in sugarcane-dominated areas can help reduce over-reliance on sugarcane. This can be achieved through awareness campaigns, financial incentives and research on suitable crop alternatives.

CONCLUSION

The sugar industry's problems are complex but not insurmountable. A combined effort from stakeholders-farmers, sugar mills and the government—is required to address issues like cane arrears, surplus production, and farmer distress. Embracing diversification, technological advancements and policy reforms can pave the way for a resilient and sustainable sugar sector. With a focus on ethanol production, export growth and waste utilization, the industry holds significant promise for contributing to India's agricultural and energy needs while improving farmer incomes and reducing financial stress.

TRANSFORMING AGRICULTURE: THE ROLE OF GIS IN MODERN FARMING

Ramkrushna Murmu
M.Tech (Soil and Water Engineering), Irrigation and Drainage Engineering Division (IDED), ICAR-CIAE, Bhopal, Madhya Pradesh

INTRODUCTION:

As the global population nears 10 billion by 2050, food production must increase by 50% to meet demand, despite challenges like climate change, limited arable land, and dwindling water resources. Technologies such as GIS, remote sensing, GPS, AI, and IoT enable efficient crop monitoring, resource management, and sustainable agriculture. Precision farming, which leverages these technologies for site-specific crop management, aims to enhance productivity while minimizing environmental impact. By integrating data and optimizing inputs, precision agriculture promotes both higher yields and environmental sustainability, addressing modern agricultural challenges with advanced decision-making tools.

What is GIS?

GIS is crucial for mapping and managing natural resources, especially in diverse topographies like hilly regions. It supports precision agriculture by integrating GPS, remote sensing, and data analytics to improve crop yield, manage resources, and reduce agrochemical use. Despite challenges in data storage and analysis, GIS provides valuable insights for site-specific management and informed decision-making in agriculture.

Main supporting technologies in GIS

GPS: GPS satellites provide precise location data, aiding in accurate tractor positioning for efficient planting, fertilizing, and harvesting. When integrated with GIS, this enables precision farming, allowing for optimal use of fertilizers, pesticides, and water. Real-time monitoring through GIS helps in managing crop conditions and identifying issues swiftly. Additionally, GPS data supports detailed field planning, improving crop yields, and reducing waste through better resource management.

Remote Sensing: Remote sensing uses satellites and aerial imagery to collect data on crop health, soil moisture, and field conditions. Integrated with GIS, this data helps monitor crop growth, identify pest infestations, and optimize resource use. It supports precision agriculture by providing timely information for better decision-making, leading to improved yields and sustainable farming practices.

APPLICATION OF GIS IN THE FIELD OF AGRICULTURE

Soil Health and Fertility Management:

GIS and remote sensing play crucial roles in soil health and fertility management by enabling the collection, analysis, and visualization of spatial data. They help map soil properties like pH, nutrient levels (N, P, K), organic carbon, and moisture content. This supports precision agriculture by identifying soil health variations, optimizing fertilizer use, and enhancing crop yields. Techniques like spatial interpolation, MCDA, and OWA help map soil variability, while GIS-based systems offer actionable insights for sustainable farming. These technologies aid in erosion risk assessment, land-use planning, and real-time monitoring, ensuring effective soil management, increased productivity, and environmental sustainability. Soil fertility maps, influenced by factors such as pollution and erosion, guide resource management and site-specific practices for improved crop productivity and sustainability.

Water Resource Management:

Water supply is crucial for meeting global food production demands, especially with a growing population. Dependence on rainfall is no longer viable, making water resource management essential. GIS and remote sensing technologies have proven their value in managing water resources by enabling groundwater potential assessment, irrigation suitability, and watershed prioritization. GIS helps in delineating groundwater zones, assessing irrigation needs, and optimizing water use. GIS aids in water resource management by delineating watersheds and analysing runoff patterns for effective watershed management. It identifies and models flood-prone areas for flood risk assessment. GIS optimizes irrigation schedules by mapping soil moisture levels and tracks pollution sources for water quality monitoring. Additionally, GIS simulates water flow and predicts droughts, making it

an invaluable tool for hydrological modelling and sustainable water management.

Land suitability assessment and land use planning:

In an era where we face the challenge of feeding billions while fertile land is shrinking, optimizing natural resource use is crucial. GIS plays a vital role in land suitability assessment and land use planning by enabling the collection, analysis, and visualization of spatial data. It assesses soil type, texture, water levels, fertility, pollution, and climate conditions by integrating data from remote sensing and field surveys.

The Multi-Criteria Decision-Making (MCDM) approach, such as the Analytic Hierarchy Process (AHP) and Analytic Network Process (ANP), is widely used for evaluating land suitability for various crops. These models help in planning land reclamation and conservation practices, ensuring sustainable use of resources. Fuzzy logic combined with GIS allows for more precise classification of land suitability, outperforming traditional methods.

GIS-based land suitability assessment aids in optimizing agricultural practices by identifying the best use for each parcel of land. It helps in determining crop suitability, managing soil erosion, and planning irrigation. Researchers also explore artificial intelligence integrated with GIS to enhance efficiency in land use planning.

These tools support informed decision-making, maximizing productivity, and promoting sustainable agricultural practices, crucial for addressing global food security challenges. GIS thus empowers effective management of shrinking fertile land, ensuring optimal utilization and sustainability.

Crop monitoring and yield production:

GIS is a powerful tool in crop monitoring and yield prediction, enhancing precision agriculture through spatial data collection and analysis. It integrates various data

sources, such as satellite imagery, UAV (drone) data, and ground sensors, to monitor crop health in real time. This helps in identifying stress factors like pests, diseases, and water deficiencies early, enabling timely interventions. In yield prediction, GIS uses historical crop performance data, soil health information, and weather patterns to model and forecast crop yields. Spatial analysis identifies zones within fields that may produce higher or lower yields, guiding management practices to optimize production. For example, farmers can apply variable rates of fertilizers and water based on GIS data, improving efficiency and reducing input costs.

Moreover, GIS can assess the impact of different farming practices and climatic conditions on crop performance. By mapping these variables, it supports strategic planning and decision-making, helping farmers to maximize yields sustainably. Advanced GIS models can simulate future scenarios, aiding in long-term agricultural planning and risk management. GIS provides a comprehensive framework for monitoring crops and predicting yields, facilitating data-driven decisions that enhance productivity and sustainability in agriculture.

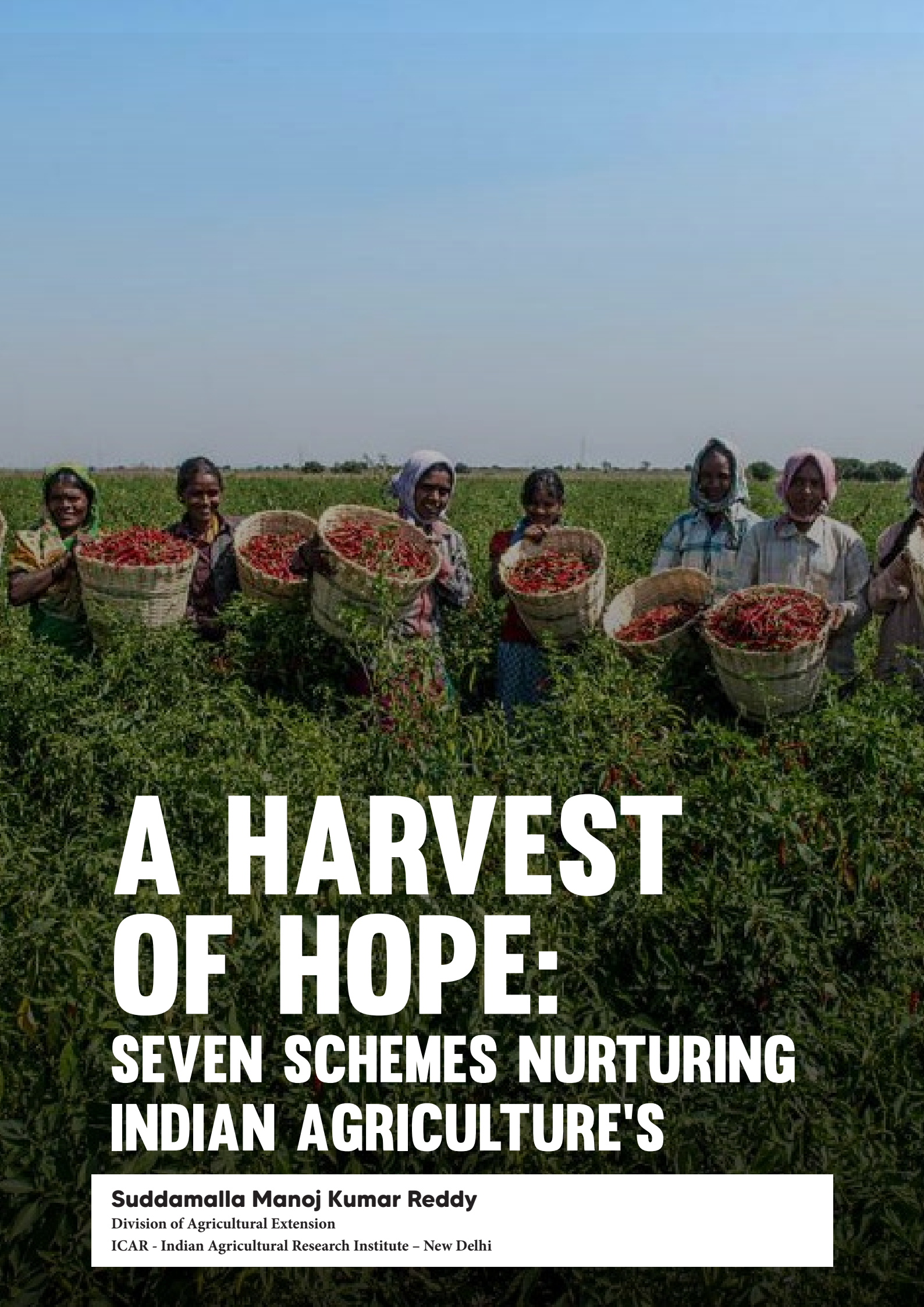
Precision farming:

GIS (Geographic Information System) is a cornerstone in precision farming, enhancing agricultural productivity and sustainability through spatial data analysis. It creates detailed maps showing soil types, nutrient levels, and crop health, enabling targeted interventions. Farmers use GIS to apply fertilizers, pesticides, and water variably across fields, based on specific needs, reducing waste and improving efficiency. Integrating data from sensors, satellites, and UAVs, GIS monitors crop growth, detecting stress factors like pests, diseases, and water deficiencies early. Historical data and current field conditions analysed through GIS help predict crop yields, aiding in better planning and resource allocation. It also maps soil moisture levels and weather patterns to optimize irrigation schedules, conserving water and ensuring crops receive the right amount. Additionally, GIS assesses soil fertility and health by mapping soil properties and monitoring changes over time. It evaluates and manages risks related to weather, pests, and diseases, improving resilience and decision-making in farming operations.

Precision farming uses GIS, GPS, and Variable Rate Technology (VRT) to enhance crops are collected and stored in GIS to aid in variable planting and soil mapping. During the Crop Growth Stage, this data is used to manage irrigation, soil fertility, and pest control, with GIS and remote sensing assessing plant health and managing stress. Finally, in the Harvesting Stage, GIS aids in yield monitoring and mapping, informing strategies for future crop seasons. Integration of GIS in these stages promotes sustainable and efficient agricultural practices. crop productivity through three stages: Preparatory, Crop Growth, and Harvesting. In the Preparatory Stage, data on soil nutrients, groundwater, and past.

CONCLUSION

The rapid adoption of GIS in agriculture has revolutionized the sector, enhancing productivity and sustainability. Advances in digital technology have integrated GIS into all stages of the agricultural value chain, from land suitability and water management to precision farming and supply chain management. The ability to collect and analyse real-time data has further elevated GIS's importance, providing essential spatial intelligence for optimizing agricultural practices and achieving sustainable productivity. GIS continues to play a pivotal role in modern agriculture's evolution.



A HARVEST OF HOPE: SEVEN SCHEMES NURTURING INDIAN AGRICULTURE'S

Suddamalla Manoj Kumar Reddy
Division of Agricultural Extension
ICAR - Indian Agricultural Research Institute – New Delhi

INTRODUCTION

Agriculture has been the backbone of the Indian economy for years since independence. During independence, agriculture contributed more than half of the country's GDP. Though its contribution decreased with the increase in industrialisation and service sectors, it still accounts for around 18 per cent of the GDP and provides employment opportunities to more than 50 per cent of the Indian population. Various schemes implemented during the times of the green revolution such as the High Yielding Varieties Programme, Intensive Agricultural Development Programme etc., have led us to significantly increase the production levels. Though we have achieved self-sufficiency in food grains, certain threats are looming agricultural sector at present. Threats such as loss of soil fertility, shrinking water resources, degrading natural resources, increasing land fragmentation, climate change, increasing cost of inputs etc., are impacting farmers' prospects. The Government of India (GOI) from time to time enacts various schemes to assist the farmers carry out farm activities effectively and also to make sure that farmers earn respectable incomes. Recently, GOI heeding the current threats poising the agricultural sector approved the operationalisation of seven new schemes to enhance farmers' livelihoods with a total outlay of Rs.14,235 crore. Understanding the importance of implementing such schemes will be useful for all agricultural stakeholders, which this article aims for. All the seven schemes are described in the sections below:

1. Digital Agricultural Mission

With the penetration of mobiles into majority of the households both rural and urban, and access to the internet, every piece of information is available at the fingertips of everyone. The farming community can also capitalise on such technology to improve the efficiency and ease of operations. However, there is a need to create a strong database on various metrics related to agriculture for the government and farmers to be able to leverage the technology. GOI under the Digital Agricultural Mission aims to achieve that with a focus on two foundational pillars namely Agri Stack and Krishi Decision Support System.

Agri Stack

Agri Stack is being set up as the foundation for digital agriculture wherein farmers can avail various services such as access to inputs, credit, advisory services, market access etc. It relies on various data and digital services. GOI under this plan is developing a Farmers' Registry, Crop Sown Registry and Village Landmap Registry. Under these registries, the details of all the farmers, their land records, and the crops grown will be collected using digital technologies such as smartphones, drones, satellite images and stored. State governments will compile the necessary data which will be later stored by the central government under Agri Stack. A unique farmerID will be assigned to farmers which will be digitally verifiable. This ID will be useful for the transparent delivery of services and scheme delivery by the government.

Krishi Decision Support System (KDSS)

Krishi Decision Support System is being developed to facilitate all the diverse stakeholders such as farmers, policymakers, scientists etc for making informed decisions. It will feature various data such as geospatial, weather/satellite, groundwater availability, drought/flood monitoring and modelling for crop yield and insurance. With all such data layers, KDSS will act as a repository integrating various ecosystems that can be capitalised by the stakeholders. It can be used for sustainable resource usage, crop planning, crop condition, verifying insurance claims, timely response during floods/droughts, etc. GOI has allocated an outlay of Rs. 2817 crores for this scheme.

Figure 1: Seven schemes for the agricultural sector recently approved by the Government of India

2. Crop science for food and nutritional security

Research and education in pure sciences is a lynchpin for agriculture as the eventual outputs from such sciences will result in newer crop varieties, technologies and management practices. There is an imminent requirement for climate-resilient varieties among farming communities as extreme weather events are becoming a new normal. Though we have attained self-sufficiency in food grains, we still exert dependence on imports for oilseeds and also pulses during lean production times. Also, India is a leading producer of milk, milk products, eggs, meat etc., with their growth rates exceeding that of agriculture. Thereby, it is also pertinent to improve the availability of fodder crops by increasing the productivity and area cultivated. GOI is vying to address all the above issues by implementing this scheme where an outlay of Rs. 3,979 crores has been allocated. It focuses on

- ✓ Research and education
- ✓ Plant genetic resource management
- ✓ Genetic improvement for food and fodder crop
- ✓ Pulse and oilseed crop improvement
- ✓ Improvement of commercial crops
- ✓ Research on insects, microbes, pollinators etc.

3. Strengthening Agricultural Education, Management and Social Sciences

To provide reliable advisory and other services to farmers, there is a need to increase the number of personnel who are competent in agriculture. Also, improving the research capabilities of researchers by providing various trainings, improving the lab infrastructure, and funding for research activities is required to meet the ever-dynamic needs of farmers by the agricultural scientific community. With an outlay of Rs. 2,291 crores, GOI is aspiring to upgrade the capabilities of stakeholders of the Indian Council of Agricultural Research. This scheme will also increase the percentage of agricultural GDP that is spent for research activities and agricultural education which is currently a dismal low of 0.6 to 0.7 per cent in comparison to 4.2 per cent in Israel and 2.1 per cent in China. Strengthening social sciences

in agriculture is also crucial as it forms the crucial link between farmers and the scientific community. Researchers in Agricultural Extension, Agricultural Economics and Agricultural Statistics will assess the needs of farmers, the extent of success of various schemes, assess vulnerabilities of farmers, distress among farmers etc. Also, the current extension worker-to-farmer ratio in India is very wide at around 1:1100 ratio, creating more burden and reducing effectiveness and efficiency. The above scheme also has the potential to reduce the widening gap between farmers to extension personnel.

4. Sustainable livestock health and production

As mentioned earlier the leading front India plays in the dairy sector globally, certain other metrics assure the importance of the dairy sector nationally too. In recent years, milk production has grown multi-fold times from 55.6 million tonnes during 1991-92 to 239.3 million tonnes during 2023-24. The livestock sector registered a compound annual growth rate of 7.38 per cent from 2014-15 to 2022-23 along with a significant increase in total gross value added in agriculture from 24.32 to 30.38 during the same period. As the livestock sector is poised for further growth, the sector is even being considered as a sunrise sector for further investments. Accordingly, GOI is providing an impetus with an outlay of Rs. 1,702 crores in investments in the sector. The scheme focuses on

- ✓ Animal health management and veterinary education
- ✓ Dairy production and technology development
- ✓ Animal genetic resource management, production and improvement
- ✓ Animal nutrition and small ruminant production and development

5. Sustainable development of Horticulture

India is focusing on a shift from calorie-oriented food consumption to more nutrition-oriented food consumption. Horticulture has a pivotal role to play in achieving such nutritional objectives. Also, the horticulture sector can help the farmers in crop diversification and also increase their incomes as the government is heavily

promoting horticulture activities through various schemes. Increasing the production of fruits, vegetables, spices etc is very much necessary as they exert a strong impact on the consumer price index (CPI). Food and beverages weighing around 45 per cent under CPI is the component with the highest weightage, under which cereals, vegetables, fruits, spices, and processed foods contribute substantially. Therefore, any price changes in horticultural commodities have a huge effect on the pockets of consumers. Also, TOP commodities which comprise tomatoes, onions and potatoes have far-reaching effects as their prices fluctuate steeply. Covering all such aspects, an outlay of Rs. 1,129 crores has been allocated for the horticultural sector for various investments. It encompasses various crops such as tropical, sub-tropical, and temperate horticultural crops.

6. Strengthening of Krishi Vigyan Kendra (KVK)

Krishi Vigyan Kendras since their inception in 1974 till now have been an integral part of our agricultural system acting as a farm science centre. As of December 2024, a total of 728 KVKs are present overall in India with total farmers registered for various activities at more than seven lakhs. With its presence all over the nation, KVKs have the potential to reach farmers and upgrade their capacities as relevant to their location and available resources. Each KVK will have its unique mandate, however, all these mandates will be working on Technology Assessment and Demonstration for its Application and Capacity Development (TADA-CD). Also, KVKs act as knowledge and resource centres which provide information on various new technologies that are developed under the National Agricultural Research System. With the advent of Artificial Intelligence, Machine Learning, Drone technology etc., there is a need to integrate such new advances in the service delivery by KVKs. With such an objective, an outlay of Rs. 1,202 crores has been allocated by the GOI for strengthening KVKs.

7. Natural Resource Management

Though the Green Revolution is acclaimed for increased productivity and production, there is a lot of criticism in both scientific and general communities about the negative effects it had on natural resources such as soil, water, air etc. Earlier, improving production was the major motive of any schemes targeting the agricultural sector but currently, the emphasis drifted towards sustainability which anchors on 3 pillars, economic, environmental and social sustainability. Reducing the emissions of greenhouse gases (GHG) arising out of the agricultural sector is a global concern. In India, agriculture accounts for 18 per cent of the total GHG emissions. Agriculture thereby is both a catalyst of climate change and also inherently gets affected negatively by it. To limit climate change from exacerbating, natural resource management is the key. GOI has implemented various schemes in the past such as Soil Health Card, Pradhan Mantri Krishi Sinchai Yojana, Paramparagat Krishi Vikas Yojana etc., that promote sustainable agriculture. To further bolster the aspect of natural resource management, an outlay of 1,115 crores has been allocated under this new scheme.

CONCLUSION

With a total outlay of Rs. 14,235 crores for all the seven schemes combined, GOI is ambitious to strengthen the agricultural sector altogether. All seven schemes are devised to address the contemporary challenges faced by agriculture. While the schemes have been approved by the government, they take effect in the coming days. To achieve all the objectives, effective implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the schemes is necessary. Overall, the schemes upon successful implementation will strengthen the agricultural sector and farming communities.

CURRENT STATUS AND UNTAPPED POTENTIAL OF SEAWEED FARMING IN INDIA

Mr. Vishal Ghorela1, Ms. Priya Bankar2 and Ms. Gina Naiding3*
[1,2,3] Institute of Agri Business Management, SKRAU, Bikaner, Rajasthan

INTRODUCTION:

Seaweed, a marine macroalga, is a highly versatile resource with applications in food, pharmaceuticals, cosmetics, biofuels, agriculture, and environmental restoration. Globally, seaweed farming is one of the fastest-growing sectors of aquaculture, with over 35 million tonnes produced annually. Seaweeds play a pivotal role in carbon sequestration, nutrient cycling, and enhancing marine biodiversity.

India, with its 7,500 km-long coastline, abundant Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ), and favorable climatic conditions, holds immense potential for seaweed farming. However, despite these advantages, the country's seaweed production remains relatively small, limited to traditional harvesting and small-scale farming. Recent government initiatives under the Blue Economy Vision 2030 and the Pradhan Mantri Matsya Sampada Yojana (PMMSY) have identified seaweed farming as a priority sector, paving the way for its expansion.

CURRENT STATUS OF SEAWEED FARMING IN INDIA:

India is home to over 700 species of seaweed, with an annual harvestable biomass of 0.26 million tonnes. However, much of this comes from wild harvesting, primarily concentrated in Tamil Nadu, Gujarat, and Maharashtra. Approximately 52,000 tonnes (wet weight) of seaweed are harvested annually, involving around 5,000 families in Tamil Nadu alone.

The cultivation of high-value species such as *Kappaphycus alvarezii* (used in carrageenan production) and *Gracilaria* (for agar) has gained traction in recent years. Yet, large-scale farming remains limited due to infrastructural, logistical, and policy challenges.

The ICAR-Central Marine Fisheries Research Institute (CMFRI) has made significant strides in identifying suitable farming areas. Through coastal surveys and remote sensing, the institute has mapped 24,252 hectares of potential seaweed farming zones across 333 locations within 1 km of the low-tide line. These areas are estimated to have an annual production potential of 10 million tonnes (wet weight).

Trial farming is being conducted at 78 of these sites, demonstrating the feasibility of large-scale seaweed cultivation. Despite this progress, India's overall contribution to the global seaweed market remains underwhelming, accounting for less than 1% of global production.

UNTAPPED POTENTIAL OF SEAWEED FARMING IN INDIA:

India's untapped potential in seaweed farming is immense, given the favorable geographical, environmental, and socio-economic conditions:

- **Scaling Commercial Production-**

The ICAR-CMFRI estimates that the identified farming zones alone could produce nearly 10 million tonnes of seaweed annually. Expanding commercial cultivation, particularly of high-value species like Gracilaria, Sargassum, and Kappaphycus alvarezii, could significantly boost production and export potential.

- **Emerging Applications-**

1. **Biofuels:** Seaweed is a promising feedstock for bioethanol and biogas production, offering a sustainable alternative to fossil fuels.
2. **Bioplastics:** Seaweed-based biodegradable plastics can address the growing demand for eco-friendly packaging solutions.
3. **Nutraceuticals:** The rich bioactive compounds in seaweed have applications in functional foods and dietary supplements.

- **Socio-Economic Impact-**

Seaweed farming has the potential to transform the livelihoods of coastal communities, especially women and economically disadvantaged groups. The labor-intensive nature of the industry creates employment opportunities while requiring minimal capital investment. Under PMMSY, it is projected that seaweed farming could provide direct and indirect employment to 0.5 million people during its initial stages.

- Moreover, the short cultivation cycle of seaweed (6–8 weeks) enables multiple harvests annually, ensuring consistent income for farmers. Women-led cooperatives and small-scale enterprises are particularly well-suited to benefit from this sector.

Government Initiatives and Policy Support:

The Pradhan Mantri Matsya Sampada Yojana (PMMSY) is the flagship program driving the development of seaweed farming in India. With a budget allocation of ₹640 crores, the initiative aims to:

1. Increase seaweed production to 1.12 million tonnes (wet weight) within five years.
2. Establish tissue culture laboratories, nurseries, seed banks, and processing units.
3. Provide financial assistance, technical training, and marketing support to fisherfolk, particularly women-led households.

In addition to PMMSY, regional governments in Tamil Nadu, Gujarat, and Andhra Pradesh are actively promoting seaweed farming through subsidies and skill development programs.

Challenges in Seaweed Farming:

Despite its potential, the seaweed farming sector in India faces several challenges:

1. Infrastructure and Logistics-

- Lack of adequate facilities for seed cultivation, processing, and storage hampers large-scale production.
- Limited cold-chain infrastructure affects the quality of harvested seaweed, reducing its market value.

2. Policy and Regulatory Gaps-

- Ambiguity in coastal regulations and overlapping jurisdiction among fisheries, agriculture, and environment departments create hurdles for new entrants.
- Export policies for seaweed and related products require clearer guidelines to enhance market access.

3. Environmental Risks-

- Climate variability, including temperature fluctuations and ocean acidification, poses risks to seaweed growth and productivity.
- Pests and diseases, such as epiphyte infestations, can affect yields.

4. Limited Awareness and R&D-

- Many coastal communities remain unaware of the economic opportunities offered by seaweed farming.
- Research on high-yield, disease-resistant seaweed varieties and cost-effective farming techniques is still in its early stages.

Future Strategies for Growth:

To realize the full potential of seaweed farming, India must adopt a multi-faceted approach:

1. Research and Development-

Investing in biotechnology and breeding programs to develop resilient seaweed strains is critical. Establishing collaborations between academic institutions, government bodies, and private enterprises can accelerate innovation.

2. Infrastructure Development-

Building state-of-the-art processing units, tissue culture labs, and cold storage facilities will enhance the quality and value of seaweed products.

3. Market Expansion-

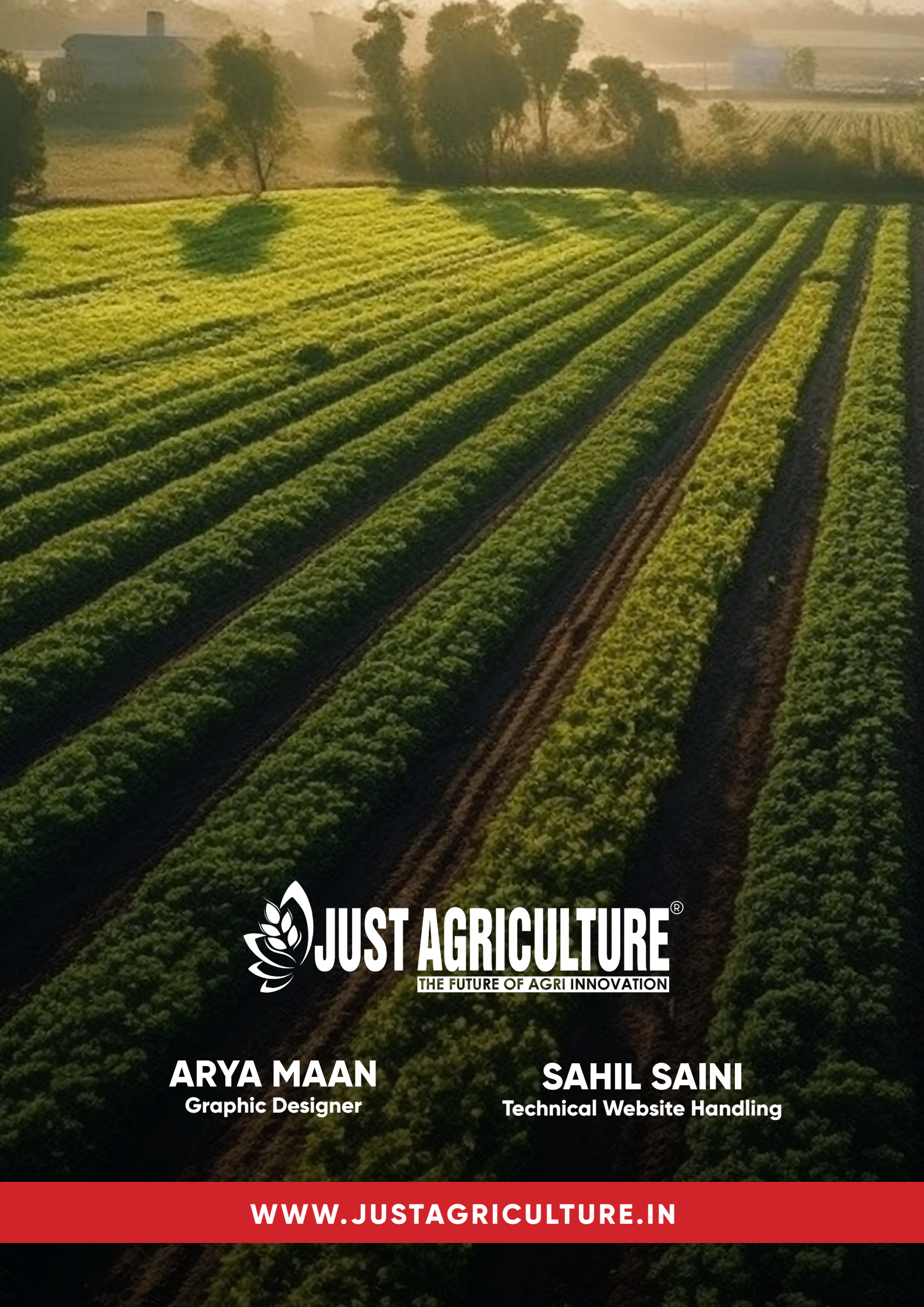
Developing domestic markets for seaweed-based products, such as biofertilizers, nutraceuticals, and bioplastics, can reduce reliance on exports. Public-private partnerships (PPPs) can play a key role in market development and distribution.

4. Policy Reforms-

Streamlining coastal regulations and introducing farmer-friendly policies will encourage new investments. Export promotion schemes and financial incentives can further enhance India's competitiveness in the global seaweed market.

CONCLUSION

Seaweed farming in India represents a unique opportunity to combine economic development with environmental sustainability. With strategic investments, supportive policies, and technological advancements, India can emerge as a global leader in seaweed cultivation and processing. By addressing the existing challenges, the country can unlock the full potential of this sector, transforming the livelihoods of coastal communities and contributing to the global fight against climate change.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