



Similar Question on Indian agriculture (AFS 2012 by APSC)

Agriculture forms the backbone of Assam's economy, with the majority of its population engaged in farming activities. However, despite its crucial role, Assam's agricultural sector faces a myriad of challenges that hinder its growth and sustainability. Understanding these issues is essential for devising effective solutions and ensuring agricultural prosperity in the state.

1. **Floods and River Erosion** Assam's geographical vulnerability to floods, especially due to the Brahmaputra River and its tributaries, causes immense damage to crops, soil fertility, and infrastructure. Recurrent floods not only wash away standing crops but also lead to severe river erosion, reducing arable land over time and displacing farming communities.
2. **Lack of Irrigation Facilities** The state heavily relies on monsoon rains for irrigation, with only a small percentage of cultivated land having access to reliable irrigation infrastructure. The absence of efficient water management systems exacerbates drought conditions during lean seasons, affecting crop yields.
3. **Low Productivity and Traditional Farming Practices** Assam's agriculture largely depends on traditional farming methods with limited mechanization. The use of outdated tools, minimal adoption of high-yield crop varieties, and inadequate extension services result in lower productivity compared to national averages.
4. **Fragmented Land Holdings** The prevalence of small and fragmented land holdings due to inheritance laws and population pressure hampers economies of scale. This fragmentation reduces the efficiency of farming practices and limits farmers' capacity to invest in modern technology or inputs.
5. **Insufficient Access to Credit and Markets** Farmers often face difficulties in accessing institutional credit due to bureaucratic hurdles and lack of collateral. Moreover, poor rural



infrastructure — including inadequate roads, storage facilities, and market linkages — restricts farmers from fetching fair prices for their produce.

6. **Pest and Disease Management** Crop loss due to pests and diseases is another significant issue. Limited awareness and access to modern pest control methods, coupled with the unregulated use of chemical pesticides, further endanger both crops and soil health.
7. **Climate Change** Erratic weather patterns, rising temperatures, and unpredictable rainfall owing to climate change have added another layer of uncertainty to Assam's agricultural output. These changes pose a threat to both food security and farmers' livelihoods.
8. **Policy and Implementation Gaps** While the government has introduced several schemes to support agriculture, such as the Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana (PMFBY) and the Assam Agribusiness and Rural Transformation Project (APART), the benefits often fail to reach the intended beneficiaries due to weak implementation, corruption, and lack of awareness.

The Way Forward

To address these challenges, a multi-pronged approach is required:

- Developing robust flood and erosion control measures.
- Expanding irrigation facilities and promoting water conservation techniques.
- Encouraging the adoption of modern farming technologies and high-yield crop varieties.
- Consolidating land holdings through cooperative farming models.
- Enhancing rural infrastructure to improve market access and storage.
- Strengthening pest and disease management systems.
- Implementing climate-resilient farming practices.



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- Ensuring transparency and efficiency in the implementation of government schemes.

In conclusion, Assam's agriculture sector, though beset with numerous challenges, holds immense potential for growth. With strategic planning, policy reforms, and active participation from both the government and farming communities, the state can overcome these hurdles and secure a sustainable and prosperous agricultural future.