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SHAKTI UTTHAN ASHRAM

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Ch: AGRICULTURE

READ THE FOLLOWING PARAGRAPH THOROUGHLY AND TRY TO UNDERSTAND.

India is an agricultural country because of the following reasons:

1. Two-third of its population is engaged in agricultural activities.
2. Agriculture is a primary activity and produces most of the food and food grains.
3. It produces raw materials for our various industries, e.g., cotton textile, sugar industry.
4. Agricultural products, like tea, coffee, spices are exported and earn foreign exchange.

Primitive Subsistence Farming:

This type of farming is practiced in few pockets of India on small patches of land using primitive tools and family/community labour. Farmers clear a patch of land and produce cereals and other food crops to sustain their families. When the soil fertility decreases, the farmers shift and clear a fresh patch of land for cultivation. This type of shifting allows nature to replenish the fertility of the soil through natural processes. Land productivity is low as the farmer does not use fertilizers or other modern inputs.

Intensive Subsistence Farming:

It is practiced in areas of high population pressure on land. It is labour intensive farming. Yield per hectare is high because high doses of biochemical inputs and irrigation are used. The size of the land-holdings is small and uneconomical. Farmers take maximum output from the limited land by raising 2-3 crops in a year from the same land, i.e., multiple cropping is practiced.

Commercial Agriculture:

In this, crops are mainly grown for commercial purposes. It is practiced on large pieces of land on scientific and commercial lines using machines and modern technology. There is higher use of modern agricultural inputs, e.g., HYV seeds, fertilizers, irrigation, etc. The degree of commercialization varies from one region to another. Rice is a commercial crop in Punjab, while in Odisha it is subsistence crop. E.g., plantation agriculture.

Characteristics of plantation agriculture:

A single type of crop is grown on a large area. Plantation is carried out on large estates using lot of capital intensive units. Lot of migrant laborers work on these estates. The plantation has an interface of agriculture and industry. All the produce

is used as raw material in the respective industries. The production is mainly for the market, i.e., commercial agriculture.

Rabi, Kharif and Zaid are the three cropping seasons:

- **Rabi crops (Winter crops):** Sown in winter—October to December. Harvested in summer—April to June. Important crops: wheat, barley, mustard, peas, gram, etc.
- **Kharif crops (Crops of the rainy season):** Sown—onset of monsoon (June-July). Harvested— September-October. Important crops: rice, maize, millets, Jowar, bajra, tur (arhar), moong, urad, cotton, jute, groundnut and soyabean.
- **Zaid season:** It is a short cropping season during summer months mainly between March-April and June-July. Main crops—watermelon, musk melon, cucumber etc.

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