

Essay

Agriculture decline
in Pakistan and how to
Counter it.

Outline

I Introduction

- a. Hook
- b. Background
- c. Thesis Statement: Pakistan's agricultural decline is the result of outdated farming

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methods, water mismanagement
weak policies and structural
inefficiencies, however through
technological, modernization,
sustainable water use, farmer
empowerment, and consistent
institutional reforms the
sector can be revitalised
to ensure food security,
rural stability and long-
term national development.

II Understanding Agricultural Decline

- a. Declining crop yields
- b. Shrinking cultivated area
- c. Falling farmer profitability
- d. Rising dependency on food imports
- e. Low adoption of modern farming

III Causes of Agricultural Decline in Pakistan

1 Water Mismanagement

- a Flood irrigation → water wastage
- b No Storage → water scarcity during crucial sowing season
- c Canal system deterioration

2 Outdated Farming Practices

- a Manual, guess-based cultivation
- b zero adoption of precision farming
- c Seed Varieties not improved for decades

3 Low Government Priority

- a Agriculture receives minimal budgeting
- b Policy inconsistency
- c Political decisions override expert recommendations.

4 High Costs of Inputs

- a. Fertilizer, diesel, pesticides exorbitant
- b. Farmer profit margins collapsing
- c. Middleman system exploitative

5 Climate Stress + zero Preparedness

- a. Heatwaves destroying wheat
- b. Unpredictable monsoon affecting cotton
- c. No national climate adaptation strategy

6 Fragmented Landholdings

- a. Small farmers cannot afford machinery
- b. No cooperative farming culture

7 Weak Agricultural

Research and Extension

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a. Universities produce theory.
not innovation

b. Farmers get no training, no
guidance.

B Rural-to-Urban Migration

a. Youth leaving farming

b. Labour shortages in harvesting
seasons.

IV Consequences of Agricultural Decline

1 Food Inflation

Tomato, Onion, wheat, sugar price
skyrocket → urban hardship

2 Rural Poverty and Unrest

Farmer suicides
Protests due to low

procurement prices.

3 Food Import Dependency

Wheat, cotton, pulses, edible oil imports draining foreign reserves

4 Weakening Textile Sector

Cotton shortage → textile exports falling
→ unemployment.

5 National Security Threat

A country that cannot feed itself becomes vulnerable.

v. How To Counter

Agricultural Decline

1 Build water Storage

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and Introduce water

Smart Irrigation

Small and medium dams

Drip irrigation subsidies

2 Shift from Traditional

to Smart Agriculture

Precision farming sensors

Drone-based pesticides application

Soil scanning technology

3 Strengthen Seed Research

and Local Innovation

Create high-yield, heat
resistant varieties

End seed mafia dominance.

4 Reform Middleman System

Digital marketplaces

Direct farmer to market

Policy

5 Affordable Input and

Financial Security

Reduce GST on fertilizer

Crop insurance against
floods and heatwaves

Interest-free machinery loans.

6 Cooperative Farming Model

Pooling land → shared tractors
and shared profits

7 Professionalize Agriculture

University extension officers
posted at Union Councils.

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Mandatory farmer training programs.

8 Climate Adaptation Strategy

Early warning systems
Heat-resilient crop calendars
National drought plan

9 Encourage Youth Entry Into Agriculture

Start ups in agri-tech.
Government incentives for high-technology farming.

VI Conclusion

The Essay

Nations do not collapse when their borders weaken, they collapse when their breadbasket dries. For Pakistan, agriculture is not merely an economic sector, it is the back bone of national stability, rural livelihoods and food security. Over the last few decades however, the sector has witnessed a persistent decline due to outdated practices, weak governance, and ecological vulnerabilities. This decline is evident in shrinking crop yields, declining farmer incomes, rising

dependency on imports, and gradual erosion of rural resilience. It is therefore essential to understand the precise causes of this decline and to explore practical measures that can restore agriculture to its rightful place as a pillar of national development. In my view, addressing this issue is not only a matter of policy but a moral and strategic imperative for the country.

To begin with one of the foremost causes of agricultural decline is the reliance on outdated and traditional farming practices.

Despite technological advancements globally, a large proportion

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of Pakistani farmers still
on rely on manual guess-
based methods and low
quality tools. This has
resulted in stagnating yields
over decades. Moreover
poor access to mechanisation
and minimal extension
services mean that even
willing farmers cannot
adopt modern methods.
Reflecting on this, it
becomes clear that
neglecting technology in
agriculture is not just
inefficient but morally
questionable as it
directly impacts the
livelihoods of millions
of farmers.

Furthermore, water
mismanagement significantly

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exacerbates the crisis.

Pakistan a water-stressed nation, continues to depend on flood irrigation systems that waste large quantities of water while canal networks deteriorate and groundwater is depleted. Unsustainability. Climate change has further aggravated the problem as unpredictable monsoon patterns, heatwaves and floods destroy crops erode fertile soil, and undermine the confidence of farmers. From a reflective perspectives failing to address water management is akin to undermining the very foundation of Pakistan's food security. a risk that cannot be ignored.

Climate change does not respect border. It does not respect who you are rich or poor, small and big. Therefore this is what we call global challenges which requires global solidarity.
(Ban Ki-moon)

In addition the low quality of seeds and low-productivity varieties contributes to the decline. Despite research institutions and universities high-yields and climate resilient seeds remain largely inaccessible to ordinary farmers, while unregulated private seed markets often promote substandard seeds. It is

therefore not surprising that crop outputs are lower than potential. Personally, I believe that empowering farmers with the right tools and knowledge is a basic responsibility of the state yet it remains largely unmet. Equally important is the high cost of agricultural inputs. Fertilizers pesticides diesel and machinery are expensive and small farmers often cannot afford them. Coupled with exploitative middlemen, farmers are forced to sell crops at low prices, trapping them in a cycle of low profitability and debt. Reflecting on this one realizes that agricultural

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decline is not only a technical issue but also a social justice issue: these who feed the nation are simultaneously deprived of fair returns for their labor.

Moreover, weak governance and inconsistent policy-making have prevented systematic solutions. Agricultural policies are often temporary politically motivated, or poorly implemented. Support prices fluctuate subsidies are mismanaged and farmers rarely receive timely guidance. From my perspective policy inconsistency reflects a lack of strategic vision which directly undermines national development. Consequently these combined factors have produced severe

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outcomes. Food inflation has become chronic rural poverty is rising farmers' debts are accumulating and Pakistan increasingly depends on imported staples like wheat pulses and edible oil.

The decline has also affected national morale and stability as agricultural distress fuels rural unrest and discourages youth from engaging in farming.

It is ^{therefore} evident that agricultural decline is not merely an economic concern; it is a societal and strategic crisis.

On a positive note, Pakistan has multiple avenues to counter this decline.

Modernisation of farming techniques is critical;

Mechanisation, precision agriculture

tools, soil testing and digital advisory systems can dramatically increase productivity. Farmers need access to training and technological support which will allow them to adopt practices proven to work globally.

Alongside this addressing water scarcity and mismanagement is indispensable. Transitioning to drip and sprinkle irrigation, rehabilitating canal systems, promoting rainwater harvesting and regulating groundwater extraction can conserve water and enhance crop resilience. Coupled with climate resilient crop varieties, these steps can reduce vulnerability to environmental shocks. Equally important is

Empowering Small farmers.
Accessible low interest
loans crop insurance storage
facilities and cooperative
farming models can provide
financial security and
bargaining power. In my
view perspective strengthening
the position of the farmer
is both ethical and practical.
A farmer who thrives will
naturally contribute to
national food security.
Furthermore, reforming the
market and value chain is
essential. Eliminating exploitative
middleman building cold storage
and warehouses and facilitating
direct access to local and
international markets will
ensure fair prices and reduce
post harvest losses. Similarly

Stabilising support prices
and ensuring transparent
predictable procurement
will motivate farmers to
invest in productivity
enhancing measures.

In addition, long term revival
requires policy stability
and institutional reforms.

Establishing a national
agricultural commission

strengthening extension departments
and developing data-driven
planning mechanisms can
insure consistent progress.

Reflecting critically it is
not enough to implement
temporary measures, sustained
institutional commitments
is the only way to reverse
decades of decline.

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Finally attracting youth into agriculture through incentives, agri-tech startups and modern farming opportunities is crucial for long-term sustainability without the next generation, reforms will fail to take root and the sector will continue to age and decline. In my opinion empowering young farmers is not just an economic necessity but a strategic investment in Pakistan's future.

In conclusion, agricultural decline in Pakistan is neither inevitable nor irreversible. It is the product of outdated methods, mismanagement and weak policy frameworks.

Yet with technological modernisation water-Smart practices empowered farmers, market reforms and consistent governance, Pakistan can restore its agriculture to a position of strength. Ultimately reversing this decline is not just about improving crop yields, it is about securing livelihoods ensuring food security and safeguarding the nation's future. A society that fails to nourish its farmers will struggle to nourish itself ~~farmers~~ and recognizing this truth is the first step toward meaningful reform.
