

Q. No. 3. Having the largest irrigation system in the world, the land of the sub-continent served as the main food supply basket for the British power for more than a century, but now Pakistan has to import food commodities. Discuss in detail the causes of this agricultural decline. **(20)**

Having the largest Irrigation system in the world; the land of the sub-continent served the main food....

Introduction:

The land of the sub-continent served as major food supply for the British power due to its largest irrigation system and vast agricultural production. But now the decline of agriculture has occurred due the following reasons: Water scarcity, Soil erosion and salinity, obsolete techniques used for cultivation, changing weather patterns, poor farming education and training, Loadshedding and farmers litigation and political instability. Aforementioned factors resulted into poor agriculture production. As a result, Pakistan has to import food commodities to meet the need of food scarce region.

III Brief overview of historical glory of irrigation-system of sub-continent:

Having largest irrigation-system enabled the sub-continent to grow surplus food and export it. But after the independence, Pakistan was left with little resources and poor farmers.

Ishrat Hussain in her book asserted that after the independence Pakistan was left with poor farmers, ineffective resources and millions of refugees to deal with.

(Governing the ungovernable)

Lack of resources, technology and experts in farming resulted into agriculture decline.

III Current conditions of agriculture sector of Pakistan and food imports:

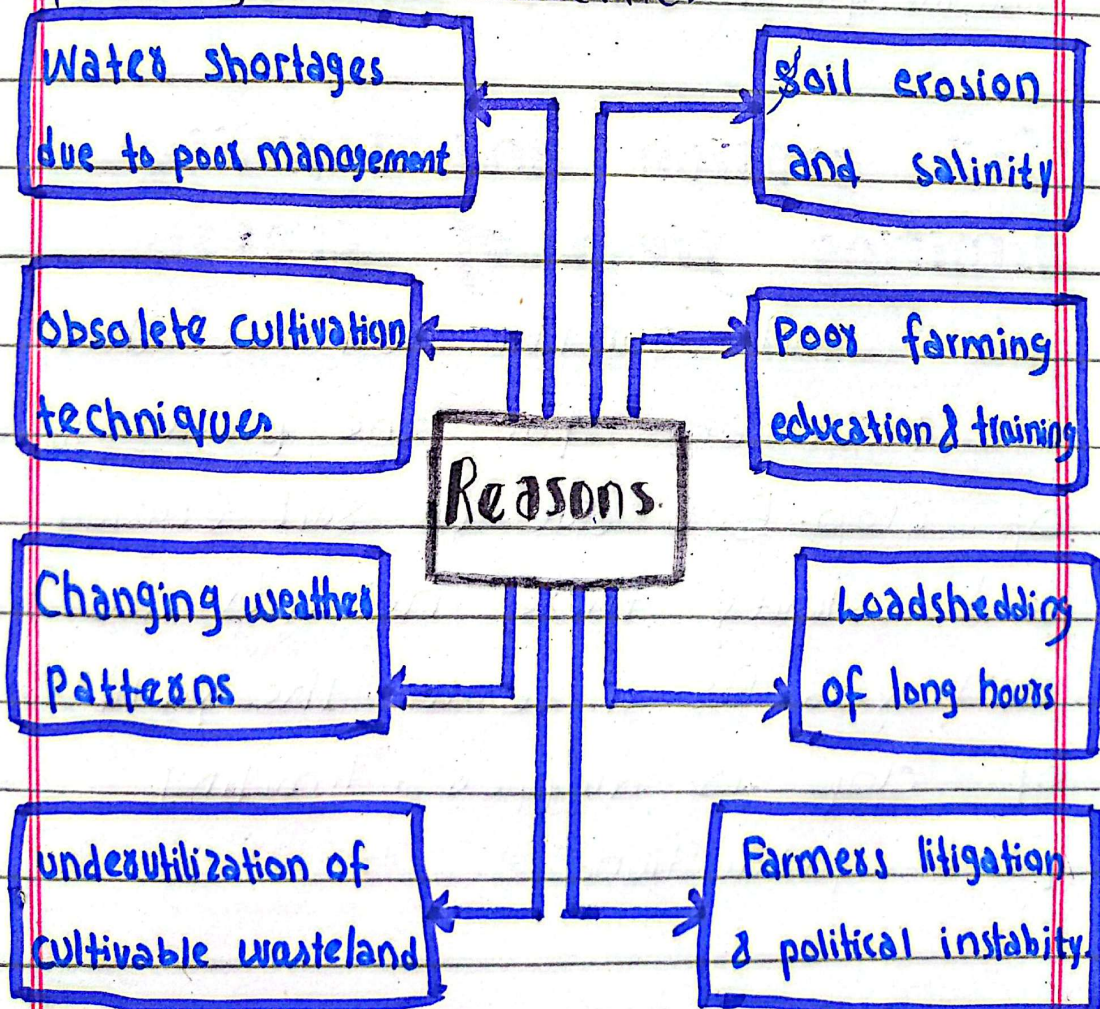
The current agriculture sector

of Pakistan is unable to meet the needs the 26 million population. Due to this, food commodities are imported from other countries.

The report of SBP revealed that import of food products reached to \$6 billion in FY 2023, representing the decline of agriculture sector.

(III) Causes of agriculture decline in Pakistan:

Follow reasons are responsible for agriculture decline:



i) Water shortages due to poor management and water storage techniques:

Pakistan has been facing water shortages due to poor irrigation methods, ineffective water storage techniques and restriction on the flow of water from India, violating Indus water treaty. This shortage of water severely impacts crop production.



■ Agriculture need

■ Domestic consumption

■ Industrial need

Source: The Express Tribune

ii) Soil erosion and salinity limiting yield of crops:

Soil contains nutrients that are necessary for the production of crops. But due to soil erosion and salinity, these nutrients are destroyed. As a result, the yield of crops is dropped, limiting food production.

16 million hectares of land
is affected by soil erosion.

Source: Pakistan Academy of Science

iii) **Obsolete cultivation techniques hampering efficient production:**

Cultivation methods used
in agriculture sector are out-dated.
The loss of production occurs
during the harvest and storage
time.

According to the news, Pakistan
is 10 to 15 years behind than
the Brazil and Argentina in
adopting modern farming
techniques and tools. Source: ISSI

iv) **Poor farming education and training - Obstacle in the way of achieving sufficient production:**

Government is not allocating
sufficient resources to the
education and training of farmers.

As a result, poor farmers are unable to compete the rich landlords in producing sufficient yield.

Poor education and training of farmers obstacle in producing sufficient crop yield. Source: The research gate

v) Changing Weather patterns. destroying the cultivable land:

Pakistan is severely impacted by the climate change. Irregular rain patterns and rise in temperature are destroying crop production and cultivable lands. Recent floods in swat, Chakwal, and other cities of Pakistan wiped out the crops and homes.

Due to changing weather patterns, Pakistan will loss 8-10% of agricultural productivity till 2040, including

wheat production.

Source: The Express Tribune

vi) Loadshedding of long hours, impeding farmers to irrigate their crops;

Another major significant issue that farmers are facing is the loadshedding of long hours. This impedes the farmers to irrigate their land timely. Consequently, crop yield is decline.

Farmers are unable to use fuel as an alternative to loadshedding of long hours due to high prices of fuel.

The result is poor production.

Source: The Research Gate

vii) Underutilization of cultivable Wasteland- Insufficient productivity;

The rapid growth in population

is resulting into high demands of food productivity. But the land per person food productivity is not provided. This is due to the underutilization of cultivable wasteland of Balochistan.

The government tried to educate youngmen about cultivating waste land of Balochistan. But the authorities prevented from utilizing this wasteland due to their vested interests. Source: IPRI

viii) Farmers litigations and political instability- loss of investor confidence to invest in agricultural sector:

The disputes between farmers over the ownership of land is usual. They can frequently be available in govt. offices such as revenue boards, Irrigation officers to police stations to

resolve their disputes. Due to these long-lasting disputes agricultural productivity is undermined. Further, the political instability in the country also hampers production.

The investors are hesitant to invest in agricultural sector due to farmer litigation and political upheavals. As a result, this sector remains underdeveloped.

Source: The Research Gate

(iv) Measure that can be adopted to resolve the issue of agricultural decline:

Following measures can be adopted:

- Construction of dams to store water effectively.
- Using climate-resistance crops.
- Investing in the education

and training of farmers.

- Restoring political stability to attract investors that will boost agriculture productivity.
- Use of advance technology and tools for cultivation.
- Last but not the least, supply of agriculture credits to the poor farmers to enhance their capacity to adopt modern practices.

Conclusion:

Hence, from the above discussion it can be concluded that several factors are responsible in the decline of agriculture sector. However, certain measures can be adopted to increase the food productivity and modernize agriculture sector.