

# Agricultural Decline in Pakistan and How to Counter it

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## Outline:

### 1. Introduction:

**Thesis Statement:** Pakistan is facing rapid agricultural decline exacerbated by traditional farming practices, institutional strain, and unpredictable weather pattern. It is negatively affecting Pakistani society and economy, however, it can be effectively countered by adopting modern approaches and techniques.

### 2. Why Agriculture is Declining in Pakistan

### 3. Causes of Agricultural Decline in Pakistan

- a. Outdate farming practices
- b. Water scarcity and poor water management practices
- c. Climate Change is also a major cause
- d. Lack of research and technical assistance for farmers
- e. Agricultural land is being destroyed by horizontal development model in Pakistan

### 4. Impacts of Agricultural Decline in Pakistan

- a. Food Insecurity is rising
- b. Inflation is increasing
- c. Decline in rural livelihoods and rising poverty

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- d. Threatening national economic stability
- e. Contributing to social unrest

## 5. Practical Steps to Counter Agricultural Decline in Pakistan

- a. Invest in mechanization and modern approaches
- b. Improve water management and irrigation practices
- c. Crop diversification to deal with the impacts of climate change
- d. Invest in research and provide technical assistance to farmers
- e. Encourage vertical development models to protect agricultural land
- f. Promote education and awareness among farmers regarding modern techniques
- g. Encourage the use of digital apps to know about the weather patterns and proper sowing time

## 6. Conclusion

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In the book, 'Let my people go surfing: the education of a reluctant businessman', the author Yvon Chouinard says, "Everything is connected, the ocean is connected to the land, the land is connected to the air, and the air is connected to us. When we destroy nature, we destroy ourselves".

In the same way, Pakistan is facing agricultural decline due to poor farming practices and other harmful practices that are going to destabilize it in the long run. Therefore, as Yvon Chouinard explains it, by promoting these harmful practices, Pakistan is destroying itself. The Agriculture sector in Pakistan is facing rapid decline exacerbated by outdated farming practices. Water scarcity, poor water management, and climate change are the main drivers of this sharp decline. The scarcity or unavailability of the agricultural land due to horizontal development model is also contributing its share in it. Farmers are stuck in outdated practices due to lack of research and technical assistance. Therefore, Pakistan is facing food insecurity, inflation, decline in rural livelihoods and rising poverty. This is ultimately threatening the national economic stability and contributing to the social unrest. However, Pakistan can counter it by taking practical steps. These steps include investing in mechanization, modern approaches, and in research. The Naveed

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government should encourage vertical development models and the use of digital apps to predict the weather pattern. Pakistan should improve water management and irrigation practices, and promote education and awareness among farmers. To deal with the climate change, Pakistan should move toward crop diversification and resilient infrastructure. The agricultural decline exacerbated by traditional farming practices, institutional strain, and unpredictable weather pattern. It is negatively affecting Pakistani society and economy, however, it can be effectively countered by adopting modern approaches and techniques.

Pakistan's agricultural sector is under strain and numerous factors are contributing to it. It faced 13.5% of decline in major crops and the production of major crops fell sharply in 2024-2025. Farmers suffered heavy losses in 2024 upto 1.26 trillion Rupees, according to Ministry of Finance. The major crops affected are rice and maize. However, Pakistan is stuck with its traditional agricultural practices and is unable to shift with the changing weather patterns and modern approaches. This is negatively affecting its agricultural sector.

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"We cannot solve our problems  
with the same thinking we  
used when we created  
them"

- Albert Einstein

Pakistan needs to adopt new thinking  
to deal with this issue and for this it has  
to move away from the practices that are  
contributing to the agricultural decline.  
New and innovative approaches and technologies  
can help Pakistan overcome this existential  
issues.

Pakistan is an agricultural economy and  
is dependent on outdated farming practices.  
These practices do not yield much output and  
waste the resources. For instance, Pakistan still  
uses old seed varieties that give less output, and are  
easily attacked by pests. This ultimately lead to  
agricultural decline. Therefore, the use of outdated  
farming practices is one of the major cause of  
this decline.

The agricultural sector in Pakistan is  
largely dependant on water from the Indus  
River. The water availability is decreasing day  
by day and Pakistan faces recurrent droughts.  
According to Islamabad Policy Research  
Institute (IPRI), the per capita water

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availability in 1950s was 5000 cubic meter that has declined upto 800 cubic meter in 2025. This water scarcity is further exacerbated by poor water management and irrigation practices. For example, Pakistan's agricultural sector largely employs flood irrigation method that wastes 90% of water. This practice not only wastes water but also declines the agricultural yield. Therefore, water scarcity and poor water management practices are the leading factors of agricultural decline.

The climate change is also contributing its share. Due to the climate change, Pakistan faces increasing intensity and frequency of floods. Floods destroy large agricultural fields and also causes the soil erosion. This strip the land off of its essential nutrients for plant growth. For example, Pakistan faced 2010, 2022, and now flashfloods of 2025. The window is increasingly becoming narrower with time and leading to increased devastation of agricultural land and infrastructure. The Climate Risk Index 2025, ranked Pakistan at top due to the economic losses of 2022 floods. Therefore, climate change is one of the major

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causes of agricultural ~~loss~~ decline in Pakistan.

Pakistan's agricultural sector is under strain not because of just traditional practices, water scarcity, and climate change but also because of lack of research and technical assistance for farmers. Pakistan is severely lacking in this sector. Due to this, Pakistan is stuck in traditional model and is not shifting with the changing environmental and developmental conditions. Its research institutes lack resources and funding necessary for technical research. Research forms the backbone of anything and enhances the prospects of success but Pakistan lacks this and is therefore falling back from rest of the world.

Agricultural decline is also increasing because of less land available for farming. In Pakistan, horizontal development model is usually followed and it covers large area of land. This land is usually the fertile agricultural land that is being converted into concrete infrastructure. For example, a number of housing schemes in Pakistan utilize large rural agricultural land and turn it concrete. In this way, with rapidly increasing population more and more land is being utilized and horizontal model is also

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contributing in it. Therefore, it is one of the major causes of agriculture decline in Pakistan.

Pakistan's agricultural sector is under stress due to multiple reasons and it is contributing to a number of problems and issues.

When the agricultural yield decreases in a country, it leads to food insecurity. Pakistan is definitely facing the issue of food insecurity.

According to the World Food Program,

around 40% of Pakistanis are facing moderate to severe food insecurity exacerbated by climate change impacts. This food insecurity is also causing malnutrition in children.

According to WFP,

almost 42% of children in Pakistan under 5 are stunted due to the food insecurity.

Therefore, agricultural decline is negatively impacting the food security of Pakistan.

When the agricultural output declines, it contributes to rising food prices. The rising food prices fuels the inflation.

Pakistan is facing inflation where a normal household can't afford even the basic necessities of life. The agricultural decline is therefore contributing to inflation.

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When the agricultural yield is low and large swathes of land is destroyed either by floods or by desertification, it contributes to the decline in rural livelihoods. This leads to rising poverty among farmers who are unable to even recover the input cost of farming. They are trapped in a cycle of debt that becomes worse due to recurring ~~of~~ low agricultural yield. Therefore, it is contributing to decline in rural livelihoods and rising poverty.

Pakistan presents itself as an agricultural economy and no doubt agriculture is the major sector that contributes meaningfully in the national economy. For example, the agriculture sector in Pakistan employs nearly **40 percent of the work force**. But when the agricultural output is reduced, the food insecurity rises and fuels the inflation and poverty, the loss of this 40 percent of job prospects ~~and~~ becomes eminent, ~~and the ultimate~~ ~~consequence of~~ climate devastation threatens the overall national economic stability of Pakistan.

All the above mentioned causes and impacts lead to the social unrest in Pakistan. As Pakistan faces increasing protests and loss of GDP that further strains the resources and has adverse impacts on the society.

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People start to fight over scarce resources. It was seen, the people in Sindh came out on roads in early 2025 when their livelihoods and agriculture was threatened due to the canal project that could divert the water resources away from their lands. It could have led to low agricultural yield, therefore, people came out on roads and halted everything from trade to business. Therefore, agricultural decline can fuel social unrest in the society of Pakistan where major source of livelihood is farming.

There are multiple causes of agricultural decline and numerous harmful impacts of this decline but Pakistan can overcome it by adopting practical steps and measures.

Pakistan must invest in mechanization and modern approaches in the agricultural sector. The agricultural yield is low because of traditional practices. Pakistan should use tractors, mechanical reapers and other up to date machinery to increase the yield and reduce the wastage. This is one of the way to reduce the agricultural decline.

Pakistan's agricultural sector uses traditional practices like flood irrigation and

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monocropping. These practices decrease the agricultural output and also waste large amount of essential water resources.

According to

**Pakistan Council on Research of Water Resources,**

**90 percent of water is wasted due to traditional agricultural practices especially flood irrigation.**

Therefore, Pakistan needs effective water management and irrigation techniques.

For example, Pakistan should enhance the water storage capacity, rainwater harvesting, and underground artificial water reservoirs, so that the water can be used during drought. On the other hand, Pakistan should invest in **deep irrigation and sprinklers** to get rid of flood irrigation practice. These practices not only enhance the agricultural yield but also contribute in effective water management.

Pakistan should move towards crop diversification to counter the agricultural decline. As the major factor in agricultural decline is that crops die due to either floods or droughts. These floods and droughts are becoming frequent due to climate change. Therefore, Pakistan

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should grow drought resistant and flood resilient crops. For example, Millet and cotton are drought resistant and deep water rice is flood resilient crop. In order to counter climate change, Pakistan should use climate smart options to enhance the agricultural yield.

The main sector that requires attention is research institutes and technical assistance for the farmers. Pakistan should invest in research. Research institutes are the backbone of any sector. Pakistan can move towards effective water management, modernization and climate smart options only on the basis of effective research. Therefore, the government of Pakistan must revitalize institutes like **PARC** and increase the collaboration between researchers and farmers. This is the most important and practical step to counter the agricultural decline in Pakistan.

The above main points are necessary and also need more land to use these techniques. But the horizontal development model is making agricultural land scarce in Pakistan. Therefore, the government of Pakistan must encourage vertical development model to protect the agricultural

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land. It is necessary to introduce reforms and regulations to curb horizontal development especially by the housing schemes that destroy large swathes of fertile land.

The most critical aspect to counter agricultural decline is to educate the farmers regarding modern techniques.

The large number of farmers in Pakistan are illiterate and are adamant to stick with traditional practice despite facing major setbacks. Therefore, it is necessary to raise awareness among farmers because without it everything would go to waste. For example, farmers are not even shifting the sowing season due to which when it is time to reap the harvest the monsoon arrives and inundates agricultural land and destroys crops. Climate is shifting so there is need to shift along with it. Therefore, it is necessary to educate farmers and raise awareness to counter the agricultural decline effectively.

The education and awareness must involve the use of digital apps. These apps can help the farmers to know about the weather patterns and

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also give help in taking necessary decisions. By knowing weather conditions, farmers can decide whether to water the fields or not as there may be prospects of rain. Pakistan is also offering servicing of experts advice by the digital apps. For example, **Kissan Madadgar** and **Digital Dera** are good steps. But to use them effectively, the government of Pakistan must educate the farmers and encourage the use of these services. This is one of the effective way to counter it.

Pakistan's agricultural sector is facing decline due to outdated farming practices, water scarcity, poor water management, ~~advers~~ rapidly changing climate, lack of research and horizontal development model. These practices are negatively impacting Pakistan due to food insecurity, inflation, rising poverty, social unrest and the ultimate threat to national economic stability. However, Pakistan can overcome this challenge by following and adopting practical steps.

**"God help those who help themselves"**

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Pakistan can effectively deal with this challenge by investing in mechanization, improving water management, effective irrigation practices, crop diversification, encouraging vertical development model, promoting education and use of digital apps and ~~by~~ increasing investment in research and technical assistance.

Pakistan is an agricultural economy and it can overcome the challenge of agricultural decline by following practical steps.