

Introduction :- India is an agricultural country, wherein nearly 70% of the country's population depends on agriculture for their livelihood. In India, agriculture is not only an occupation, while it has become an important part of economic, social and cultural life of Indians. It is the backbone of Indian ~~agricultural~~ economy because out of the total national income of the country, 27% comes from agriculture.

Characteristics of Indian agriculture :- Some of the major characteristics of Indian agriculture are following :-

1. Subsistence farming :- Subsistence farming is the most important characteristic of Indian agriculture which has been prevalent in India since ages. Farmers grow some selected crops for their domestic needs rather than generating surplus for sale or export.

2. Traditional agriculture :- Indian agriculture is intensively practised on traditional lines, utilising draught animals and manual labour in agricultural work. This traditional method of farming follows local environment.

3. Dependence on monsoon :- Indian agriculture is mostly dependent on rainfall which is highly variable in time and space. Only 41.2% of the total cropped area is under irrigation.

Non irrigated area	Irrigated area
58.8%	41.2%

Fig:- Importance of monsoon in total cropped area in Indian agriculture.

4. Abundance of agricultural land :- India has the highest percentage of geographical area (53%) under cultivation, as against USA (16.3%), Japan (14.9%), China (11.8%), Canada (4.3%) etc. Average agricultural area of the world is only 10.8%.

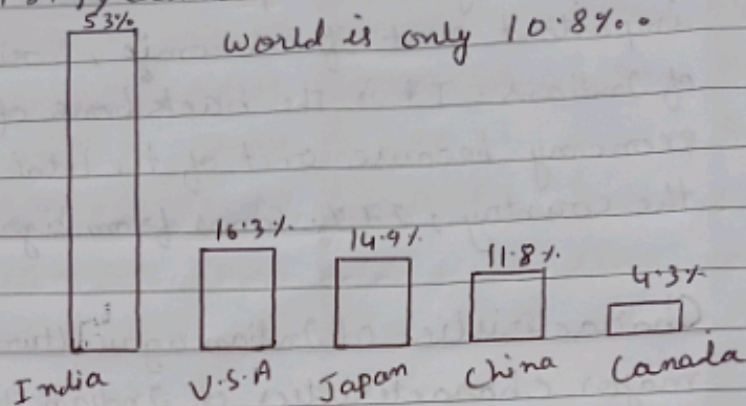


Fig:-
Agricultural land under total geographical area.

5. Predominance of food crops :- There is a predominance of food crops in agriculture, which occupy 76% of the total cropped area and account for 80% of the total agricultural production of the country.

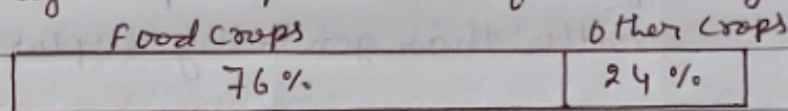


Fig - Area under food crops of the total agricultural area in India.

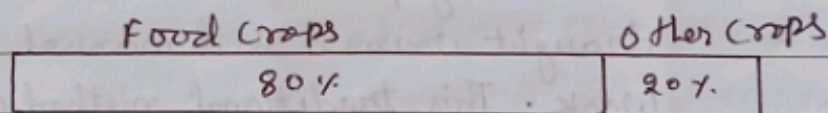


Fig - Contribution of food crops in total agricultural production.

6. Heavy Pressure of Population on agriculture :- There is heavy pressure of population on land, as nearly 70% of the country's population depends on agriculture for their livelihood.

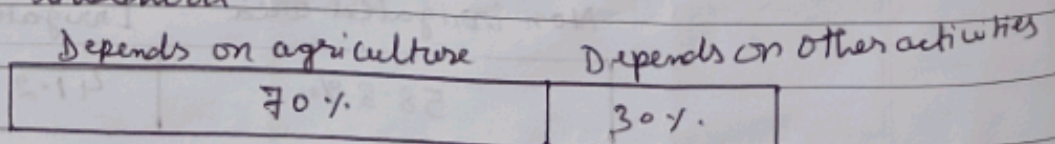


Fig - Heavy pressure of population on agriculture.

7. Abundance of net Sown area : India has the highest (46.6%) percentage of net sown area in the world, as against U.S.A. (40%), Brazil (16.1%) and Canada (6.4%) etc. The world's average net sown area (32%) is also below from India. There is also a regional variation found in net sown area. Punjab has the highest (84.2%) percentage among all states.

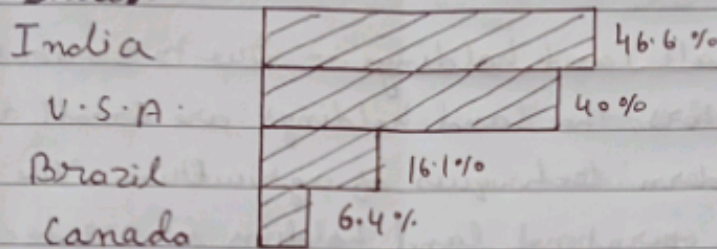
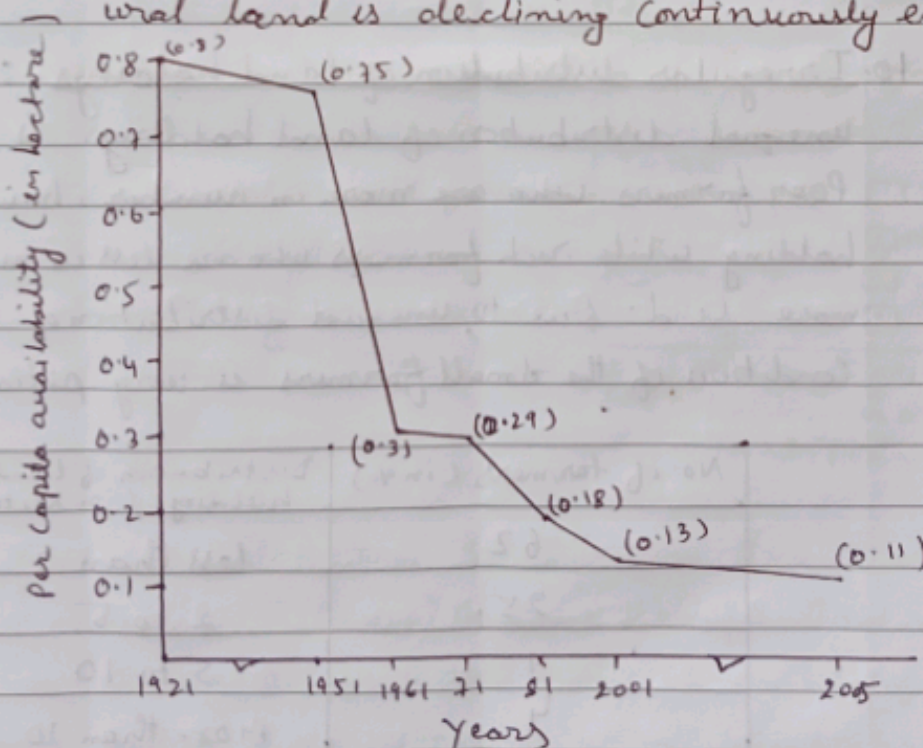


Fig:- Net Sown area of some countries.

8. Decline in Per Capita availability of agricultural land

Due to heavy pressure of population on agriculture the per-capita availability of agricultural land is declining continuously in India.



The per-capita agricultural land availability is much lesser than several countries of the world. But these all countries are less populated and their socio-economic features are different from India.

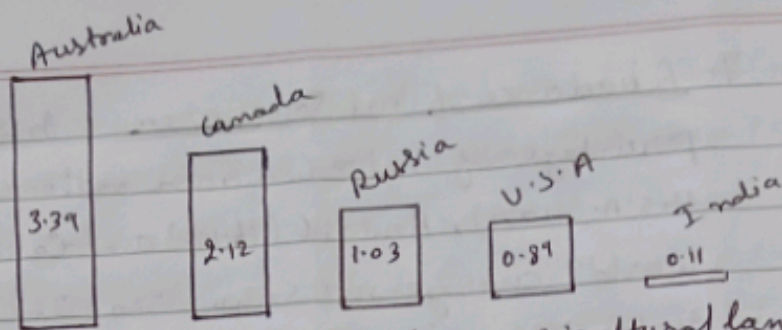


Fig - Per capita availability of agricultural land in some countries of the world (in hectare)

9. Small land holdings :- Due to various socio-economic factors, the land holdings are small and unfit for modern techniques of agriculture. The average size of the operational land holdings is 0.2 hectare in India which is very lower than the other countries.

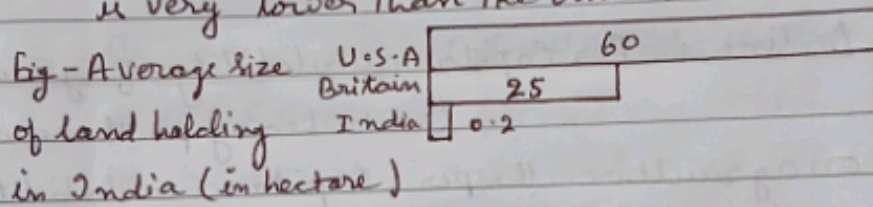


Fig - Average size of land holding in India (in hectare)

10. Irregular distribution of land holdings : There are unequal distribution of land holdings is found in India. Poor farmers, who are more in number, have less land holding while rich farmers who are less in number, have more land. Due to unequal distribution of land, the condition of the small farmers is very pitiable.

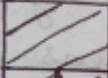

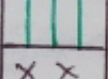
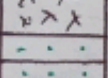
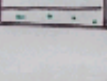
No. of farmers (in%)	Distribution of land holdings (in hectare)
62	less than 2
25	2 to 5
9	5 to 10
4	More than 10

Fig. Unequal distribution of land holdings in India.

11. Division of land holdings :- Due to rapid growth of population and law of inheritance, the land holdings

are generally becoming smaller. It is a major problem of Indian agriculture because for carrying on agricultural operation they are unsuccessful.

condition of holdings

	80 years ago
	60 years ago
	40 " "
	20 " "
	Present

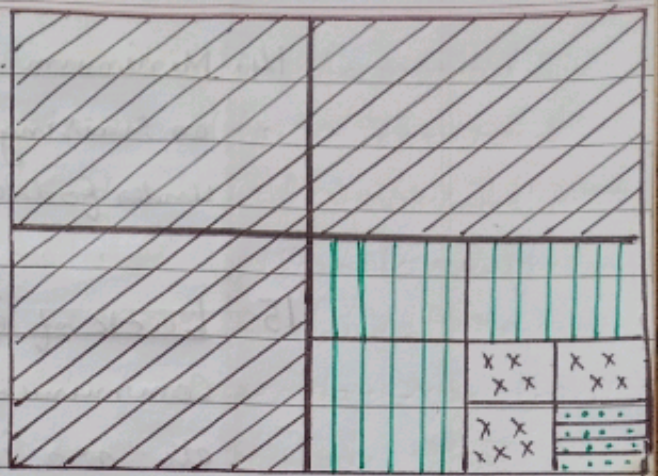


Fig - An example of division of land holdings due to law of inheritance.

12. Scattered land holdings: All land holdings of a farmer in India are not found at one place. They are scattered in smaller size in all parts of village due to environmental conditions. Due to scattered land holdings each farmer are capable to grow any one period of crops in any natural hazard.

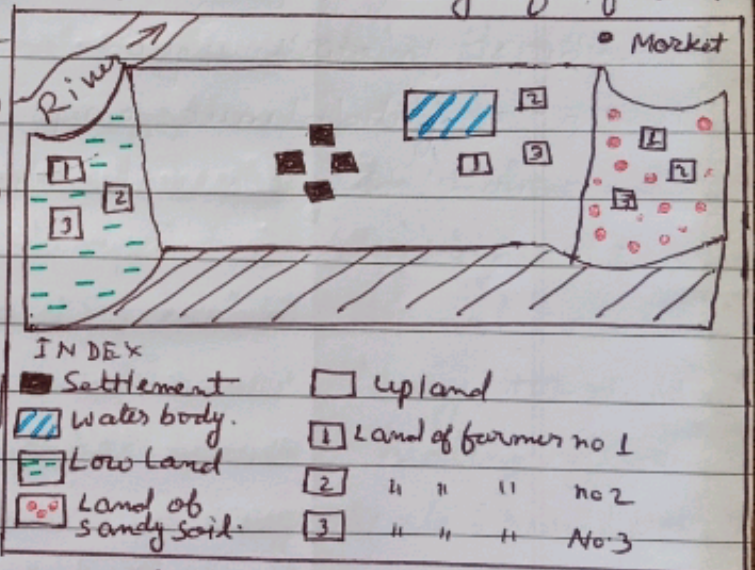


Fig: - An example of scattered land holdings in a village of the South Bihar plain.

13. Seasonal Pattern :- There are three seasons of agriculture found in India. These are Kharif, Rabi and Zaid. Rice, Jowar, Bajra, Cotton, moong etc. are Kharif crops which are cultivated during monsoon period. Wheat, gram, pulses etc. are Rabi crops which grow after monsoon period. Zaid crops (vegetables, some species of rice etc.) are cultivated in summer season (before monsoon).

14. Minimum attention of fodder crops : There is low attention on raising fodder crops in India. There is only 4% area comes under fodder crops of total cropped area.

15. Lack of infrastructure :- Facilities of transport, communications, banking, electricity, storage, marketing etc. are insufficient in rural areas. This has hampered the development of agriculture in the country.