Indian Economy · GS - III

How can crop diversification serve as a model for water conservation and enhancement of farmers' income in India? Discuss the challenges and suggest suitable measures.

EXAM YEAR	PAPER	SUBJECT
DAILY PRACTICE 20/10/2026	GS - III	Indian Economy

MARKS	WORD LIMIT
10	~150 words

Answer Hint

Crop diversification, water-use efficiency, sustainable agriculture, farmers' income, climate resilience, soil health, horticulture, pulses, millets, crop rotation, minimum support price (MSP), irrigation facilities, market access, food security, agricultural reforms.

Model Answer

1. Introduction

Crop diversification refers to shifting from the cultivation of a limited number of crops towards a wider range of crops suited to local agro-climatic conditions. It can conserve water, improve soil health and provide farmers with more stable income opportunities.

2. Main Body

Benefits of Crop Diversification

1. Water conservation: Replacing water-intensive crops with less water-intensive alternatives, such as millets and pulses, can reduce pressure on groundwater.
2. Higher and diversified income: Horticulture, pulses, oilseeds and other high-value crops can create additional income opportunities.
3. Improved soil health: Crop rotation and legume cultivation can improve soil fertility and reduce pest-related risks.
4. Climate resilience: Diversified cropping systems reduce dependence on a single crop and help manage weather-related risks.

Major Challenges

1. Assured procurement and MSP support are concentrated in selected crops and regions.
2. Farmers may lack suitable seeds, irrigation facilities, storage and market access.
3. Price fluctuations and limited awareness discourage diversification.

Way Forward

The government should promote micro-irrigation, crop-specific research, Farmer Producer Organisations (FPOs), processing facilities, market linkages and suitable procurement mechanisms.

3. Conclusion

Crop diversification can strengthen agricultural sustainability while conserving water and improving farmers' livelihoods. Its success requires region-specific planning, reliable markets and institutional support for farmers.

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