Two-thirds of India’s population is engaged in agricultural activities. It is a primary activity, which produces food grains and raw materials for industries. India is geographically a vast country so it has various food and non-food crops which are cultivated in three main cropping seasons which are rabi, kharif and zaid.

Major crops can be classified into-

- **Food crops**- Rice, Wheat, Millets, Maize and Pulses.
- **Cash crops**- Sugarcane, Oilseeds, Horticulture crops, Tea, Coffee, Rubber, Cotton and Jute.

### Cropping Seasons

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S. No</th>
<th>Cropping Season</th>
<th>Time Period</th>
<th>Crops</th>
<th>States</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Kharif</td>
<td>Sown: June-July Harvested: September-October</td>
<td>Rice, maize, jowar, bajra, tur, moong, urad, cotton, jute, groundnut, soybean etc.</td>
<td>Assam, West Bengal, coastal regions of Odisha, Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, Tamil Nadu, Kerala and Maharashtra</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
3. Zaid

Sown and harvested: March-July (between Rabi and Kharif)

Seasonal fruits, vegetables, fodder crops etc.

Most of the northern and northwestern states

Major Food Crops

Rice

Major Rice Producing States
- **Temperature**: Between 22-32°C with high humidity.
- **Rainfall**: Around 150-300 cm.
- **Soil Type**: Deep clayey and loamy soil.
- **Top Rice Producing States**: West Bengal > Punjab > Uttar Pradesh > Andhra Pradesh > Bihar.
- It is the **staple food crop of majority** of Indian people.
- India is the **second largest producer of rice in the world after China**.
- In states like Assam, West Bengal and Odisha, three crops of paddy are grown in a year. These are **Aus, Aman and Boro**.
- **National Food Security Mission**, **Hybrid Rice Seed Production and Rashtriya Krishi Vikas Yojana** are few government initiatives to support rice cultivation.

**Wheat**
- **Temperature:** Between 10-15°C (Sowing time) and 21-26°C (Ripening & Harvesting) with bright sunlight.
- **Rainfall:** Around 75-100 cm.
- **Soil Type:** Well-drained fertile loamy and clayey loamy (Ganga-Satluj plains and black soil region of the Deccan)
- **Top Wheat Producing States:** Uttar Pradesh > Punjab > Madhya Pradesh > Haryana > Rajasthan.
- India is the **second largest producer** after China.
- This is the **second most important cereal crop and the main food crop, in north and north-western** India.
- Success of **Green Revolution** contributed to the growth of Rabi crops especially wheat.
- **Macro Management Mode of Agriculture, National Food Security Mission and Rashtriya Krishi Vikas Yojana** are few government initiatives to support wheat cultivation.

**Millets (Nutri-Cereals)**

- **Temperature:** Between 27-32°C
- **Rainfall:** Around 50-100 cm.
• **Soil Type:** Can be grown in inferior alluvial or loamy soil because they are less sensitive to soil deficiencies.
  - **Jowar**- Rain-fed crop grown in the moist areas with less or no irrigation.
  - **Bajra**- Sandy soils and shallow black soil.
  - **Ragi**- Red, black, sandy, loamy and shallow black soils. (dry regions)

• **Top Millets Producing States:** Rajasthan > Karnataka > Maharashtra > Madhya Pradesh > Uttar Pradesh
  - **Jowar:** Maharashtra > Karnataka > Madhya Pradesh > Tamil Nadu > Andhra Pradesh.
  - **Bajra:** Rajasthan > Uttar Pradesh > Gujarat > Madhya Pradesh > Haryana.

• These are also known as **coarse grains**, which have **high nutritional value**. **Ragi** is very **rich in iron, calcium, other micro nutrients** and **roughage**.

• **Jowar** is the **third most important food crop with respect to area and production**.

• **National Agricultural Insurance Scheme, Initiative for Nutritional Security through Intensive Millets Promotion** are examples of government’s efforts to support millet production.

*Maize*
- **Temperature:** Between 21-27°C
- **Rainfall:** High rainfall.
- **Soil Type:** Old alluvial soil.
- **Top Maize Producing States:** Karnataka > Maharashtra > Madhya Pradesh > Tamil Nadu > Telangana
- India is the **seventh largest producer** worldwide.
- It is used both as **food and fodder**.
- Use of modern inputs such as **High-Yielding Variety seeds, fertilisers and irrigation** have contributed to the **increasing production** of maize.
- **Technology Mission on Maize** is one of the government’s initiatives for maize.
**Pulses**

- **Temperature:** Between 20-27°C
- **Rainfall:** Around 25-60 cm.
- **Soil Type:** Sandy-loamy soil.
- **Top Pulses Producing States:** Madhya Pradesh > Rajasthan > Maharashtra > Uttar Pradesh > Karnataka.
- India is the largest producer as well as the consumer of pulses in the world.
- These are the major source of protein in a vegetarian diet.
• Major pulses grown in India are tur (arhar), urad, moong, masur, peas and gram.
• Being leguminous crops, all these crops except arhar help in restoring soil fertility by fixing nitrogen from the air. Therefore, these are mostly grown in rotation with other crops.
• National Food Security Mission for Pulses, Pulses Development Scheme and Technological Mission on Pulses are few of the government’s plans to support pulses production.

NOTE: Cash Crops will be covered in the Cropping Patterns and Major Crops of India: Part Two.