Indian Economy · GS - III

Elaborate the impact of National Watershed Project in increasing agricultural production from water-stressed areas.

EXAM YEAR	PAPER	SUBJECT
2019	GS - III	Indian Economy

MARKS	WORD LIMIT
10	~150 words

Answer Hint

Watershed development; soil and water conservation; groundwater recharge; rainwater harvesting; cropping intensity; productivity; community participation; implementation challenges

Model Answer

Introduction

Watershed development manages land, water and vegetation within a drainage area to conserve natural resources and improve rural livelihoods. National watershed initiatives aim to restore degraded and rain-fed agricultural landscapes.

Impact on Agricultural Production

- **Water conservation:** Check dams, contour bunds and farm ponds reduce runoff and soil erosion.
- **Groundwater recharge:** Improved infiltration can raise groundwater availability and support irrigation.
- **Higher productivity:** Better soil moisture and fertility improve crop yields, especially in rain-fed regions.
- **Cropping intensity:** Additional water can enable farmers to cultivate a second crop or diversify into horticulture.
- **Livelihood diversification:** Improved fodder and water availability support livestock and allied activities.
- **Climate resilience:** Moisture conservation reduces vulnerability to irregular rainfall and short dry spells.

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- **Community participation:** Watershed committees can encourage collective management of common resources.

Challenges

Unequal water distribution, poor maintenance, excessive groundwater extraction and weak community institutions may reduce long-term benefits.

Conclusion

Watershed projects can improve agricultural production in water-stressed areas when combined with scientific planning, local participation, groundwater regulation and sustained maintenance.

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