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MAGAZINE NOTES

Driving Growth in Agriculture and Allied Sectors

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Driving Growth in Agriculture and Allied Sectors

Kurukshetra Chapter 2 · 4 min read ·

Author: Dr. Vijay Agrawal (AFEIAS, Bhopal) | **Published:** Kurukshetra, March 28, 2026

Agriculture and allied sectors — horticulture, fisheries, dairy, poultry, and forestry — collectively account for **18% of India's GDP** and employ **46% of the workforce**. Budget 2026-27 signals a pivot from paddy-wheat monoculture to **diversified, high-value, climate-resilient agriculture**.

THE DIVERSIFICATION IMPERATIVE

India's agricultural growth has been uneven. While foodgrain production reached **330+ million tonnes** in 2025–26, per-hectare productivity in several crops remains 50–60% below global best practices. The sector faces three structural challenges:

1. **Income Stagnation:** Real agricultural wages grew only 2% per year over the last decade
2. **Soil Degradation:** 30% of India's cultivable land is degraded; extensive chemical use has depleted soil organic carbon
3. **Market Access Failures:** Post-harvest losses estimated at **₹90,000 crore annually** due to cold chain gaps

KEY SCHEMES AND BUDGET 2026-27 INITIATIVES

1. Pradhan Mantri Dhan-Dhaanya Krishi Yojana

- Targets **100 aspirational districts** with low agricultural productivity
- Integrated approach: seeds + irrigation + post-harvest + credit linkage
- Convergence of 11 existing schemes under one umbrella for administrative efficiency
- Expected to benefit **1.7 crore farmers** in the first phase

2. Bharat-VISTAAR AI Platform

- **AI-enabled advisory platform** for agriculture, operational from 2026-27
- Provides real-time crop-specific advisories in regional languages
- Integration with soil health card data, weather forecasts (IMD), and mandi prices (AGMARKNET)
- Targets 5 crore farmers through **Kisan Credit Card (KCC)** linked delivery

3. Mission for Integrated Horticulture Development (MIDH)

- India is the **2nd largest producer of fruits and vegetables** globally
- Budget 2026-27: enhanced allocation for cold chain infrastructure (₹2,000 crore)
- Focus on **Cluster Development Programme (CDP):** 55+ horticulture clusters across states
- Coconut, cashew, cocoa: self-reliance targets by 2030 through processing & value addition

4. Blue Economy and Fisheries

- **PM Matsya Sampada Yojana (PMMSY):** ₹20,050 crore scheme — extended through 2026-27
- **500 Amrit Sarovars + reservoirs** for inland fisheries development
- Seaweed farming: coastal livelihood diversification in Tamil Nadu, Gujarat, Maharashtra
- India target: **₹1 lakh crore** in fisheries exports by 2030 (current: ~₹60,000 crore)

5. Livestock, Dairy, and Poultry

- **Rashtriya Gokul Mission:** Indigenous cattle breeds + Artificial Insemination network (75,000 BSUs)
- **PM Rashtriya Pashu Swasthya Yojana:** 100% FMD + Brucellosis vaccination coverage
- National Livestock Mission: entrepreneurship in fodder production, poultry, goatry
- **Operation Flood III analogy:** New co-operative push targeting **Northeast states**

SOIL HEALTH AND NATURAL FARMING

Soil Health Cards

- **22 crore soil health cards** issued (2015–2024)
- New phase: mobile soil testing vans + digital delivery of card + agri input recommendations
- Micronutrient deficiency mapping: Zinc (42% soils deficient), Boron (33%), Sulphur (41%)

Bharatiya Prakritik Krishi Paddhati (BPKP)

- Natural/zero-budget farming on **7.5 lakh hectares** (target: 15 lakh hectares by 2026)
- States leading: Andhra Pradesh, Himachal Pradesh, Uttarakhand, Gujarat
- Key input: **Jeevamrit** (cow dung + cow urine fermentation) replaces chemical fertilisers
- ICAR developing certification and quality standards for natural farm produce

AGRICULTURAL MECHANISATION

MECHANISATION AREA	CURRENT LEVEL	TARGET
Overall farm mechanisation	45%	75% by 2030
Paddy transplanting	10%	40%
Harvesting (combined)	40%	80%
Micro-irrigation coverage	13 million ha	26 million ha

Custom Hiring Centres (CHCs):

- 1.5 lakh CHCs operational; target 2.5 lakh by 2027
- FPOs and PACS as primary operators — aggregates demand from small farmers

MARKET LINKAGES AND PRICE SUPPORT

e-NAM (National Agriculture Market):

- 1.7 crore+ farmers registered; 23 crore+ trades facilitated
- Integration with private mandis and warehouse receipt system
- FPOs: **10,000 FPOs** by 2027-28 (₹6,865 crore outlay); 3,000+ operational by 2026

MSP Regime:

- Kharif 2026-27: paddy MSP = ₹2,320/quintal; 23 crops under MSP
- Debate: statutory MSP for all crops? Swaminathan Commission recommendation still unimplemented
- PM-AASHA (Price Support + Price Deficiency Payment) for oilseeds and pulses

ALLIED SECTORS: CONTRIBUTION TO DOUBLING FARMER INCOME

SECTOR	CONTRIBUTION TO AGRI GVA	GROWTH RATE (5-YR CAGR)
Crops	55%	3.1%
Livestock	30%	8.2%
Fisheries	10%	11.4%
Forestry	5%	2.8%

The **livestock and fisheries sectors** are the most dynamic — smallholder integration into these is key to income diversification.

UPSC RELEVANCE

GS3 — Agriculture, Economy:

- Agriculture's role in India's development paradox (high employment, low productivity)
- MSP, procurement, and the food subsidy burden
- Allied sector diversification as a strategy for doubling farmer incomes
- Natural farming vs. conventional: policy, environmental, and economic trade-offs
- Value chain development and the role of FPOs, co-operatives, and e-markets

GS2 — Governance:

- Agricultural federalism: state subjects vs. Centre's scheme delivery
- DBT in agriculture: eliminating fertiliser subsidies leakage

FACTS CORNER

- India: 2nd largest producer of fruits and vegetables globally
- Fisheries sector: 11.4% CAGR over last 5 years; target ₹1 lakh crore exports by 2030
- BPKP (Natural Farming): 7.5 lakh hectares under zero-budget farming
- Soil Health Cards: 22 crore issued; zinc deficiency in 42% of Indian soils
- e-NAM: 1.7 crore+ farmers; 23 crore+ trades; 1,361 mandis integrated
- FPO Mission: 10,000 FPOs by 2027-28 with ₹6,865 crore support
- VB-G RAM G adds agricultural wage employment as part of rural transformation

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