

Agriculture in India – Cash Crops

Cash Crops

Cash crops are grown for market sale. They include:

- **Beverages:** Tea, Coffee
- **Fibres:** Cotton, Jute
- **Oilseeds:** Groundnut, Mustard
- **Others:** Sugarcane, Tobacco, Rubber

Sugarcane

India has the largest area under sugarcane cultivation and is the second-largest producer after Brazil.

Climatic Conditions & Soil:

- Grows well in 20–24°C with 100–150 cm of rainfall.
- Requires rich alluvial and lava soil.

Cultivation:

- **Sowing:** Methods include Sett (planting cuttings) and Ratooning (regrowing from old stalks).
- **Harvesting:** Cut close to the ground before winter to save from frost.
- **Processing:** Used for sugar, gur, and khandsari. Cane is crushed, boiled, and refined into sugar.
- **Distribution:** Major producers include UP, Maharashtra, Tamil Nadu, Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh.

Oilseeds

India is a major producer of oilseeds, including groundnut, mustard, sesame, sunflower, and soybean.

Groundnut

- It contains 42% oil, used for cooking, margarine, and cattle feed.
- **Climate & Soil:** Needs 20–25°C, 50–100 cm rainfall, and well-drained sandy loam soil.
- **Cultivation:** Sowed by broadcasting; harvested after 4–5 months.
- **Distribution:** Gujarat leads, followed by Maharashtra, Karnataka, Rajasthan, and MP.

Oilseed

Temperature Rainfall Soil

Major Producers

Mustard & Rape	10–20°C	25–40 cm Loamy	UP, Rajasthan, Punjab
Soybean	13–24°C	40–60 cm Loamy acidic	MP, Rajasthan, Maharashtra
Sunflower	26–30°C	<50 cm Well-drained loamy	Bihar, Maharashtra, Karnataka
Sesame	21°C	40–50 cm Light loamy	UP, Rajasthan, MP, Gujarat
Linseed	15–20°C	45–75 cm Clayey loamy	MP, UP
Castor Seed	20–25°C	50–75 cm Red sandy loamy	Gujarat, AP, Rajasthan

Cotton

A major raw material for the textile industry.

Climatic Conditions & Soil:

- Needs 21–30°C with 200 frost-free days.
- Requires moderate rainfall (50–75 cm) and well-drained clayey or black soil.

Cultivation:

- **Sowing:** Done before rainfall by drilling or broadcasting.
- **Harvesting:** Done in October when cotton balls ripen.
- **Processing:** Ginning (separating fibres), oil extraction, and spinning into yarn.
- **Distribution:** Gujarat, AP, Maharashtra, Punjab, MP, Rajasthan.

Jute

Used for sacks, carpets, and textiles.

Climatic Conditions & Soil:

- Requires 24–35°C, 150 cm rainfall, and new alluvial soil.

Cultivation:

- **Sowing:** Seeds are broadcast in February (lowlands) and March–June (uplands).
- **Harvesting:** Plants are cut at 2–4m height, retted in water, and peeled.
- **Processing:** Retting, drying, spinning into fibre.
- **Distribution:** West Bengal (leading), Assam, Bihar, Odisha, UP.

Tea

India is the fourth-largest tea exporter.

Climatic Conditions & Soil:

- Requires 24–30°C, 150 cm rainfall, and loamy soil rich in humus.

Cultivation:

- **Sowing:** Grown from seeds or clonal planting on hilly slopes to prevent waterlogging.
- **Harvesting:** Frequent picking, done mostly by women.
- **Processing:** Includes withering, rolling, fermentation, drying, and blending. Types: Black, Green, Oolong, Brick.
- **Distribution:** Assam (leading), West Bengal, Tamil Nadu, Kerala.

Coffee

Three main species:

- **Arabica (high quality)**
- **Robusta (drought-resistant)**
- **Liberica (disease-resistant)**

Climatic Conditions & Soil:

- Requires 15–28°C, 150–200 cm rainfall, and loamy soil.
- Grown under shade to protect from sunlight.

Cultivation:

- **Sowing:** Saplings are transplanted and pruned.
- **Harvesting:** Begins in the fourth or fifth year.
- **Processing:** Beans are dried, roasted, and ground into coffee powder.
- **Distribution:** Karnataka (Chikmagalur, Coorg), Kerala, Tamil Nadu.

Rubber

Obtained from latex, mainly from *Hevea brasiliensis*.

Climatic Conditions & Soil:

- Grows in 25–35°C, 200–400 cm rainfall, and alluvial/laterite soil.

Cultivation:



- **Sowing:** Grown from seeds or bud grafting.
- **Harvesting:** Latex is tapped from trees; tapping stops in winter and rainy seasons.
- **Processing:** Latex is mixed with acid, rolled, and dried into sheets.
- **Distribution:** Kerala (95% of total), Tamil Nadu, Karnataka, Tripura, Assam.