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Q4

How can the Digital India program help farmers to improve farm productivity and income? What step has the government taken in this regard?

UPSC Civil Services Mains 2015 · GS III · 12 marks · Crops, Irrigation and Marketing

Major crops - cropping patterns in various parts of the country; different types of irrigation and irrigation systems; storage, transport and marketing of agricultural produce and issues and related constraints; e-technology in the aid of farmers.

Core demand of the question

- Explain how **Digital India** can raise farm productivity and income
- **List government steps already taken:** **Digital India** pillars, soil health, **mKisan**, **AGMARKNET**, land records and common service centres

Revision summary

Digital India (1 July 2015) is the public digital stack for broadband, identity and e-services.

Farmers can use it for weather, soil advice, credit identity and market prices.

Soil Health Card, **mKisan**, **Kisan Call Centre 1551**, **AGMARKNET** and **NeGP-A** are the agri tools already in play.

DILRMP land records, **Aadhaar** and **CSCs** support credit, subsidy and applications.

Last-mile connectivity and mandi rules still decide whether the portal becomes income.

Introduction

Digital India, launched on **1 July 2015**, is a Union programme to take broadband, identity and e-services to every citizen. For farmers, the same rails can carry **weather, soil, advice, prices and payments**. Productivity rises when the decision is timely; income rises when the sale is informed and the subsidy is not stolen.

Body

How **Digital India helps productivity**

- **Broadband and mobile** (BharatNet / National Optical Fibre Network, cheap data) put weather warnings and pest alerts on the phone before the crop is lost.
- **Soil Health Card** (rolled out 2015) plus lab data on a portal tell the farmer which nutrient to apply, which cuts waste of urea and raises yield.
- **Kisan Call Centre (1551)** and **mKisan** SMS/IVRS give agronomy in local language without waiting for a scarce village officer.
- Digitised **land records (DILRMP)** and **Aadhaar-linked** identity make credit and insurance less of a tout's business.
- Precision tools - remote sensing for drought, future drone and sensor use - sit on the same public digital stack.

How it helps income

- **AGMARKNET** and other price portals reduce the information gap versus the arhatiya.
- Direct Benefit Transfer of subsidy and crop-insurance premium, using **Jan Dhan-Aadhaar-mobile**, can put cash in the farmer's account.
- **Common Service Centres** can file applications, print soil cards and book mandi or warehouse services without a trip to the district town.
- E-commerce and electronic mandi ideas can widen the buyer set once States open markets; **Digital India** supplies the identity and payment layer.

Steps already taken

- **Digital India** pillars relevant to farms: **broadband highways, public internet access, e-Kranti** (electronic delivery of services), and information for all.
- **National e-Governance Plan - Agriculture (NeGP-A)** funds State agri portals and service centres.
- **Soil Health Card** Mission, **mKisan**, Kisan Call Centres, **AGMARKNET**, and computerisation of land records pre-date or accompany the 2015 launch.
- **Aadhaar** seeding of welfare and fertiliser pilots is the targeting layer under the same digital push.
- **Gaps remain:** last-mile fibre, language, women's access to the household phone, and mandi laws that still block electronic sale.

Flow diagram

Digital India 2015 -> Broadband CSC
Digital India 2015 -> Advice soil mKisan KCC
Digital India 2015 -> Prices AGMARKNET payments
Broadband CSC -> Higher productivity
Advice soil mKisan KCC -> Higher productivity
Prices AGMARKNET payments -> Higher farm income

Conclusion

Digital India can raise farm yield through timely advice and soil data, and raise income through prices, payments and less leakage. The government has already laid Soil Health Cards, **mKisan**, **AGMARKNET**, NeGP-A and land-record computerisation on that stack. The farmer gains when the village actually has signal, a working CSC, and a market that honours the electronic price.

Facts & figures

Digital India

Union programme launched 1 July 2015 to expand broadband, e-governance and digital services nationwide.

Soil Health Card

Scheme from 2015 to issue farm-wise nutrient status so fertiliser use can match the soil.

mKisan

Mobile agri-advisory platform (SMS and IVRS) of the agriculture ministry for farmers.

Kisan Call Centre

Toll-free 1551 service for farm advice in regional languages.

AGMARKNET

Electronic network of wholesale market prices meant to reduce the farmer's information disadvantage.

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