



## LAND MANAGEMENT POLICY - GS II AND III MAINS

**Q.** Effective land management is paramount for sustainable development, global stability, and environmental resilience. Critically analyse its needs and challenges in India. (15 marks, 250 words)

**News:** *An expansive land management policy is overdue*

### What's in the news?

- Land is central to all human activities. It provides ecological, economic, social and cultural services.
- But this multi-dimensional character of land is often overlooked in land management practices, resulting in excessive stress, land degradation and environmental draw down.

### Need for Land Management Policy in India:

- **Land degradation** costs the world about \$6 trillion in ecosystem services annually.
- In 2019, the UN's COP14 and the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change highlighted the need for land management improvements.
- The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change's special report on '**Climate Change and Land**' (2019) suggested country-level stocktaking of land management practices.
- A 2021 Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) report stressed the urgency of caring for land, soil, and water.

### Challenges Faced by India in its Land Management:

#### 1. High Population Pressure:

- India has over 17% of the world's population but only 2.4% of its land area, leading to intense competition for land use.

#### 2. Land Degradation:

- Approximately 30% of India's total geographical area is degraded, impacting agricultural productivity and environmental health.

#### 3. Diverse Land Use:

- With 55% arable land and 22% forest cover, managing diverse land uses like agriculture, forestry and urban development is a complex task.

#### 4. Rapid Urbanization:

- Increasing urbanization demands more land for infrastructure, intensifying the strain on available land resources.

#### 5. Sectoral Approach to Land Management:

- Different government departments follow their own land management practices, leading to a fragmented and inefficient system.



## 6. Private Land Ownership:

- Much of the cultural land is privately owned, complicating broader land-use planning and management.

## WAY FORWARD:

### 1. Establish Multi-Stakeholder Platforms:

- Create platforms at district and sub-district levels to bring together farmers, policymakers, and other stakeholders for collaborative land management.

### 2. Activate District Planning Committees:

- Utilize Article 243ZD (1) of the Constitution to activate district planning committees for comprehensive land management plans.

### 3. Implement a Landscape Approach:

- Adopt a landscape approach to assess land potential and make informed decisions about land allocation and use.

### 4. Focus on Climate-Smart Practices:

- Incorporate climate-smart strategies in land management to address climate change impacts and enhance agricultural production.

### 5. Institutional Support for Integrated Management:

- Seek systematic support for integrated landscape management, learning from global experiences such as the European Landscape Convention and the UK's sustainable land management practices.

Effective land management is paramount for sustainable development, global stability and environmental resilience. By embracing integrated approaches, nature-based solutions and community engagement, India can address its land management challenges and pave the way for a more sustainable future. It is imperative for policymakers to prioritize these strategies, fostering collaboration and adaptability to safeguard India's landscapes for generations to come.