



**Q. Analyse the factors contributing to the decline in cotton production in India and propose effective measures to reverse this trend, ensuring sustainability and livelihood security of cotton farmers.**

**GS Paper III**

**(250 Words)**

**Answer:**

Cotton production in India has witnessed a decline in recent years, jeopardizing the livelihoods of millions of cotton farmers.

**Several factors contribute to this trend:**

**Pest Infestations:** Persistent attacks by cotton pests like pink bollworms have led to substantial yield losses.

**Lack of High-Yield Varieties:** The absence of high-yield cotton varieties, resistant to pests and adaptable to diverse climatic conditions, hinders production.

**Erratic Weather Patterns:** Unpredictable weather patterns due to climate change, including droughts and unseasonal rains, disrupt cotton cultivation.

**Input Costs:** Rising input costs for seeds, fertilizers, and pesticides strain farmers' finances.

**Small Landholdings:** A majority of cotton farmers have small landholdings, limiting their capacity to adopt modern farming techniques.

**Inadequate Credit Access:** Limited access to affordable credit prevents farmers from investing in better technology and practices.

**To reverse this trend and ensure sustainability and livelihood security for cotton farmers, the following measures are crucial:**

**Research and Development:** Invest in research to develop high-yield, pest-resistant cotton varieties tailored to different regions.

**Integrated Pest Management:** Promote eco-friendly pest control methods to reduce chemical pesticide usage.



**Climate-Resilient Practices:** Encourage farmers to adopt climate-resilient farming practices and provide weather forecasting services.

**Subsidies and Price Support:** Provide timely subsidies on inputs and ensure fair minimum support prices for cotton.

**Extension Services:** Strengthen agricultural extension services to educate farmers about modern techniques and best practices.

**Credit Facilities:** Enhance access to affordable credit and insurance schemes for cotton farmers.

**Market Linkages:** Develop robust market linkages and improve infrastructure for cotton marketing.

**Farmer Training:** Conduct regular training programs on sustainable farming and resource management.

By addressing these factors and implementing these measures, India can revitalize its cotton production sector, ensuring both the sustainability of agriculture and the economic well-being of cotton farmers.