

# Digital survey shows higher crop area

**BETTER THAN MANUAL.** Agriculture Ministry finds 19% increase in acreage; all States to be covered in kharif

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New Delhi

The Centre has mapped at least 23 crore plots in 3 lakh villages of 435 districts in 14 States for its ambitious Digital Crop Survey (DCS) programme, and results show that there is a 19 per cent jump in the acreage data from the manual estimate of the crop sown area.

It is now gearing up to cover at least one district in non-covered States under the DCS.

“The overall increase in the surveyed area of 21 districts during last kharif season was 18.93 per cent higher at 20.09 lakh hectares (lh) in DCS against 16.8 lh estimated through the conventional system of gathering the crucial information



**TARGET SET.** The Centre is gearing up to cover at least one district in non-covered States under the Survey REUTERS

through village-level agricultural and revenue staff,” said Pramod Kumar Meherda, Additional Secretary in the Agriculture Ministry.

## **VERIFYING MANUALLY**

According to the assessment done by the Ministry, there was a 14 per cent jump in paddy acreage from the

manually gathered data to the digitally accumulated data in the surveyed districts in kharif 2024. Similarly, the increase was 48 per cent in sugarcane and 111 per cent in groundnut acreage.

Even small millet varieties, normally not given as much importance, like Kakun saw an expansion of

8,500 hectares, and Kodo had 32,900 hectares higher area.

“After taking the digital survey, there has to be re-verification of those data manually, particularly wherever discrepancy has been found between the two methods of collecting information so that the DCS is made robust,” said an expert, adding that manual gathering should also be allowed to continue for the next few years until the digital data’s credibility is proven.

“We are actively expanding the DCS, with plans to carry out this ambitious initiative under the Digital Agriculture Mission across all the districts of major States and at least one district in other States during kharif 2025,” Meherda said, adding that it will create a comprehensive single source of na-

tional crop sown data.

Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Madhya Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh, Assam and Rajasthan are the best performing States as each of them have completed over 90 per cent of their targeted plots in the kharif season last year. Gujarat and Odisha had covered more than 50 per cent of their target.

## **THE FUTURE**

Explaining the future outlook of infusion of technology, he said DCS accumulates a substantial database of crop images, which can serve as training data for machine learning models.

“This will facilitate the use of AI to do crop survey, analyse crop health and growth patterns via drones and satellite imagery,” he said.