



NITI Aayog for clear policy on 'jhum' cultivation

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Highlights

- A recent NITI Aayog publication on shifting cultivation which is particularly practised in the northeastern States, has recommended that the Ministry of Agriculture should take up a "mission on shifting cultivation" to ensure inter-ministerial convergence between ministries.
- "Central as well as State government departments of forests and environment, agriculture and allied departments often have divergent approaches towards shifting cultivation.
- This creates confusion among grass-roots level workers and jhum farmer," said the report titled, **"Mission on Shifting Cultivation: Towards a Transformational Approach"**.
- The document that calls for policy coherence, said land for shifting cultivation should be recognised as "agricultural land" where farmers practise agro-forestry for the production of food rather than as forestland.

Falling area

- Locally referred to as jhum cultivation, this practice is considered as an important mainstay of food production for a considerable population in northeast India in States like Arunachal Pradesh, Nagaland, Mizoram, Meghalaya, Tripura and Manipur.
- The publication notes that between 2000 and 2010, the land under shifting cultivation dropped by 70 %.
- The publication also addresses the issue of food and nutritional security of communities involved in jhum cultivation during transition and transformation by broadening the public distribution system (PDS) to ensure widespread access to cereals and other basic food items.
- The publication also suggested that shifting cultivation fallows must be legally perceived and categorised as 'regenerating fallows' and that credit facilities be extended to those who practise shifting cultivation.