

Que

Promotion of nutri-cereals by the govt is a national decision that helps in alleviating malnutrition in India. Explain

Ans

World Health Organisation released Global Nutrition Report 2020. The report stated that India is among 88 countries that are likely to miss global nutrition target by 2025. It also identified the country as one with the highest rates of domestic inequalities in malnutrition.

The three major millet crops currently growing in India are jowar (sorghum), bajra (pearl millet) and ragi (finger millet) are known as nutri-cereals.

Benefits of nutri-cereals are:

- High in dietary fibre, nutri-cereals are powerhouse of nutrients including iron, folate, calcium, zinc, magnesium, phosphorus, copper, vitamins and antioxidants. They are not only important for the healthy growth and development of children but have also been shown to reduce the risk of heart disease and diabetes in adults.



Grown by small and poor farmers on dry low-fertile, mountainous, tribal and semi-arid areas, millets are good for the soil, have shorter cultivation cycles and require less cost intensive cultivation. These unique features make millets suited for and resilient to India's varied agro-climatic conditions.

Millets are not water or input intensive making them a sustainable strategy for addressing climate change and building resilient agri-food systems.

Steps by government to increase production are:

- ① The first strategy from a consumption and trade point of view was to re-brand coarse cereals/millets as nutri-cereals. As of 2018-19, millet production had been extended to over 112 districts across 14 states.
- ② Government hiked the MSP of nutri-cereals, a big incentive for farmer.
- ③ To provide a steady market for the produce. Millets are now included in public distribution system.



④ Provision of seed kits and inputs to farmers building value chains through farmer producer organisation and supporting the marketability of nutri-cereals are some of the key interventions that have been put in place.

⑤ ~~Also~~ The ministry of women and child development has been working at the intersection of agriculture and nutrition by setting up nutri-gardens, promoting research on inter-linkage between crop diversity and dietary diversity and running a behaviour change campaign to generate consumer demand for nutri-cereals.

As the government sets to achieve its agenda of a malnutrition-free India and doubling of farmers' incomes, the promotion of the production and consumption of nutri-cereals seems to be a policy shift in the right direction.

—x—x—x—