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Q14

How has the emphasis on certain crops brought about changes in cropping patterns in recent past? Elaborate the emphasis on millets production and consumption. (250 Words, 15 Marks).

UPSC Civil Services Mains 2018 · GS III · 15 marks · Indian Economy

Indian Economy and issues relating to planning, mobilization of resources, growth, development and employment.

Core demand of the question

- Explain how emphasis on certain crops changed India's cropping pattern
- Then elaborate the new emphasis on millet production and consumption, with recommendations

Revision summary

Rice, wheat, and sugarcane expanded because MSP, FCI, mills, and irrigation paid for them.

Millets lost area even on dry land as diets and PDS favoured fine cereals.

Millets fit rainfed India and a nutrition plate, and policy now names them **nutri-cereals** with MSP and NFSM support.

Consumption will not follow unless PDS, schools, and processed foods take the grain.

Diversification needs real procurement and less subsidy for paddy in falling aquifers.

Flow diagram

MSP irrigation PDS -> Rice wheat cane area
 MSP irrigation PDS -> Millets lose area
 Nutrition water stress -> Nutri-cereal push
 Nutri-cereal push -> Seed MSP procurement
 Nutri-cereal push -> PDS MDM urban food
 Seed MSP procurement -> Drier healthier pattern
 PDS MDM urban food -> Drier healthier pattern

Conclusion

- Pay **MSP with actual lifting** of millets in rainfed districts, not only a price on paper.
- **Cut the paddy lock-in where aquifers fall: direct seeding, crop diversification payments, and honest power pricing.**
- Put millets in **PDS, ICDS, and MDM** with local procurement so consumption and production move together.

- Support FPOs for **dehulling and branding** so the farmer is not stuck with an unprocessed grain nobody in the city can cook.

Emphasis on rice, wheat, and cane, backed by water and procurement, remade India's cropping map and pushed millets to the margin. A new emphasis on millet production and consumption is right for water and nutrition, but it will stick only when the State buys, schools cook, and mills process the grain as seriously as it does paddy.

Facts & figures

Paddy-wheat lock-in

Assured procurement and irrigation in the north-west made the two-cereal rotation the rational farm choice.

Nutri-cereals

Official grouping of jowar, bajra, ragi, and small millets to restore them in farm and food policy.

MSP for millets

Commission for Agricultural Costs and Prices recommends MSP for major millets; lifting is still thinner than for rice and wheat.

NFSM coarse cereals

National Food Security Mission component that supports seed and demonstrations for millets and maize in selected districts.

Water contrast

Transplanted paddy in low-rainfall, tubewell belts uses far more irrigation water than typical millet systems on the same land.

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