

28. Promotion of nutri cereals by the government is a rational decision that helps in alleviating malnutrition in India. Explain.

India is in dire need to alleviate the crisis of malnutrition (major factor for under 5 mortality in India) for which the nutri cereals (Millets) may lend its hand because of its richness in iron, calcium, folate, vitamins etc. (Millets are 'pouchhouse of nutrients')

Nutri cereals → Alleviating malnutrition :-

* The malnutrition when looked through Socio economic scale, it prevails largely among the poorer sections of the society for them affordability remains the challenge. Thus the lower priced millets such as bajra, ragi can aid them in multiple aspects.

* The folate, Iron content in millets can help to overcome the anaemic issue among the women, thus it may help to achieve the Government's 6x6x6 strategy.

Indirect benefits of Nutricereals :-

→ Millets are less cost intensive cultivation where the input resources are not much needed, rain fed crops, good for the soil because of No. fixation and have shorter cultivation cycles, thus the agri community can go for the crop based on agro climatic zones classification.

Government steps to promote nutri-cereals

→ The rebranding of Millets as nutri-cereals in last year and efforts made to persuade us to announce 2023 as International year of millets stands to be a welcome step about creating awareness on millets.

→ The MSP towards millets increased manifold where ragi saw 113% rise, bajra and jowar saw 70% rise, which helps the farmers to prefer the cultivation of millets.

→ The inclusion of millets in public distribution systems aids in creating accessibility and affordability among the poor sections as well as ensuring the procurement from the farmers.

→ 'Bharatiya Krishi Poshan Abhiyan' under Ministry of women and child development where the agriculture and nutrition was linked after long years to alleviate the malnutrition.

Demography dividend of the India can be potentially utilized by making the labour productive for which the consumption habit of people can be shifted from rice/wheat to nutri-cereals in an alternative order of days/week. [Persuasion/Influence remains the key to change the attitude of people here.]

Through the success of Nutri-cereals the nation can have triple benefits of attaining the targets of Malnutrition free India (Poshan Abhiyan), Doubling farmers income by 2022, Healthy India (Eat Right India Campaign)