

Addressing Food Wastage

What is the issue?

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- According to the FAO, One third of food produced for human consumption is lost or wasted globally i.e about 1.3 billion tons per year.

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- Food is lost or wasted throughout the supply chain, from initial agricultural production to final household consumption.

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What are the impacts?

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- In a country like India, food is not only scarce, but also a luxury for many others.

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- India was ranked 97th among 118 countries in the Global Hunger Index for 2016.

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- About 20 crore people go to bed hungry and 7,000 people die of hunger every day

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- Food wastage also includes a waste of resources used in production such as land, water, energy and inputs, increasing the green gas emissions in vain.

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- The increasing wastage also results in land degradation by about 45%, mainly due to deforestation, unsustainable agricultural practices, and excessive groundwater extraction.

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- Decay of wasted food also leads to harmful emission of other gases in the atmosphere.having major impact on climate change and resulting in greater carbon footprint.

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What are the reasons?

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- People's behavior.
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- Poor supply-chain management.
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- Food is lost or wasted throughout the supply chain, from initial agricultural production to final household consumption.
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- Lack of storage facilities. Only 10% of food is covered by cold storage facilities in India.
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- Absence of an effective distribution mechanism and legal framework
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What should be done?

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- 1996 Bill Emerson Good Samaritan Act in the U.S which encourages donation of food and grocery products by protecting the donor and the recipient agency against liability.
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- France banned supermarkets from destroying unsold food.
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- It forces them to donate it to charities or food banks or send it to the farmers to be used as fertilisers in crop production.
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- Civil socities like India Food Banking Network (IFBN) promotes the concept of collaborative consumption with support from the private sector and civil society organisations.
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- These preactices should be coupled with the creation of a time-bound task force under Niti Aayog, to frame a national policy to tackle this issue.
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Source: The Hindu

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