Minimum Dietary Diversity

Why in News?

A new indicator on Minimum Dietary Diversity has been adopted by the United Nations Statistical Commission.

- **Minimum Dietary Diversity (MDD)** – It is a **yes/no indicator** that measures whether individuals consume at least *5 out of 10 defined food groups* within a 24-hour period.
- The 10 food groups include:
  - Grains
  - White roots, tubers, and plantains
  - Pulses (beans, peas, lentils)
  - Nuts and seeds
  - Milk and milk products
  - Meat, poultry, and fish
  - Eggs
  - Dark green leafy vegetables
  - Vitamin A-rich fruits and vegetables
  - Other vegetables and fruits
- **Adopted as** – A new indicator on Minimum Dietary Diversity (MDD) to track progress *toward Sustainable Development Goal 2* (Zero Hunger).
- **Global indicator framework** – This indicator adds to the nearly 250 indicators that are already monitored under the global indicator framework for the SDGs adopted in 2017.
- **Managed by** – The indicator would be managed jointly by FAO and UNICEF.
- **Target Groups** – Children and women of reproductive age.
  - **MDD-W** (Women aged 15-49) – **FAO** is the custodian agency.
  - **MDD-C** (Children) – **UNICEF** is the custodian agency.
- **Significance for Global Nutrition –** The MDD indicator addresses a critical gap in SDG monitoring by:
  - Shifting focus from mere calorie intake to nutritional quality.
- Recognizing that no single food group provides all essential nutrients.
- Highlighting the importance of dietary diversity in preventing micronutrient deficiencies.
- Particularly targeting vulnerable populations: children and women of reproductive age.
- **Relevance for India** – For India, with its dual challenges of undernutrition and rising non-communicable diseases, the MDD indicator offers:
  - A *tool to evaluate* the effectiveness of nutrition schemes like POSHAN Abhiyaan.
  - Metrics to *address regional and socioeconomic disparities* in diet quality.

- Framework for designing targeted dietary interventions.
- Alignment with India's commitment to achieving the *SDGs by 2030*.

Reference

Down to Earth | Minimum Dietary Diversity

