Prelim Bits 10-05-2024 | UPSC Daily Current Affairs

Share of Religious Minorities (1950-2015)

A recent working paper by the Economic Advisory Council to the Prime Minister (EAC-PM) pointed out that India witnessed a reduction in the share of the majority religious denomination by 7.82%.

- **About** - The paper is a cross-country descriptive analysis of the ***status of minorities around the world*** measured in terms of their changing share in a country's population over 65 years ***between 1950 and 2015.***
- **Baseline year** - For the 167 countries analysed, the average value for the share of the majority religious denomination in the baseline year of ***1950*** is 75%.

Key findings

Religion	% of population in 1950	% of population in 2015	Changes
Hindus	84.68%	78.06%	**Decrease** in population
Jains	0.45%	0.36%	**Decrease** in population
Parsis	0.03%	0.004%	**Decrease** in population
Muslims	9.84%	14.09%	**Increase** in population
Christians	2.24%	2.36%	**Increase** in population
Sikhs	1.24%	1.85%	**Increase** in population

- **Global trends** - In keeping with the global trends of declining majority, India too has witnessed a ***reduction*** *in the share of the majority religious denomination* by 7.82%.
- **Trends in South Asian Countries** - The share of the *majority religious denomination has* ***increased*** *and minority populations have* ***shrunk*** alarmingly across countries like Bangladesh, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Bhutan and Afghanistan.

Majority Religion	Country	Majority religion share		Change in share (as %)
		1950	2015	
Hindu	India	84.68	78.06	-7.82
Hindu	Nepal	84.30	81.26	-3.61
Muslim	Maldives	99.83	98.36	-1.47
Muslim	Afghanistan	88.75	89.01	0.29
Muslim	Pakistan	77.45	80.36	3.75
Muslim	Bangladesh	74.24	88.02	18.55
Buddhism	Myanmar	78.53	70.8	-9.84
Buddhism	Sri Lanka	64.28	67.65	5.25
Buddhism	Bhutan	71.44	84.07	17.67

Reference

The Hindu | Share of Religious Minorities: A Cross-Country Analysis (1950-2015)

The Dietary Guidelines for Indians

Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) released 17 dietary guidelines to meet the requirements of essential nutrients and prevent non-communicable diseases (NCDs) such as obesity and diabetes.

- **Issued by** - ***National Institute of Nutrition (NIN), Hyderabad***, which works under the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR).
- The guidelines has been drafted by a multi-disciplinary committee of experts led by ***Dr Hemalatha R*** (Director of ICMR-NIN).
- 17 guidelines have been listed in the DGI.
- **Balanced diet** - A balanced diet should provide not more than 45% calories from cereals and millets and up to 15% of calories from pulses, beans and meat.
- Rest of the calories should come from nuts, vegetables, fruits and milk.

ICMR DIETARY GUIDELINES



GUIDELINE 1 Eat a variety of foods to ensure a balanced diet



GUIDELINE 2 Ensure provision of extra food and healthcare during pregnancy and lactation



GUIDELINE 3 Ensure exclusive breastfeeding for the first six months and continue breastfeeding till two years and beyond



GUIDELINE 4 Start feeding homemade semi-solid complementary foods to the infant soon after six months of age



GUIDELINE 5 Ensure adequate and appropriate diets for children and adolescents both in health and sickness



GUIDELINE 6 Eat plenty of vegetables and legumes



GUIDELINE 7 Use oils/fats in moderation; choose a variety of oil seeds, nuts, nutricereals and legumes to meet daily needs of fats and essential fatty acids (EFA)



GUIDELINE 8 Obtain good quality proteins and essential amino acids (EAA) through appropriate combination of foods and avoid protein supplements to build muscle mass



GUIDELINE 9 Adopt a healthy lifestyle to prevent abdominal obesity, overweight and overall obesity



GUIDELINE 10 Be physically active and exercise regularly to maintain good health



GUIDELINE 11 Restrict salt intake



GUIDELINE 12 Consume safe and clean foods



GUIDELINE 13 Adopt appropriate pre-cooking and cooking methods



GUIDELINE 14 Drink adequate quantity of water



GUIDELINE 15 Minimize the consumption of high fat, sugar, salt (HFSS) and ultra-processed foods (UPFs)



GUIDELINE 16 Include nutrient-rich foods in the diets of the elderly for health and wellness



GUIDELINE 17 Read information on food labels to make informed and healthy food choices

Disease burden in India

• Estimates show that 56.4% of the total disease burden in India is due to unhealthy diets.
• Healthy diets and physical activity can reduce a substantial proportion of coronary heart disease (CHD) and hypertension (HTN) and prevent up to 80% of type 2 diabetes.

YOUNG & UNHEALTHY

	1-4 yrs	5-9 yrs	10-19 yrs
DISEASES OF OVERNUTRITION (%)			
Overweight		3.7	4.9
Obesity		1.3	1.1
Pre-diabetes		10.3	10.4
Diabetes		1.2	0.6
Hypertension			4.9
High total cholesterol		3.2	3.7
DISEASES OF UNDERNUTRITION (%)			
Anaemia	40.6	23.5	28.4
MICRONUTRIENT DEFICIENCIES (%)			
Iron	32.1	17.0	21.5
Vitamin D	13.7	18.2	23.9
Vitamin A	17.5	21.5	15.6
Vitamin B12	13.8	17.2	30.9
Zinc	19.0	16.8	31.7

Source: ICMR-National Institute of Nutrition Report on Dietary Guidelines for Indians

References

1. The Hindu | ICMR releases 17 dietary guidelines
2. ICMR | Dietary Guidelines

Trichoderma asperellum

Punjab Agricultural University has developed a biocontrol agent Trichoderma asperellum to manage 'foot rot' disease, in Basmati rice crops.

- **Biocontrol agent**- Ludhiana Punjab Agricultural University has developed Trichoderma asperellum and registered it with the Central Insecticides Board and Registration Committee (CIBRC).
- **Purpose**- To manage *foot rot disease* in Basmati rice crops.
- **Foot rot disease**- It is caused by *Fusarium verticillioides*, a soil-seed borne pathogen which spreads the infection through the root of the plant, and eventually leads to the colonisation of the stem base.
- **Occurrence**- It affects basmati rice at the seedling stage and can lead to crop rejection. The infected seedlings first turn pale yellow, then elongate and dry up, and eventually (usually) die.
- **Eco-friendly**- The new agent offers a *non-chemical alternative* to pesticides, reducing environmental harm and avoiding toxic residues.
- **Trichoderma asperellum**- It is a *species of fungus* that belongs to the genus Trichoderma, which is well-known for its biocontrol properties against plant pathogens.
- **ACCD enzyme-** *ACC deaminase enzyme* produced by Trichoderma asperellum influences plant defense mechanisms and development.

Quick facts

Central Insecticides Board and Registration Committee
• **About**-It is an Indian regulatory authority responsible for the registration and regulation of insecticides in the country. • **Admintration-** Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare, Government of India. • **Governance**- Insecticide Act, 1968 • **Objective-** To ensure the safety and efficacy of insecticides used in agriculture, public health, and other sectors, while also promoting the sustainable use of these chemicals.

Reference

1. Indian Express- A new biocontrol agent
2. Science Direct- Trichoderma asperellum

FLiRT

New COVD-19 strains KP.2 and KP1.1 known as FLiRT variants causing a surge in cases in the U.S., U.K., South Korea and New Zealand.

- **FLiRT group of variants**- KP.2 and KP1.1 are recent descendants of the JN.1 variant of the SARS-CoV-2 virus. These mutations confer greater invasive properties to the virus.
- **Symptoms-** It is similar to other Omicron subvariants, including sore throat, cough, nausea, congestion, fatigue, headache, muscle or body ache, loss of taste or smell.'
- **KP.2-** It is considered the 'great-grandson' of JN.1 and is more prevalent across countries which accounts for about 25% of new cases in the U.S. and U.K.

- **JN.1-** It is a descendant of the Pirola variant (BA.2.86), which itself stems from the Omicron sub-variant. It was classified as Variant of Interest.
- **Immunity evasion**- Research indicates that the FLiRT variants, especially KP.2, can evade immunity from vaccines and previous infections, posing challenges for COVID-19 management.
- **India's status-** INSACOG has detected cases of FLiRT variants in India with a rise in COVID-19 cases, emphasizing the need for updated vaccinations and continued precautions.

INSACOG is an Indian SARS-CoV-2 Genomics Consortium, a network of genomic laboratories.

- **Cyclical disease**- COVID-19 is described as a cyclical disease with periodic spikes, rather than an endemic one, necessitating sustained surveillance and universal protection measures.

Reference

Indian Express- All about FLiRT

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