Problem of Food Wastage

Why in news?

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The Union Food and Consumer Affairs ministry wants restaurants to specify portion sizes to enable customers to order the right amount to reduce food wastage.

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What do the studies point out?

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- Studies have pointed out that staggering amounts of food are wasted due to inadequate or flawed storage and transportation facilities.
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- The Minister of State for Food Processing Industry told the Lok Sabha that **India has a gap of 3.28 million tonnes of cold storage facilities for fruit and vegetables.**
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- A study submitted in 2015 found that 67 million tonnes of food is wasted in the country every year.
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- The food lost could feed people in the state of Bihar for an entire year.
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- The value of this food is more than Rs 92,000 crore, two-thirds of the cost to feed the country’s 600 million poor under the National Food Security Act (NFSA).
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- In 2013, the **Global Food Waste Not Want Not** Report found that the wheat wasted in India due to want of storage and production facilities are almost equivalent to the entire production of Australia.
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- In 2013-16, 46,658 tonnes of food grains went bad in FCI warehouses across the country, while another 143 tonnes were reported stolen, which is enough to feed eight lakh people under the NFSA.
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What are the solutions for food wastage?

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- The solutions range from educating farmers about **better post-harvesting technologies** to creating **better storage facilities,** locally-specific farm mechanisation to standardising farm operations and **ensuring better transport facilities** for food and food products to eating what is produced locally.
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- There are also civil society and business initiatives of various types including by individual restaurants and restaurant associations to reduce food waste.
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- However, in spite of all this, India ranks 97/118 in the Global Hunger Index.
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- The government should introspect about where things have gone and should address the problems in substantive ways.
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Source: Indian Express

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