Sowing Better to Eat Better

What is the issue?

The first round of Fifth National Family Health Survey suggested the worsening of nutrition-related indicators and Comprehensive National Nutrition Survey (2016-18) highlighted the role of micro-nutrient malnutrition.

What is the status of India's agri-food systems?

- India produces sufficient food, feed and fibre to sustain about 18% of the world's population (as of 2020).
- Agriculture contributes about 16.5% to India's GDP and employs 42.3% of the workforce (2019-20).
- The problem of malnutrition is a huge challenge in India.
- COVID-19 has exacerbated the nutrition issue, while climate change has challenged the agricultural production itself.
- Economic and ecological sustainability, nutrition and the adoption of new agricultural technologies poses huge challenge.
- Disasters and extreme events make India's biosecurity more vulnerable.

To know more about India's food security, click here

How can the agri-food system be improved?

- A shift in production can diversify the dietary pattern and can ensure nutrition security.
- Nutritional security can be ensured by kitchen gardens, reducing post-harvest losses, nutrition-sensitive safety net programmes, women's empowerment, enforcement of standards, improving Water, Sanitation and Hygiene, nutrition education, and effective use of digital technology.
- The direction of agri-food systems has to be reoriented not only to enhance farm incomes but also to ensure better access to safe and nutritious foods.
- The cost on the environment and the climate posed by the agri-food systems has to be minimised.
- The theme of **World Food Day 2021**: **"Our actions are our future; Better production, better nutrition, a better environment and a**

better life” has to be focussed.

- FAO’s support for the transformation of agri-food systems such as mainstreaming agrobiodiversity, greening agriculture, promoting nutrition-sensitive agriculture and strengthening national food security is the need of the hour.
- Integrated crop-livestock-forestry-fishery systems can help farmers produce a variety of products.
- A sustainable agri-food system has to be promoted in which a variety of sufficient, nutritious and safe foods are made available at an affordable price to everyone.
- Such systems can deliver food security and nutrition for all without compromising the economic, social and environmental bases.

Source: The Hindu

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