

threat to food security and crop health? Discuss the measures taken by the government in controlling it. (200 words)

Ans Locusts :- (Polyphagous feeders)

- Locusts are the "oldest migratory pest" in the world.
- The most devastating of all locust species is the "desert locust" - Schistocerca gregaria.
- The magnitude of the damage and loss caused by the locusts is very gigantic beyond imagination.
- locust adults (swarms) and hopper bands are highly "gregarious" and a major threat to food security and crop health in India.
- Swarms can cover a maximum distance of 150 km/day
- As they are "polyphagous pests" they cause damage by devouring the leaves, flowers, fruits, seeds, growing points of all the crops resulting in severe crop loss.
- If good rains fall, ecological conditions become favourable for locust, they rapidly reproduce & "increase some 20-fold in three months."
- If infestations are not detected and controlled, devastating plagues can develop that often take millions of rupees to bring under control with "severe consequences on food security and livelihoods."
- Since, December 2011 we haven't received any desert locust plague in India.
- "locust warning organisation", Directorate of plant

protection quarantine and storage (PPQS) of ministry of Agriculture had taken the responsibility in monitoring and control of the locust situation in India.

- In India, locust affected areas are confined to Scheduled desert areas in "Rajasthan and Gujarat" and partly in Punjab and Haryana.

Measures taken by Government to control it :-

- "Locust control and Research scheme" is being implemented through the locust warning Organisation for monitoring and control of locusts.
 - Taking up locust control operations by "treating the lands" as per the forecasts.
 - "Timely warnings and forecasts" to the locust circle offices
 - Preparing "fortnightly bulletins" and "periodic updates" summarizing the locust situation and forecasting migration and breeding status.
 - Government organizes "trainings, technical workshops" to all the man-power engaged in it.
 - Setting up of "21 activated 'e locust-3' units" for locust-surveys, monitoring and control operations.
 - "Indo-Pak border meetings" for exchange of current locust-situations for effective monitoring the situation and ensure preparedness to tackle the emerging locust threat, if any.
- finally, India is prepared with sufficient trained man-power, vehicles, plant-protection equipments, pesticides and e-locust 3 units for effective monitoring and control.