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28th, January, 2023

Today's Topics Covered

- 1) Himachal Pradesh farmer conferred Padma Shri for his contribution to organic farming..... Read in detail
- 2) Asia's first paragliding school to start in April in Beed Billing, Himachal....Read in detail



Topic: Himachal Pradesh farmer conferred Padma Shri for his contribution to organic farming.

Importance: Himachal HPAS Prelims and Mains

Importance for Prelims: Himachal Current Events of Himachal

Pradesh.

Importance for Mains Exam:

- PAPER-VI: GENERAL STUDIES-III : SUB UNIT 3: Topic: Diversification in Agriculture and allied activities, Land tenure and size of land holdings.

What is the news?

- Nekram Sharma, the single recipient of a Padma Shri in Himachal in 2023, received the fourth-highest civilian honor for his exceptional work in agriculture, particularly natural farming and resurrecting the customary “nau-anaj” intercropping practise.



Lets know about Nek Ram Sharma:

- Nek Ram Sharma, a farmer in the Mandi region of Himachal Pradesh, has received the coveted Padma Shri award for his outstanding contributions to agriculture, particularly organic farming.

- Nek Ram Sharma, the sole recipient of a Padma from Himachal Pradesh, has thanked the administration for this honor.
- He has been using organic farming to raise nine different cereals.

According to Nek Ram, there is a pressing need to avoid using fertilizers in agriculture.

- Sharma praised the 2023 “International Year of Millets” and noted that since its declaration, “people have grown aware. In the past, when people obtained their food directly from the forests, there were fewer infections. Nowadays, people engage in unethical behaviour to make money, which is leading to a lot of diseases in farm products. The resolution in the UNGA designating 2023 as the “International Year of Millets” was pushed by the Indian government, and it received support from 72 other nations.
- In 2005, Sharma reintroduced the “nau-anaj” (nine crops) system—a blend of grains, millets, creepers, lentils, legumes, and vegetables—saying that he had also learned about crop biodiversity.
- By using this technique, “our elders would tell us that they once farmed 18 crops in a year,” Sharma added. Later, he reinstated the practice by utilizing the crops that can be cultivated in tandem, Rabi and kharif. In his travels across the state to discover the traditional farming methods, he also encountered many old farmers.
- He said that this technique promotes the growth of earthworms and other microorganisms, which are essential for the cycling of nutrients.
- Sharma farms maize, moong, beans, rajma, urad dal, ram Dana (Amaranthus), foxtail millet, finger millet, and buckwheat using a mixed-cropping technique.

Additionally, he has established an orchard where he cultivates mango, pomegranate, and litchi.

The International Year of Millets:

How can the Indian government advertise cereals in 2023?

- 2023 has been designated as the International Year of Millets by the United Nations.
- Since India, which produces a fifth of the world's millets, took the initiative, one would anticipate that this year the government would take a different approach to promoting these "nutri-cereals".

The positives of millets:

- Millets outperform wheat and rice in terms of their amino acid composition, dietary fibre levels, and content of minerals, vitamins, and other nutrients.
- Low or no gluten content: While Bajra is gluten-free and higher in fibre than wheat, which has an average protein content of 13% and contains 80% of glutens that cause gastrointestinal and autoimmune problems.
- Other health advantages include the fact that bajra rotis take longer to digest and do not significantly boost blood sugar levels. This results in a longer feeling of fullness.
- It can solve the issue of "hidden hunger," which results from eating foods that are high in energy but low in micronutrients.
- Hardy and drought-resistant due to their short lifespan, low water needs, and capacity to thrive in arid and hilly environments.

Where millets fall short?

- No assistance from the Green Revolution and NFSA in 2013; instead, the emphasis was on making the desired wheat accessible and affordable, tipping the scales against millets.
- Difficult to prepare: Wheat flour's gluten proteins make rolling rotis easier than they are with millet flour.
- Low yields per hectare: national averages for jowar, bajra, and ragi are 1 tonne, 1.5 tonne, and 1.7 tonne, respectively, compared to 3.5 tonne for wheat and 4 tonne for paddy.
- Access to guaranteed irrigation is not available for these crops, only for rice, wheat, sugarcane, or cotton.
- Farmers are reluctant to cultivate wheat and paddy since there are no government purchases of these products at MSP.

What can be done:

- Millets could become a mainstay in children's diets to help combat micronutrient deficiencies, notably iron and zinc deficiency, which are important contributors to anaemia and stunting.
- Serving those in need in schools and anganwadis would help fight hidden hunger and increase agricultural diversification by generating demand.
- Making existing programmes more millets-focused can help them be better utilised. This includes Pradhan Mantri Poshan Shakti Nirman, Saksham Anganwadi, and Poshan 2.0.
- Millets should be purchased through MSP as part of a decentralised nutrition programme that is specifically designed for tomorrow's residents.
- Alternative meals could include ready-to-eat millets

like biscuits, laddus, murukku, energy bars, and extruded snacks.

- Funding by Centre to any state willing to procure millets: specific to their region exclusively for distribution through schools and anganwadis.
- Combining central funding with decentralised procurement: linked to nutrition goals can do for millets what the Food Corporation of India achieved with rice and wheat.

Millets:

UNGA declared the year 2023 as the International Year of Millets in March 2021. January 2023 is the focused-month for the Ministry of Sports and Youth Affairs, and the states of Chhattisgarh, Mizoram, and Rajasthan for conducting events and activities related to the millets year.

(News Source: The Tribune & Indian Express)



Topic: Paragliding School

Importance: Himachal HPAS Prelims and Mains

Importance for Prelims: Himachal Current Events of Himachal

Pradesh.

Importance for Mains Exam:

- PAPER-VI: GENERAL STUDIES-III : SUB UNIT 3: Topic: Types of tourism: religious, adventure, heritage, Important tourist destinations in Himachal Pradesh.

What is the news?

- ***Asia's first paragliding school*** to start in April in Beed Billing, Himachal.



How it will be helpful?

- With the start of paragliding school, the tourism business here will get a boost and the region will get more recognition at the international level.

Who will run this school?

- The state government has given the responsibility of running this school to mountaineering educational institute Manali.

(News Source: Amar Ujala)



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