Indian Economy · GS - III

How has the emphasis on certain crops brought about changes in cropping patterns in recent past? Elaborate the emphasis on millets production and consumption.

EXAM YEAR	PAPER	SUBJECT
2018	GS - III	Indian Economy

MARKS	WORD LIMIT
15	~250 words

Answer Hint

Minimum Support Price; procurement incentives; regional specialisation; rice-wheat dominance; water stress; millets; nutritional security; crop diversification

Model Answer

Introduction

Cropping patterns in India are influenced by government procurement, minimum support prices (MSP), irrigation, technological change, market demand and food policies. These factors have encouraged concentration on certain crops in particular regions.

Changes in Cropping Patterns

1. **Rice and wheat dominance:** Green Revolution technologies, assured procurement and MSP encouraged rice-wheat cultivation, particularly in Punjab, Haryana and parts of north-western India.
2. **Regional specialisation:** Irrigation, infrastructure and market access have encouraged states to concentrate on crops suited to their production systems.
3. **Commercial crops:** Demand for cotton, sugarcane, oilseeds and horticultural crops has altered land-use decisions in several regions.
4. **Ecological consequences:** Monocropping, groundwater depletion, soil degradation and imbalanced fertiliser use have emerged in some intensive agricultural belts.

5. **Market-led diversification:** Changing diets, processing industries and exports have encouraged diversification, although price uncertainty can discourage farmers from switching crops.

Emphasis on Millets

Millets such as jowar, bajra and ragi are climate-resilient cereals suited to many dryland regions. They generally require less water than paddy and can tolerate difficult growing conditions.

Their promotion offers several benefits:

- **Ecological:** Reduced pressure on irrigation resources and improved suitability for rain-fed agriculture.
- **Nutritional:** Many millets provide dietary fibre, minerals and other nutrients.
- **Economic:** They can diversify farm income and strengthen resilience against rainfall variability.
- **Food security:** Their cultivation supports local food systems in drought-prone regions.

Government initiatives, MSP announcements for selected millets, public awareness and inclusion in food programmes can encourage production and consumption.

Way Forward

Improve millet seed systems, processing, procurement, storage and consumer access. Align price incentives with agro-climatic suitability rather than promoting a uniform cropping pattern.

Conclusion

Crop incentives have improved foodgrain production but also created ecological imbalances. Millets offer a practical pathway towards diversified, nutritious and climate-resilient agriculture.

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