Indian Economy · GS - I

From being net food importer in 1960s, India has emerged as a net food exporter to the world. Provide reasons.

EXAM YEAR	PAPER	SUBJECT
2023	GS - I	Indian Economy

MARKS	WORD LIMIT
15	~250 words

Answer Hint

Examine the Green Revolution and expansion of irrigation, HYV seeds, fertilisers and mechanisation; discuss institutional support through MSP, procurement and agricultural research; include diversification, improved logistics, processing and trade policy; recognise regional and crop-specific limitations behind the transformation.

Model Answer

Introduction

In the 1960s, India faced severe food shortages and depended substantially on food imports. The subsequent transformation into a major agricultural producer and net food exporter resulted from a combination of **technological change, state support, infrastructure development, farmer adaptation and expanding global markets**.

Body

Major Reasons

Green Revolution:

The introduction of high-yielding varieties of wheat and rice, supported by fertilisers, pesticides and improved farm practices, significantly increased productivity. Punjab, Haryana and western Uttar Pradesh became major surplus-

producing regions.

Expansion of irrigation:

Canals, tubewells and groundwater irrigation reduced dependence on uncertain monsoon rainfall and enabled multiple cropping.

Institutional support:

Minimum Support Prices, public procurement, input subsidies and the expansion of agricultural credit encouraged farmers to adopt productivity-enhancing technologies.

Agricultural research:

Institutions such as ICAR and agricultural universities developed and disseminated improved crop varieties and farming practices.

Mechanisation:

Tractors, harvesters, pumps and improved farm equipment increased efficiency and reduced dependence on manual labour.

Diversification:

India expanded production beyond cereals into rice, spices, fruits, vegetables, marine products, sugar and other agricultural commodities with export potential.

Post-liberalisation opportunities:

Economic reforms expanded access to international markets. Improvements in cold chains, storage, processing, ports and logistics increased India's ability to export agricultural products.

Large domestic production base:

India's diverse agro-climatic conditions allow cultivation of numerous crops across different regions and seasons, creating a broad export basket.

Limitations

The transformation is not uniform. Small landholdings, post-harvest losses, water stress, inadequate storage and fluctuations in agricultural trade policy continue to constrain India's export potential.

Conclusion

India's journey from food scarcity to agricultural surplus reflects the combined impact of **technology, irrigation, public policy, institutional support and farmer innovation**. The next challenge is to make agricultural exports more competitive, sustainable and beneficial to small producers.