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PULSES IN INDIA

CHALLENGES

THE REVOLUTION

WAY FORWARD

- As in the wheat and rice revolutions, the rewards of the increased pulse production are also being reaped by a few farmers
- Situation of the marginal farmers in rainfed areas, who are responsible for 90 to 92 per cent of country's pulse production, has not changed
- Despite the increasing yields of some pulses, the demand for pulses has consistently exceeded production.
- According to a survey, most people in the rural areas receive less quantity of pulses compared to the recommended levels by FAO/WHO.
- Pulses are more risky proposition than cereals, with the yields tending to be unstable.
- They are more susceptible to the vagaries of weather, pests and disease.
- Therefore, developing pulse varieties, which are both high-yielding and tolerant of stress and pests, is difficult.
- Unlike oilseeds, pulses are prone to infestation during prolonged storage; thus, timely disposal of stocks assumes significance.

- Pulses occupy an important place in Indian agriculture.
 - India moved from a situation of acute scarcity of pulses in 2015-16, to providing free pulses to most of the citizens in the country.
- SIGNIFICANCE:
- improved soil fertility and to agro-biodiversity along with providing a balanced and healthy diet
 - The crop residues after harvest used to feed livestock.
 - More production helps as a import substitution.

- The 2015-16 pulses crisis make the country self sufficient in pulses production.
- The government acted on supply, demand and regulatory fronts with equal emphasis.
- The twin factors critical to an immediate increase in pulses production was the minimum support price (MSP) and procurement from farmers directly at MSP.
- Additional coverage was provided for pulses under the National Food Security Mission (NFSM) launched in 2016-17.
- The government distributed of seed mini-kits, subsidy on the production of quality seed and creation of 150 seed hubs.
- A 20-lakh-tonne buffer stock was formed through the Price Stabilisation Fund (PSF)
- The state governments, particularly of pulse-production leaders worked in close coordination for the procurement of pulses.
- Farmers were greatly enthused by the attractive MSP. There was a 42% increase in production of pulses, unheard of in any other category of food articles.
- Even in the lockdown period, the government continued to support farmers by implementing the MSP and procuring pulses.

- There is ample scope for bringing pulses in newer areas such as rice fallows, tal (lake) areas, hill agriculture and in intercropping for remunerating cropping system.
- An estimated additional 3.0 million hectare can be brought under such pulses cultivation
- Processing or value addition may be another source of revenue
- New research efforts should be initiated to achieve a breakthrough in the productivity.
- The pulses production in the country has increased significantly in the last five years.
- We need to leverage this for supplying pulses through PDS to provide nutritional security to masses.